

Health and Wellbeing Board

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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 within the annual Strategic Assessment (see appendix 1) on the CSPs current priorities. The CSP Plan forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and will cover the period from 2024 to 2027.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the Strategic Assessment 2024 and to make any comments or recommendations to the Partnership in that regard.

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 2024 to 2027 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.
- 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 2024 – 2027 was adopted by full Council on 18 July 2024. A new Action Plan for 2025–26 is in the process of being approved by partners following the annual strategic assessment. This will need to be agreed by the five responsible authorities.
- 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 confirmed the existing four priorities with a new Action Plan.
- 3.4. 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 2024.
- 3.5. The Committee discussed the following topics:
- 3.6. **Anti-social behaviour** – In response to questions the Committee were advised that overall figures were down, however, there were still improvements to be made in various areas/wards. Dangerous dog incident figures were up but that was not unexpected given the focus on it and some of the national issues. The neighbourhood policing model was going to continue, with a focus on policing being visible and contactable within wards and town centres, looking where they could make a difference and find solutions. The focus moving forward would be town centres as there was still significant work to do there especially in engaging local businesses and building trust and communication. It was noted that licensing remained the strongest deterrent and enforcement tool for licensed premises. Members took the opportunity to request that their thanks be passed to their local police ward officers.

- 3.7. **Violence against women and girls** – The Committee were advised that there had been significant improvements made, with strong police investigation teams and results, working in schools and with all partners to make a difference and ensuring the right services were available to safeguard victims as well as making arrests. Events had been held in towns centres publicising what was on offer. It was queried whether female genital mutilation, hymenoplasty and virginity testing, was specifically addressed in education settings, the Committee were advised that education and awareness would continue and there was a dedicated child protection scheme assess and if there are crime enforcement will happen. It was requested that it be ensured that this was specifically addressed at education events. The Committee were advised that the education packs would be checked to see if it needed to be added.
- 3.8. It was noted that simple things such as effective lighting helped with making streets feels safer for women. It was noted that proactive measures were being explored to make public spaces feel safer, and in the new year there was some planned work with licensed taxi drivers on their role in creating that feeling of safety around the nighttime economy.
- 3.9. **Drugs and alcohol** – Continued to be a national and local issue, the police continued to be as robust as possible with significant focus on disrupting County Lines and addressing local drug misuse, whilst acknowledging a holistic approach with partners in education and health were fundamental in tackling this complex issue. From a health point of view there was a collaborative approach to ensuring continuity of care and one continuous treatment journey, with a focus of empowering people to remain off substances. There was also educational work including projects looking at drivers/influencers and how this information might be used to inform safer choices
- 3.10. **Probation Service** – In response to questions the Committee were advised that there were challenges with early prisoner releases due to capacity issues, and that the recruitment of probation officers remained a concern nationally not just locally. However, there was multi-agency support being provided for early release individuals.
- 3.11. **Funding** - In response to a query as to whether the delay in the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan submission affected action being taken, it was acknowledged that the lack of current clarity was not ideal, but it was not anticipated that funding would change, the ambitions were clear, and it should not hinder the work.
- 3.12. **Survey** - Regarding the low overall response rate to the online survey, it was suggested that other forms of engaging the public in responding to the survey, maybe across more diverse social media platforms (see section 7).
- 3.13. The Committee suggested it would be helpful to receive the 'Breakdown of Crime Types' by ward.

Decision:

- a) The Committee noted the findings of the strategic assessment.
- b) The Committee supported the proposed Community Safety Partnership priorities considering the strategic assessment findings and requested that Female genital mutilation (FGM), hymenoplasty and virginity testing be expressly included within the priorities and education and awareness training if not already.
- c) The Committee requested a 'Breakdown of Crime Types' by ward.
- d) The Committee noted 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.

3.14. The Community Safety Plan for 2024 to 2027 contains four priorities:

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

3.15. The priorities are noted the annual Strategic Assessment 2024 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.	DII
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	DII
Legislation	Government guidance could change focus for CSP	CSP to ensure that it effectively horizon scans to be aware of impending legislative changes.	CIII
Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plans	Changes in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.	Continued engagement with the PCC.	CIII

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate 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 2024.
- 7.2. The last CSP community engagement event was held in September 2024. The results are reflected in the Strategic Assessment.
- 7.3. In summary for the online survey - 103 respondents completed the survey. The previous year 107 responses were received, with these results in brackets:
- 69% (70%) feeling very safe/fairly safe in Medway during the day.
 - 19% (16%) feeling very unsafe/fairly unsafe.
 - 26% (28%) felt very safe/fairly safe in Medway during the evening.
 - 50% (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 (80%)
 - People fly tipping (73%)
 - People driving carelessly or too fast (71%)
 - People being drunk or rowdy in public places (66%)
 - People dropping litter (60%)
- 7.5. The top five issues that respondents felt should be addressed as a priority in Medway were:
- People using or dealing drugs (70%)
 - People fly tipping (44%)
 - People being drunk or rowdy in public places (40%)
 - People driving carelessly or too fast (39%)
 - Sexual offences (36%)
- 7.6. The top three things' respondents felt have the most impact on making people feel safer in Medway were:
- Visible and effective policing (79%)

- Well maintained public spaces and infrastructure (52%)
- CCTV (49%)

7.7. For the year 2025 – 2026 the CSP is working with partners to hold an in-person community event in order to increase the number of respondents.

8. Financial implications

8.1. The CSP is awaiting information from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in relation to funding for 2025-26. In previous years the PCC has granted CSPs a Crime Reduction Grant to use for funding activities to tackle crime, disorder, drugs and reoffending. In 2024-25 the amount allocated to Medway CSP was £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 2024

Background papers

None.