

Health and Wellbeing Board

11 April 2024

Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment and Community Safety Plan

Report from: Adam Bryan, Director of Place

Author: Neil Howlett, Community Safety Partnership Manager

Summary

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are under a duty to produce a Community Safety Plan to formulate and implement a strategy to reduce crime and disorder, combat substance misuse and reduce re-offending. This report provides information on the proposed priorities for the new Plan, following the Strategic Assessment. The CSP Plan forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and will cover the period from 2024 to 2027.

Recommendations

- 1.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is invited to note the Strategic Assessment 2023 and to make any comments or recommendations to the Partnership in that regard.
- 1.2. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note that as a Policy Framework document once the new Community Safety Plan 2024 – 2027 is completed, it will be taken to Full Council on 18 July 2024. The comments of this Board are invited.
2. **Budget and policy framework**
 - 2.1. CSPs were set up under Sections 5-7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and comprise representatives from the 'responsible authorities'. For Medway these are Medway Council; Kent Police; Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS); Integrated Care Partnership and The Probation Service. CSPs are able to work in partnership with any other agencies or bodies that they feel would contribute to community safety.
 - 2.2. Although the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is not a responsible authority on the CSP, there is a mutual duty to take account of each other's priorities and to co-operate.

- 2.3. Regulation 5 of the Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 requires the CSP to carry out an annual strategic assessment of crime and disorder (see Appendix 1). Regulation 10 requires CSPs to prepare a partnership plan and to revise it annually in consideration of the strategic assessment. The plan's overarching aim is to reduce crime and disorder, tackle substance misuse and reduce re-offending.
- 2.4. The current Community Safety Plan covers the period from 2020 to 2024 and forms part of the Council's Policy Framework. The classification of this Plan as a policy framework document is set out in Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, and in Article 4 (The Full Council) of the Council's Constitution. The new CSP Plan will cover the period 2024 to 2027.
- 2.5. Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires local authorities to have a crime and disorder committee with power to scrutinise the decisions and actions of the CSP in their area and to make reports and recommendations to the local authority and the Partnership. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 require Local Authorities to scrutinise CSPs at least once a year.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Community Safety Plan 2020 – 2024 was adopted by full Council on 16 July 2020. A new Plan is in the process of being approved by partners following the annual strategic assessment.
- 3.2. The CSP has conducted its annual strategic assessment of crime, disorder, and other community safety issues in Medway over the previous year. The assessment looks back at issues that have impacted upon community safety in Medway and forward at emerging issues, themes, and trends.
- 3.3. The strategic assessment has shown that there should be four priorities with an Action Plan which will be refreshed each year following the findings of future strategic assessments. This will need to be agreed by the five responsible authorities.
- 3.4. Whilst the existing Action Plan provides a lot of detail, it can be difficult to identify key actions as there are so many of them. It is recommended that rather than updating a large number of actions each quarter, the Action Plan will be a 'Plan on a Page' with priority leads providing a summary of work which can be scrutinised by members of the CSP. This will allow for a quick, concise, and informative update.
- 3.5. The scrutiny of the partnership, including scrutiny of the strategic assessment and Community Safety Plan, was last carried out by the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2023.
- 3.6. The Committee discussed the following topics:

- 3.7. Residents' concerns about drug related crime – Members recognised the identification of drug related crime by residents as a major concern. In response partners explained that there was a commitment to reduce drug crime with investment in the neighbourhood policing model and targeting drug use via the dedicated neighbourhood task force.
- 3.8. Perception of Crime – Members queried whether the perception of crime reflected reality and in response Kent Police reported that violent crime and violence against women and girls would be a high priority for the Police, but this was not always seen by the public.
- 3.9. Anti-Social Behaviour – Partners informed the Committee of the work undertaken by the Combatting Drugs Partnership and the lower drug crime figures in Medway compared to Kent. Members were informed that a new wraparound service for drug and alcohol addiction had been introduced and was focused on accessible recovery orientated services. The number of anti-social behaviour cases reported and how these were dealt with was also discussed and Members were informed of the named contact approach that would be adopted in future.
- 3.10. Youth Services - The importance of youth services was recognised by Members and a range of measures including engagement events, the dedicated youth offending team and outreach work with schools were discussed.
- 3.11. My Community Voice – Partners informed the Committee of My Community Voice and the role it plays as a key communication tool for residents to speak to their local Police Officer and raise and report concerns.
- 3.12. Sexual offences and violence against women and girls – Members highlighted the statistics which indicated this should be a higher priority than drug related crime and asked what action was being taken to tackle this. Partners acknowledged that this was a priority of central and local government and reported that Kent Police were focusing on proactive policing, targeted operations and targeting prolific offenders. Partners informed the Committee that there was a series of talk and walk events in Rochester, and alarms and other equipment had been provided to residents and the importance of education in schools was recognised. Partners reported that training courses were being delivered in schools on various topics and bystander training had been delivered.
- 3.13. Probation Service – Members queried what was being done to increase the staffing rate of 77% and when the next HMIP inspection would take place. The Chairperson of the CSP offered to take this back to the Probation Service and request a written response as they were not in attendance.
- 3.14. Rapid Deployment Cameras (RDC's) – Members acknowledged the success of RDC's in Hoo in reducing crime and queried how these were deployed. The Committee were informed that the deployment of RDC's was based on

substantive evidence, and they were normally deployed for 12 weeks to establish whether there was a need for permanent CCTV in an area.

- 3.15. Members also discussed fire safety visits and extreme stickering and graffiti in Medway and how these issues were responded to.
- 3.16. The Committee noted the findings of the strategic assessment.
 - a. The Committee agreed to support the proposed CSP priorities in light of the strategic assessment findings.
 - b. The Committee scrutinised the activity of the Community Safety Partnership, over the past year, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.
 - c. The Committee requested a written response from the Probation Service regarding actions taken in response to staffing rates and when the next HMIP inspection is expected.
- 3.17. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSC Act) received Royal Assent in April 2022. Part 2 of the PCSC Act creates a requirement for specified authorities to collaborate and plan to reduce or prevent serious violence. The specified authorities are:
 - Chief Officers of Police for police areas in England and Wales
 - Probation Services
 - Youth Offending Teams
 - All fire and rescue authorities operating in England and Wales
 - Integrated Care Boards in England
 - Local authorities including district councils and county councils
- 3.18. The Duty requires specified authorities to work together through an agreed partnership arrangement. The purpose of the collaboration is to plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence, and to prepare and implement a shared strategy.
- 3.19. Representatives of the specified authorities and the Police and Crime Commissioner met in February 2023 to discuss the response to the duty. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has responsibilities as the receiver of funding for the duty from the Home Office and the oversight and reporting responsibilities that are associated with the funding. The PCC will use his convening powers for the local partnership arrangements for the Duty to chair a Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (SVPP) Board with representatives from the specified authorities.
- 3.20. The Serious Violence strategy was agreed in January 2024 and published, along with the strategic needs assessment (SNA), on the Police and Crime Commissioner's website. The strategy summarises the work of the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board which is the response of the majority of the specified authorities to the requirements of the Serious Violence duty. The strategy has set out three key strands which are sexual violence and

domestic abuse, public place serious youth violence, and violence linked to drugs and alcohol. The strands were set as priorities based on the data within the SNA along with feedback from young people consulted in 2023, and workshops held with staff from the specified authorities.

- 3.21 The work on sexual violence and domestic abuse will focus primarily on sexual violence so as to avoid duplicating any work currently being delivered as part of the Domestic Abuse strategy. The SNA identified that the majority of victims and suspects of sexual violence where the offence is not linked to Domestic Abuse are children under the age of 18. This finding was confirmed by the National Police Chiefs Council report in January 2024 which outlined a similar picture across England and Wales. The Serious Violence strategy has proposed that the work for 2024 – 25 has a focus on improving the data available around sexual violence due to some limitations in what data is recorded, and also to work with children to understand the drivers behind sexual violence. This work will then support a response which builds on the evidence available to the Board. The lead from the Board is ACC Simon Wilson.
- 3.22 The Kent and Medway VRU has adopted the Home Office definition of serious violence and has focussed on 'specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing'.
- 3.23 For each of the three strands within the strategy the Board has agreed a lead member. In addition to ACC Simon Wilson, the lead for Serious Youth Violence is the KCC Director for Integrated Children's Services, Ingrid Crisan, and the Medway Director for Public Health, James Williams, leads the work on violence linked to drugs and alcohol. Each of the Board leads is currently working with representatives from the specified authorities to develop a more detailed plan linked to their strand. The Board will hold thematic meetings from June 2024 to allow the leads to keep the Board informed of progress and to identify and gaps or resources required to deliver against their strand.
- 3.24 The meeting agreed that Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are the local partnership model for discharging the Serious Violence Duty. Each CSP is required to produce a strategy to tackle crime and disorder which includes serious violence within their district or borough, and these strategies will reflect the needs of the local communities. Individual CSPs have agreed either to meet the requirements of the duty through the SVPP Board or at a district level through their CSP.
- 3.25 The strategic needs assessment that is led by the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) includes public place serious violence, domestic abuse and sexual abuse. The assessment was completed in December 2023 and used data from all specified authorities. The SNA is available to support strategic planning for 2024 to 2025.

3.26 The Community Safety Plan for 2024 to 2027 will contain four priorities:

- Tackle Drugs and Alcohol.
- Reduce Re-offending.
- Violence Against Women and Girls.
- Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour.

3.27 The priorities are noted the annual Strategic Assessment 2023 at Appendix 1.

4. Options

4.1. A protocol is in place to encourage the sharing of assessments and plans, so as to foster improved strategic alignment amongst the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Boards and CSP. Board members' comments are sought on the strategic assessment, to inform future assessments and plan priorities.

5. Advice and analysis

5.1. There are clear linkages between health and community safety and a range of areas of congruence where health and wellbeing and community safety players can make strong common cause, for example; drugs and alcohol; mental health; and domestic abuse (these are detailed in the strategic assessment).

5.2. The CSP continues to recognise that Medway's future success is contingent on regeneration. It is clear that benefits from growth must be delivered to existing communities and new developments and residents must be effectively integrated. The CSP is confident that the identified community safety priorities are robust and remain the right priorities.

5.3. This physical regeneration will only be successful if people feel that they and their families are safe. Safety is a key factor in encouraging people to take exercise, especially for children and older people. Taking regular exercise has clear health benefits, including limiting obesity, heart health, reducing the onset of diabetes, promoting a sense of wellbeing, and protecting older people from depression.

6. Risk management

6.1 There are reputational, environmental, economical and legal risks to the Council for not pro-actively pursuing an improvement in crime and disorder levels. This report reflects the importance of constructive dialogue with the partner organisations comprising the CSP and also the importance of coordinated and collaborative working.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Decreased Agency "buy in"	Changes in leadership, staffing or resources could reduce the involvement of key agencies	Ensure that agencies are aware of the impact of disengagement upon their own service delivery/performance. Ensure that strategic members of the CSP are made aware of any situation as it arises.	D2
A wide range of CSP objectives	Means that the CSP may be spread too thin and not have the resources to deal with all aspects so there may be gaps in service.	Prioritisation based on strategic assessment	D2
Legislation	Government guidance could change focus for CSP	CSP to ensure that it effectively horizon scans to be aware of impending legislative changes.	C3
Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plans	Changes in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.	Continued engagement with the PCC.	C3

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

7. Consultation

7.1 The CSP is required to consult with a wide variety of stakeholders in putting together the annual strategic assessment. An online consultation was carried out during September 2023.

7.2 The last CSP community engagement event was held in September 2023 with the same questions asked in the Q2 Citizens Panel. The results are reflected in the Strategic Assessment.

7.3. In summary for the online survey - 107 respondents completed the survey:

- 70% feeling very safe/fairly safe in Medway during the day.
- 16% feeling very unsafe/fairly unsafe.

- 28% felt very safe/fairly safe in Medway during the evening.
- 56% feeling very unsafe/fairly unsafe.

7.4. The top issues that were felt to be a problem in Medway were:

- People using or dealing drugs (79%)
- People driving carelessly or too fast (69%)
- People fly tipping (68%)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (66%)
- People dropping litter (63%)

7.5. The top five issues that respondents felt should be addressed as a priority in Medway were:

- People using or dealing drugs (71%)
- People driving carelessly or too fast (51%)
- People fly tipping (40%)
- Violent crime (37%)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (28%)

7.6. The top three things respondents felt have the most impact on making people feel safer in Medway were:

- Visible and effective policing (77%)
- Well maintained public spaces and infrastructure (53%)
- CCTV (46%)

7.7. In summary for the Citizens' Panel Q2 results - 192 respondents completed the survey; 80% feel very safe/fairly safe in Medway during the day with only 9% feeling very unsafe/fairly unsafe; 36% felt very safe/fairly safe in Medway during the evening with 33% feeling very unsafe/fairly unsafe.

7.8. The top issues that were felt to be a problem in Medway were:

- People using or dealing drugs (80%)
- People driving carelessly or too fast (79%)
- People dropping litter (72%)
- People fly tipping (72%)
- People not clearing away dog fouling (62%)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (62%)

7.9. The top issues that respondents felt should be addressed as a priority in Medway were:

- People using or dealing drugs (72%)
- People driving carelessly or too fast (57%)
- People fly tipping (46%)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (29%)
- People dropping litter (28%)

- People not clearing away dog fouling (28%)

7.10. The top three things respondents felt have the most impact on making people feel safer in Medway were:

- Visible and effective policing (80%)
- Well maintained public spaces and infrastructure (55%)
- CCTV (48%)

8 Financial implications

8.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has submitted his Police and Crime Plan and has proposed that CSPs be allocated a budget to use for funding activities to tackle crime, disorder, drugs, and re-offending. In 2024-2025 the amount allocated to Medway CSP is £106,460. The focus of the CRG is to deliver projects that support the priorities set out in <https://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/what-we-do/making-kent-safer-2022-25/>

9 Legal implications

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9.2. The Council's statutory powers are detailed in the report.

9.3. The adoption or modification of the Community Safety Plan would be a decision for Full Council.

Lead officer contact

Neil Howlett
Community Safety Partnership Manager
neil.howlett@medway.gov.uk
01634 331183.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Strategic Assessment 2023

Background papers

None.