

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ACTING AS CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 29 June 2021
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Joy, McKenna, Mortimer, Newton, Purle (Vice-Chairman),
D Rose (Chairman), M Rose and Young

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1 June 2021	1 - 2
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any)	
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
12. Reports of Outside Bodies	
13. The 2021/2022 Strategic Assessment and revised Community Safety Plan	3 - 79

Issued on Monday 21 June 2021

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, either remotely or in person, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 25 June 2021). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5p.m. on Friday 25 June 2021). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE **ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND** **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Joy, McKenna, Mortimer,
Newton, Purle, D Rose (Chairman), M Rose and Young

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

5. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

6. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

7. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE
BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

8. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2020 be approved as a correct record.

9. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

10. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

12. THE 2020/2021 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND REVISED COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

The Community Protection Team Manager introduced the report which provided an update on the Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment. Crime figures and actions taken by Safer Maidstone Partnership were included within the report. It was noted that since the report was published, the Leader of the Council had changed and the foreword would be updated within the Community Safety Plan.

Chief Inspector Gary Woodward and Deputy Chief Inspector Stephen Kent were in attendance and introduced to the Committee.

Concern was raised that the new Leader of the Council had not been consulted on the refreshed Community Safety Plan and may wish to review it before it was approved, with particular reference made to the increase in antisocial behaviour.

The Community Protection Team Manager explained that crime figures had been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions and that the increase in incidents of antisocial behaviour had occurred on a national level.

It was requested that this item be reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee, and the Head of Housing and Community Services reminded the Committee that as the document is a partnership strategy, any significant revision would need to be considered and approved by the Safer Maidstone Partnership, which needed to be considered when agreeing timings.

Chief Inspector Gary Woodward addressed the Committee and encouraged Members to make direct contact if there were concerns that they felt were not being addressed through the usual processes.

RESOLVED: That the item be deferred to enable the new Leader of the Council to be consulted on the revised Community Safety Plan.

13. DURATION OF MEETING

6.40pm to 7.13pm

**Communities, Housing & Environment
Committee**

29 June 2021

The 2021/2022 Strategic Assessment and revised Community Safety Plan

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
Lead Officer and Report Author	Martyn Jeynes, Community Protection Team Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The Safer Maidstone Partnership’s Community Safety Plan for 2019-22 has been refreshed following the annual undertaking of a strategic assessment. The Strategic Assessment provides members with an update on the progress made during year two of the plan and the latest figures relating to the priority areas and other areas of concern. The revised CSP Plan replaces the previous version with minor changes that provide greater focus on growing trends or changes in service delivery. It sets out the strategic direction for the Partnership for the remaining year of this Plan.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee notes the Strategic Assessment and the updates that it provides members on areas of concern highlighted by committee previously, particularly the growing and effective use of powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.
2. That the Committee approves the revised “June 21 Update” of the Community Safety Plan 2019-22, as attached at Appendix 3 to the report, and recommends to Council that it be adopted, having regard to 4.4 and 4.5.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing & Environment	29 June 2021
Council	14 July 2021

The 2021/2022 Strategic Assessment and revised Community Safety Plan

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Community Safety Partnership Plan will contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priority of; Clean Safe and Green, where People feel safe and are safe. The Community Safety Partnership Plan also supports good health and wellbeing, enhancing the appeal of the borough for everyone.	Community Protection Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The report recommendations supports the achievements of the Health Inequalities cross cutting objectives by ensuring there is a strong focus on preventative work that is intelligence driven so as to maximise the opportunities to reduces health inequalities in partnership with the police and other community safety related partners.	Community Protection Manager
Risk Management	It is a statutory requirement for Maidstone Borough Council to provide a CSP Plan.	Community Protection Manager
Financial	The Community Safety Grant funding is allocated directly by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Maidstone Borough Council is due to receive a grant of £40k for 2020-21. This will include a 'tactical pot' to be used throughout the year as and when other initiatives or issues are raised outside of this current funding round. Further funding has and will be utilised from the Kent Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) as it becomes available. However the plans and strategies detailed within the plan cover a wide range of services provided by the Council and partner agencies with the majority of activity being either mainstream funded or funded via other grants or allocations not directly allocated to community safety.	Community Protection Manager
Staffing	The priorities within the Plan crosscut the agencies that make up the Safer Maidstone Partnership. Delivery against the priorities will be via mainstream activity and any grant funding that the borough is able to secure.	Community Protection Manager

Legal	<p>Sections 5 to 7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the 1998 Act), headed "Crime and Disorder Strategies", require "responsible authorities" to comply with section 6 of the 1998 Act which states that "responsible authorities" shall formulate and implement:</p> <p>a) A strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area; and</p> <p>b) A strategy for combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and</p> <p>c) A strategy for the reduction of reoffending in the area.</p> <p>By virtue of section 5(1)(a) of the 1998 Act, the Council is the "responsible authority".</p> <p>Regulation 4 and Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 require Full Council to adopt the partnership plan.</p> <p>The Community Safety Plan is based on the findings of a comprehensive Strategic Assessment, therefore Maidstone Borough Council is fulfilling its statutory requirement. There are reputational, environmental, economic and legal risks to the Council for not pro-actively pursuing any reductions in crime and disorder levels. The recommendations in this report recognise the importance of constructive dialogue with the partner organisations comprising the Community Safety Partnership and also the importance of coordinated and collaborative working.</p>	Legal
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications.	Community Protection Manager
Equalities	The key priority themes are evidence based and developed via the partnership's strategic assessment. The ongoing monitoring of these priority areas provides an established evidence base to support wider decision making across the Council. An understanding of equalities impacts is essential and would be identified via an EqIA as part of any decision making process.	Community Protection Manager

Public Health	The Community Protection team is under the reporting line of the Head Housing and Community Services. The focus is strongly on preventative work that is intelligence driven so as to maximise the opportunities to reduce health inequalities in partnership with the police and other community safety related partners.	Community Protection Manager
Crime and Disorder	The Community Protection team is under the reporting line of the Head Housing and Community Services. The focus is strongly on preventative work that is intelligence driven so as to maximise the opportunities to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in partnership with the police and other community safety related partners.	Community Protection Manager
Procurement	None	Community Protection Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 19 March 2019 this Committee recommended the adoption of our then new Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Plan to Council in April 19. The plan was duly adopted and the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) set about delivering the plan. The plan was refreshed and brought to this Committee in 2020 on 30th June.
- 2.2 The Strategic Assessment has now been refreshed for 2021 and we are pleased to share this with members in Appendix 1. The assessment demonstrates the positive steps taken by the Partnership, despite the obvious impact of the pandemic, in the last 12 months against the priorities set by the CSP plan. It also provides updated statistics from across the partnership to help us identify trends and any growing concerns.
- 2.3 The Community Safety Plan 2019-22 has also been refreshed and updated in accordance with the information gathered in the Strategic Assessment.

Strategic Assessment 2020/21

- 2.4 The Strategic Assessment has been developed over the last 3 months to allow members and the wider public to understand clearly why our SMP is recognised as one of the most innovative and progressive CSPs in the South East. As detailed in the Strategic Assessment, the partnership has galvanised to deliver an exceptional amount in the last 12 months despite the additional challenges that the Covid-19 presented. It demonstrates how the partnership adapted and evolved to continue to deliver services in unprecedented times.
- 2.5 The Strategic Assessment provides an update on the outcome-based action plans developed by each of the identified sub-groups. Amongst the highlights are the following:

Protecting our communities against serious and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)

- One Organised Crime Group (OCG) was successfully closed down as inactive and a new OCG was identified and is being worked on by the partnership.
- The Community Protection Team successfully disrupted an alleged illegal puppy breeding operation believed to have a network that expands across Kent.
- Partnership members were trained in the problem-solving model "OSARA" and received an input on the use of tools and powers provided by Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, leading to significant increase in their effective use to challenge behaviour.

Keeping children and young people safe

- Introduction of monthly District Contextual Safeguarding meetings where professionals from across the SMP work collaboratively to identify individuals and locations of concern. The process then facilitates intensified support and location assessments to assess and mitigate against risk and harm.
- The partnership undertook The Voice of Young Maidstone Safety Survey receiving over 1500 responses from children and young people in the borough, sharing their thoughts on safety in and around their school, in their neighbourhoods, online and the risk taking behaviour in their peer group. The resulting survey will be used by the partnership to identify areas of concern and gaps in services.
- Intensive partnership work around protecting young people affected by the pandemic, including intensive support for families and voluntary "Buddi Tags", a new initiative where offenders voluntarily wear a GPS tag to encourage them to not to undertake anti-social or criminal behaviour

Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)

- Adaption of the Cradle to Grave conference from face to face to an online Webinar where 157 guests received inputs from Domestic Abuse Specialists from six different partner agencies.
- Domestic Abuse Awareness sessions delivered to approximately 20 Elected Members, 70 MBC employees and 70 local hair and beauty students.
- An improved "Flight Fund" policy which allows agencies to support victims of Domestic Abuse to obtain essential items and to pay for travel expenses whilst fleeing an abusive relationship

Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community

- MBC staff engaging in a pilot with KCC and the NHS to look at an alternative approach to supporting people with co-occurring complex needs, such as substance misuse and mental health concerns.
- Renewal to the Town Centre PSPO for a further 3 years.

Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

- Dissemination of information to vulnerable individuals, families and carers to assist with care and sign posting into services.
- Introduction of Mental Health specialist into the MBC Outreach team, which saw 19 individuals receive direct support with their complex mental health needs.

- 2.6 The Strategic Assessment also provides data from across the Partnership and some information around the impact of the pandemic and its impact on crime and disorder. It is clear the pandemic has impacted on crime and disorder in the borough, which is reflected in the data collated for the report. There are some significant variations from previous years. Restrictions and lockdowns changed the way people behaved and how we interacted. Whilst some types of crime showed a decline in incidents, others saw significant increases. These were often fuelled by fear and occasionally were because people's activities and movement were restricted. A visual representation of the data in the Strategic Assessment is provided in Appendix 2.
- 2.7 The Strategic Assessment also provides an update on the new Multi-Agency Task Force who are taking a public health approach to reducing crime and health inequalities in the Shepway area.
- 2.8 Finally, the Strategic Assessment also outlines Key Conclusions and Recommended Changes to the Community Safety Partnership Plan which have been adopted into the CSP Plan, ready for it to be taken to Council in July 2021.

Community Safety Plan Refresh

- 2.9 The Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019/22 has been refreshed, as detailed in the Strategic Assessment. In addition, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this committee further emphasis has been given to the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the need to ensure prevention of re-offending is considered across all priority work streams.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Option one; Do not approve the revision of the Community Safety Plan. This is not recommended as the Community Safety Plan sits behind the work of the SMP and should reflect current trends and working practices
- 3.2 Option two; That the Committee approves the revised "May 2021 Update" of the Community Safety Plan 2019-22 and recommends to Council that it be adopted. This will allow for the plan to be implemented by the Safer Maidstone Partnership and its subgroups

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The "June 2021 Update" of the plan is provided in Appendix 3.
- 4.2 The Strategic Assessment outlines key conclusions and recommended changes to the Plan which reflect the current trends and initiatives being developed across the SMP. The Plan will provide the framework for the SMP to continue to adapt and deliver against the 5 priority areas.

- 4.3 The June 2021 Update of the CSP Plan, provided in Appendix 3, has distributed to SMP and their comments and additions have been incorporated to ensure the partnership is reflected fully within the plan for delivery in year 3 of the action plans.
 - 4.4 Further consultation has been undertaken with the Chair and Vice Chair of this committee further emphasis has been given to the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the need to ensure prevention of re-offending is considered across all priority work streams.
 - 4.5 Cllr David Burton, Leader of the Council has also been asked to review the wording of the welcome and introduction to the CSP Plan and therefore this may be amended after publication of this report and will be addressed at committee.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

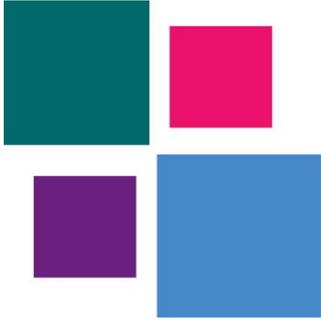
- 6.1 Once approved the Partnership Plan will be disseminated to all partners for their information and implementation through the subgroups.
 - 6.2 The Plan will also be shared with the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC).
 - 6.3 The PCC provides the SMP with a grant to enable community safety projects to be undertaken which deliver on both the PCC's priorities and those of the SMP.
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7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- *Appendix 1: Strategic Assessment 2021-22*
- *Appendix 2: Strategic Assessment Summary*
- *Appendix 3: Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-2022, June 2021 update*

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Maidstone
Borough Council

**Safer
Maidstone
Partnership**

**Strategic
Assessment**
2021-22

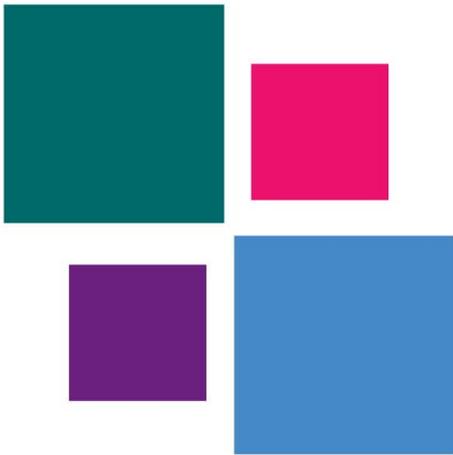


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The Aim of this Strategic Assessment

This is the Strategic Assessment produced for Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) for the period 2020-21 and informs the priorities and planned activities for the 2021-22 Partnership Plan.

The purpose of this Strategic Assessment is to provide knowledge and understanding of community safety problems to the members of the SMP. This is achieved through intelligence analysis and identifies emerging priorities by considering the patterns, trends and shifts relating to crime, and substance misuse. Additionally, the Strategic Assessment includes a performance assessment of how far the partnership has achieved its previous priorities.

The Background of Strategic Assessments

In 2006, a review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002, led to a series of recommendations to strengthen and extend existing requirements further, through the experience gained from partnership working. This resulted in a new set of national minimum standards which came into force in August 2007.

The 1998 Act included the requirement to undertake a detailed crime and disorder audit, through consultation with key agencies and the wider community with the findings used to identify strategic priorities and set targets and performance measures. The new national standards placed a legal obligation on responsible authorities to comply with the specified requirements, one of which was the creation of a strategic assessment in place of the previous 3 yearly audit.

Methodology

Data for this year's Strategic Assessment has been sourced by the Kent Community Safety Unit from a variety of statutory partners including Police, Health, Probation and KCC Services. They are available in the partnership data sets section on the Kent Safer Communities portal. Several different data display tools have been included in this year's assessment for the purpose of putting the context of crime data into more perspective, over a longer period.

Maidstone Borough Council and other authorities in Kent have again incorporated the MoRiLE (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement) scoring matrix methodology of ranking offences based on threat, risk and harm within this year's Strategic Assessment (see Appendix 1).

Executive Summary

2020 was a year that no one will forget. A year that started with concerns about the impact of a “no deal” Brexit was quickly engulfed in the national response to a global pandemic. The strong foundations which the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) is built on were tested like never before.

Plans, services, teams and individuals adapted to new ways of working as “working from home” became the new normal. The strong interpersonal and professional relationships at the heart of the SMP demonstrated our agility and adaptability to ensure that any disruption of services that keep Maidstone borough a safe place to live, work, visit and learn, were kept to a minimum.

Despite the challenges everyone faced, the SMP continued to grow; it managed to launch a new multi-agency Task Force which would introduce a public health type of approach to disproportionate levels of crime, deprivation, and health inequality within a focus area of Maidstone – currently Shepway.

Virtual meetings allowed more partners to attend more easily and removed the need to travel. From those connections came new initiatives and collaborations that may not have happened without the pandemic.

Continuing to use our outcome-based approach, the SMP developed an understanding of joint problem-solving models, such as OSARA which is a five-stage process consisting of:

- Objective
- Scanning
- Analysis
- Response
- Assessment

We also adopted Contextual Safeguarding and continued to deliver work together with our partners and communities protecting and saving lives.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has impacted on crime and disorder in the borough and this is reflected in the data collated for this report which shows significant variations from previous years. Restrictions and lockdowns changed the way people behaved and how we interacted. Whilst some types of crime showed a decline in incidents, others saw significant increases. These were often fuelled by fear and occasionally were because people’s activities and movement were restricted.

Some new areas of concern emerged, such as risk-taking behaviour in young people which could escalate when they were in larger peer groups driven by the absences of natural diversions, such as cinemas, sports clubs etc. Also, we saw the emergence of “puppy-farms” which grew to meet the demand of more people who were now able to work from home.

As unprecedented as the last year has been, the priorities set out in 2019-2022 Community Safety Partnership Plan remain unchanged for 2021/22.

Our priorities for 2021/22 are :

- Protecting our communities against serious, violent and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)
- Reducing the impact of substance misuse on our community
- Safeguarding people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

Each of these priority areas have been impacted by the pandemic and will remain key areas of focus for the partnership as we move into the recovery phase.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a considerable and unprecedented impact on the lives of everyone in the UK, including those in Maidstone borough.

At the time of this report, latest data shows that over 400 people in lost their lives as a result of COVID-19.

The virus and measures to control rates of infection (such as the national lockdowns, systems to limit social contact, and the temporary closure of education settings) have had a significant impact on many, directly affecting individuals' physical health, mental health and well-being, education, and employment.

A Residents' Covid survey was open between 31st July and 2nd October 2020, and 1453 residents responded. Survey respondents were asked about the impact of the pandemic on their mental health and around 50% responded that they have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. They were also asked to select their top 3 concerns and around 14% selected mental health as one of their top three concerns.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on how front-line services have operated including protective measures for front line staff through use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and limiting non-essential face to face contact with the public and service users, and with other professionals. The combined impact of reduced contact with the public, significant limitations on travel and social contact, and closure and strict restrictions in public and recreational spaces, is that almost all services have seen unprecedented shifts in demand. As a result, in approaching this year's report we must consider that data for the year is highly irregular, and that observations and analysis should be considered in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on 'normal' day-to-day life.

Rather than focus on Covid-19 within this assessment as a single specific priority or risk to community safety, the impact of the pandemic has been considered and discussed as a factor in each individual priority theme, wherever it is relevant.

Priorities for the Safer Maidstone Partnership for 2021-2022

The information collated for this year's Strategic Assessment, detailed within this document, identifies that the five priority areas identified in the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-2022 should remain as:

- Protecting our communities against serious and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)
- Reducing the impact of substance misuse on our community
- Safeguarding people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

These priorities are echoed across the SMP with multi-agency working remaining pivotal, especially as each of these areas has and will likely continue to be affected by the pandemic. National lockdowns created challenges when it comes to engagement across public, private and voluntary sectors, but as we embraced a new virtual approach to working our collaborations grew. Our sub-groups and working groups have never been stronger or more diverse in their attendance. As lockdown restrictions are eased, these galvanised partnerships will be critical to help the borough recover.

ASB, prevention against radicalisation and reducing reoffending, remain intrinsic elements of the work undertaken across the five main priorities.

Delivery of the Priorities

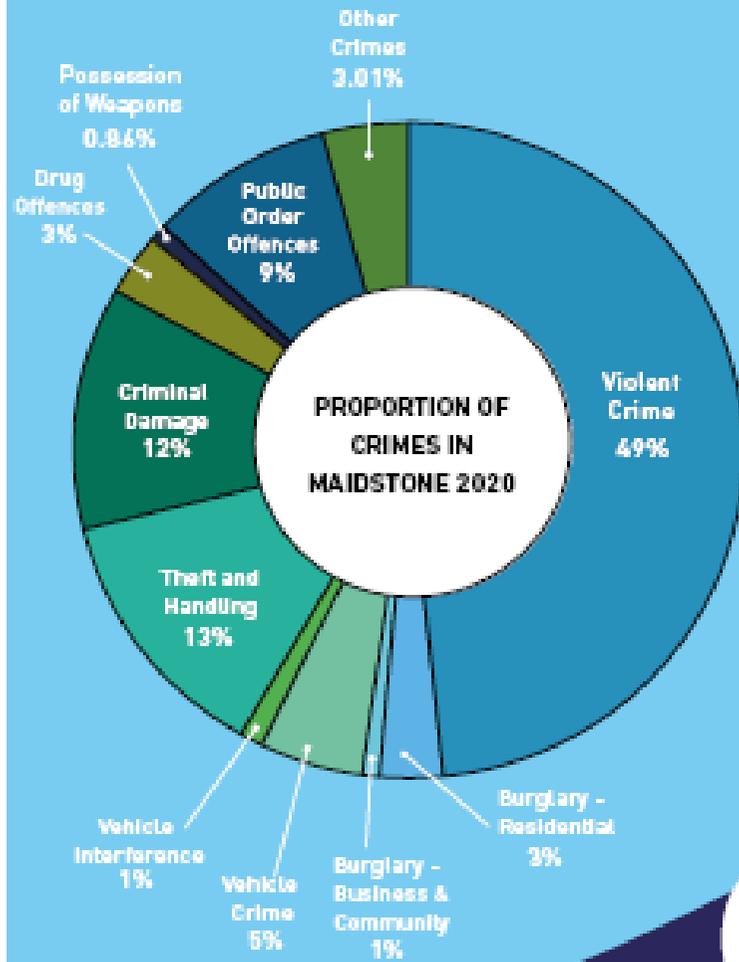
Strategic subgroups, operational groups and specialist teams work collectively to develop, co-ordinate and deliver activities which were developed primarily to help launch the Community Safety Plan and lay down the foundations for the next year before the Community Safety Plan is refreshed. For each priority, the partnership has:

- Produced an action plan containing measurable activities and indicators
- Ensured that there are resources available to deliver these plans
- Submitted funding applications to obtain additional resources where required

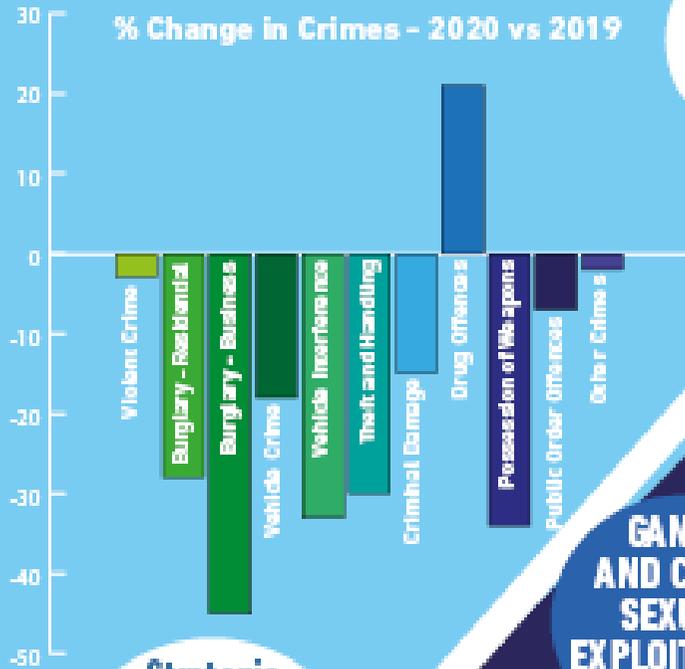
Details of what has been delivered to date in each area is summarised in the tables that follow. As these are active action plans, designed to evolve over the life of the current Community Safety Plan, some of the actions are ongoing and new actions will be added in the coming months, specifically as a result of the data provided within this report to members of the SMP.

Strategic Assessment Summary

An overview of the year 2020 and the priority areas identified within the plan



% Change in Crimes - 2020 vs 2019



19%
OF ALL CRIME IS RELATED TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

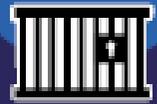
AND DOMESTIC ABUSE EQUATES TO **33%** OF ALL VIOLENT CRIME



DOMESTIC ABUSE

YOUTH OFFENCES HAVE DECREASED FROM **110 TO 87** AN DECREASE OF 21%

GANGS AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



HOWEVER THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS COMMITTING CRIME, FROM **35 TO 39**

Strategic Assessment for the **Safer Maidstone Partnership**

SECTION 136 FIGURES HAVE DECREASED FROM **143 TO 115** AN DECREASE OF 20%



MENTAL HEALTH

SUBSTANCE MISUSE



INCREASE IN DRUG OFFENCES **21%**

AN INCREASE FROM 415 TO 502 OFFENCES



Protecting our communities against serious and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)-Delivered through the Serious & Organised Crime Panel

Organised Crime is defined as planned and co-ordinated criminal behaviour and conduct by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. Organised crime in this and other countries recognises neither national borders nor national interests.

Actions currently identified or delivered	Status	Update
Introduce a scheme to promote safer socialising in the borough to prevent / reduce violent crime in the Night Time Economy (NTE).	Ongoing	<p>The safer socialising scheme has been postponed due to the impact of Covid-19 on the NTE. Some initiatives have been introduced/refined to support a Safe NTE during the social distancing restrictions and as lockdown measures are eased. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police Vulnerability Investigation Teams patrolling the NTE (Op Whitney) to support those who appear vulnerable and engagement with local hotels and taxi companies. This will be re-introduced when restrictions are lifted. 'Ask for Ani/Ask for Angela' campaigns also supported through social media channels.• Multi-agency working group set up to look at "designing out" crime in Brenchley Gardens which proposes to look at changes in park design, lay out and use, to assist in the reducing ASB, knife crime and public disorder in the evenings.• Knife Crime Intensification week (Op SEPTRE) included a focus on the Town Centre. The aim was to reduce the fear and use of knives.• NTE forum continued throughout the lockdown period to support NTE premises managers, security teams, Maidstone BID and charity groups such as Urban Blue and Street pastors to support safer socialising.• Pilot undertaken to provide cost-effective active monitoring of CCTV in partnership with the Maidstone BID. Long-term

arrangement is now being developed.

Disruption of criminal enterprises and Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) including puppy farms, county line gangs and brothels with in the district

Ongoing

During 2020 Maidstone closed the active OCG identified in last year's Strategic Assessment and until recently there had been no active "locally owned" OCGs for several months. An OCG has recently been identified relating to drugs/money laundering linked to sites in and around the town centre. A 4P plan has now been raised and a partnership investigation has commenced with uniformed/plain clothed officers actively engaging the group. This is still at an early stage but will feature heavily in the coming months.

The council CPT successfully disrupted an alleged illegal puppy breeding operation believed to have a network that expands across Kent. Further "puppy farms" have been targeted by multi-agency raids as the pandemic has driven up the popularity of puppies and the associated market.

Several county lines into Maidstone have been successfully disrupted throughout the year by the police RAPTOR team, with it being reported that Maidstone is "too difficult" for gangs to establish new lines. Work continues to shut down new lines identified through intelligence networks.

Kent police are actively disrupting identified brothels in the district. During February 2021, an intelligence led operation alongside the Serious Crime Directorate saw multiple search warrants executed, 12 arrests, 3 people were charged with 9 bailed pending further investigation. £42,000 cash and multiple phones/devices were also seized.

<p>Increase intelligence reporting by holding a training session with KCC and Kent Police Intel teams to ensure information is shared appropriately.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Training session held periodically with partners within the Serious Organised Crime Panel (SOCP) meetings over the course of the term. Partners were reminded of this intelligence gathering process recently.</p>
<p>Deliver a series of events to raise awareness of the risks and dangers of Illegal Money Lending and support services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Awareness raising training is being developed with the England Illegal Money Lending Team for delivery to core MBC services, including Housing, Revenues and Benefits and Debt Recovery. The training, which is being developed for roll out before September 2021, will raise awareness on identifying and supporting the victims of loan sharking. A community awareness event is also planned for Shepway, delivered through the Maidstone Task Force, once social distancing measures are lifted.</p>
<p>Support KCCs Doorstep Crime initiative to help safeguard the vulnerable from opportunist serial offenders</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Concept has been developed by KCC Trading standards, consisting of 4 options. KCC are currently consulting CSPs across Kent to determine commitment to no-cost or costed options. MBC have opted for a low-cost option, subject to obtaining relevant funding grant.</p>
<p>Deliver training to key partners and officers in relation to the use of specific problem-solving tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSARA • Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Specific training sessions provided to multi-agency audiences. The OSARA problem solving model is now an integral part of the multi-agency approach taken to address both existing and new crime and ASB trends.</p> <p>A recent training session on Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, built on the session provided to the partnership in February 2020. The session which considers the practical and tactical use of the powers will see increased use across the partnership, as already seen in the Warnings and Notices (CPW/CPN) figures provided in this assessment. It will also see the introduction of a pilot to empower Golding Homes staff to issue CPWs/CPNs on behalf of the local authority when tackling ASB and nuisance within their housing stock.</p>



Keeping children and young people safe- Delivered through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting

Young people are often affected by issues across our priority themes, affecting them more deeply, causing longer term issues than in adults. We work collectively to safeguard our young people from those that cause them harm.

Actions	Status	Update
Introduce District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings for Maidstone.	Delivered	The DCSM was introduced in July 2020. The meeting sees a range of professionals from across the SMP, working collaboratively to identify individuals and locations of concern. Intensified support is put in place for individuals and location assessments identify opportunities to provide contextual safeguarding that assesses the risks and opportunities to mitigate them in an area.
Introduce a scheme to support Young People who are relocated to Maidstone by other local authorities to minimise the risk of ASB [Revised target date of April to June 2021]	Ongoing	Introducing "My Place", an initiative to support young victims of crime moving to Maidstone, had been delayed due to the pandemic. The number of young people, that would have been suitable, moving to the area has reduced due to the pandemic, with older residents being prioritised through "Everybody In" and other housing prioritisation requirements. Work is in progress to ensure the initiative is in place to coincide with the lifting of restrictions.
Undertake a youth safety survey that will improve understanding of young people's fears, particularly around carrying knives [Revised target date of results by June 2021]	Ongoing	The youth survey was due to launch in April 2020 but was significantly impacted by the pandemic and the early closure of schools. The launch was postponed, and the survey finally started in January 2021 and ran until the beginning of May. Approximately 1500 responses have been collected. An analysis report will be drafted by the end of June 2021.
Undertake a review of Brenchley Gardens to identify opportunities to safeguard young people.	Ongoing	A working group has been set up to look at the issues of concern in the park that have existed for many years. A designing out crime survey has been undertaken that has identified several strands that may be implemented, which could include:

Undertake a review of Brenchley Gardens to identify opportunities to safeguard young people. (cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modifications to the bandstand to reduce its attraction for people to sit on it • Closing some of the entrances to the park after darkness • Proactive monitoring and engagement with park users • Positive use of the park <p>Options around these areas are being considered with the view to taking a report to Committee in September 2021 to consider implementing the proposed changes.</p>
Undertake assertive outreach work to safeguard young people in areas where CSE and gang activities are believed to be taking place	Ongoing	The pandemic significantly restricted the delivery of outreach with professionals not being able to go out and engage with young people. It has now been agreed that outreach can now be delivered to locations identified to the DCSM as a concern.
Increase support for depression, self-harm and suicide awareness in young people (schools, GPs etc.) to address their vulnerability (From Mental Health Plan)	Ongoing	Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma informed practices remain at the foundation of the work the SMP undertakes and delivers. This included specific ACE awareness in training provided by the Kent Violence Reduction Unit. Work will continue with KCC Social Services and Early Help to ensure safeguarding and awareness is put in place around mental health in young people, particularly as a result of the impact of the pandemic.

Youth Justice

Looking at the latest period, April 2019 to March 2020, youth offences have decreased from **110 to 87**, a decrease of **23 (21%)**. However, there has been an increase in the number of individuals committing crime, from **35 to 39 (11%)**. The breakdown of these offenders' age groups is shown in the table on the left.

Age of Offenders	Count
Age 13-14	6
Age 15	9
Age 16	9
Age 17 +	15

Around **0.2%** of the youth population have been convicted of an offence. The table below shows that the total number of youth offences has continued to decrease of the last six years.

Period	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Count	217	184	132	97	110	87

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Partnership approach to protecting young people

The Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020 saw the closure of many activities which provide natural diversions. Schools closed and later moved to virtual learning. Sports clubs and leisure activities were suspended for large parts of the year. For our young people, who are biologically programmed to explore the freedoms that come with maturity and to engage in risk taking behaviour, the world became very small. A generation, often referred to as "entitled" faced restrictions that no generation has faced since the world wars. Lockdown created unique challenges for some, such as access to IT equipment for online learning. Some taught their parents and grandparents how to socialize, virtually.

Reported issues around increased risk-taking behaviour and young people gathering whilst exercising or visiting food outlets increased across the partnership. Community fears around lack of social distancing meant that some of the concerns were due merely to the presence of young people. There was though evidence of increased risk taking, some of which escalated to anti-social behaviour and criminal acts. This was often associated with tribal confidence, which occurs naturally as group sizes grow, and the absence of natural diversions which led to, on occasion, larger peer groups forming. Reports were received, incorrectly pertaining to "gangs of youths". It remains imperative that when referring to 'gangs' that labels are not assigned without evidence, thought or research; to assume that a group of young people are a gang would not serve the priorities of the SMP and reduces the effectiveness of work on confirmed gang members. Hallsworth and Young (2006) defined the following:

- Peer Group - A small, unorganised, transient grouping occupying the same space with a common history. Crime is not integral to their self-definition.
- Street Group - A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.
- An Organised Criminal Network/Gang - A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain. The gain is mostly measured in financial terms. Crime is their 'occupation'.

These definitions are important in order to focus resources and priorities where required. There are currently no identified youth gangs in Maidstone. We do however have several Peer Groups who professionals are working with to minimise their risk taking and to improve their behaviour.

Lockdown restrictions on agencies created challenges for professionals. It restricted their ability to engage and safeguard young people. Group work was not permitted and face to face work with individuals was limited to those most vulnerable. When necessary, plans were put in place around certain individuals and their families to disrupt behaviour and to support parents and carers. In some cases, for older young people, enforcement action was taken which included restrictions on who they could associate with and where they could go whilst exercising. Joint training with Kent Police and partners in February 2020 put in place improved processes and understanding, which led to an increased confidence in the use of enforcement tools. However, a High Court appeal decided in 2020 that a council had no power to issue a Community Protection Notice in the name of a parent concerning the conduct of their child, thus creating challenges around the use of powers to require parents and guardians to take responsibility for their children's behaviour.

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Further work is needed in relation to using ASB powers with those under 16, due to their criminal status, but work is ongoing with the Youth Offender Team and KCC Early Help to implement alternatives, such as behaviour agreements and voluntary Buddi Tags, a new initiative where offenders voluntarily wear a GPS tag to encourage them to not to undertake anti-social or criminal behaviour. The monthly District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings ensure that individuals and locations of concern are discussed, and that escalating behaviour is challenged. The risk presented by County Lines Gangs, Gangs from other areas and Gang Culture remains a threat in Maidstone but these are proactively policed. The local RAPTOR team actively shuts down Gangs trying to establish themselves in Maidstone. There are currently no "home-grown" gangs active in the borough. The addition of a safeguarding officer to the RAPTOR team, alongside the introduction of "Schools Officers" by Kent Police will provide even more opportunity to incorporate contextual safeguarding and the voice of the child into everyday police and partnership work.



Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking): Delivered through the Domestic Abuse Forum

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. This can encompass but is not limited to physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse.

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Actions	Status	Update
Delivery of an awareness/ education session for Hairdressers including Mid Kent College and Saks Academy	Ongoing	Awareness sessions were delivered to 70 Maidstone based Hair and Beauty students through Saks. Due to the pandemic we were unable to deliver sessions to Mid Kent College, but discussions are ongoing with the college as social distancing restrictions are being eased.
Through temporal analysis of reported DA arrange for domestic abuse support workers to attend calls to domestic incidents with Kent Police officers over periods where reports of domestic abuse are highest.	Delivered	Kent Police and KCC Early Help undertook joint visits to DA Victims in the lead up to Christmas 2020. The patrols were very successful in providing direct support to victims and raising awareness within the police teams attending. More joint visits are planned. A potential target is the upcoming European Football Championships, as evidence with respect to previous tournaments demonstrates increased risk that DA will increase because of the tournament.
Arrange and host a practitioner's conference to increase networking, knowledge sharing and understanding of DA issues in Maidstone and the support available.	Delivered	Initially planned for delivery in April 2020, the DA forum adapted their Cradle to Grave conference for online delivery. The event, which drew upon the life experiences of a local DA victim, was attended by 157 online attendees. Inputs were provided by 8 speakers representing 6 partners. Owing to the success of this event a further online event is planned for May, as well as a face to face conference for Spring 2022.
Develop a Domestic Abuse Champions Network to support the introduction of Rural DA Champions and build on the existing Urban DA Guardians	Ongoing	Conceptualised as Maidstone specific, supporting awareness raising in Rural communities, DA Champions is being adopted for delivery Kent wide with the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service, for roll out on 2021/22. A rolling programme of awareness raising and materials to support trained Champions to signpost victims into support services is being developed. The initiative will be rolled out to professional champions from September 2021. Civilian champions will follow.

Incorporate DA into Safer Socialising initiative	Ongoing	As detailed above, Safer Socialising initiatives are on hold due to the pandemic's impact on the NTE
Listen to the voice of survivors. Establish the means to capture the views of those who have been subject to domestic abuse to ensure that the services we are delivering provide the right support needed.	Ongoing	Clarion, Choices and other support services ensure that their survivors are surveyed at various stages of their journey to capture valuable feedback on their services and to ensure the voice of the survivor is captured and used to tailor the service provision.
Deliver a Violence against Men initiative.	Ongoing	An event in conjunction with Maidstone United football club was postponed in 2020 due to the pandemic. This will be revisited when fans can return to the stadium.
Maidstone Taskforce Domestic Abuse Day of Action	Delivered	Very successful day focussed on supporting victims/survivors in the Shepway area. Activities included joint visits to repeat victims to offer support and awareness raising and literature provision to residents and businesses. The proactive visits undertaken in this period were deemed so successful that Kent Police are developing a pilot initiative to undertake regular visits, with DA specialists, to DA victims, particularly supporting those awaiting court hearings that have been delayed due to the pandemic. A further day of action is planned for 2021 when more face to face engagement is permitted.
Delivery of Domestic Abuse Awareness Presentation for Council Members	Delivered	Presentation delivered to approximately 20 council members with useful interactions and discussions around the impact of domestic abuse in the borough. Feedback received was very positive.
Delivery of Domestic Abuse Awareness for Maidstone Borough Council employees	Delivered	Presentations provided to over 70 colleagues within MBC as part of our Wellbeing Week. Further sessions are now planned for teams who have expressed an interest in further training.
Generate a DA Forum Flight Fund policy and application form	Delivered	A new policy has been put in place to give agencies direct access to DA Forum Funds (generated by charity donations) to allow victims of DA to obtain essential items and to pay for travel expenses whilst fleeing an abusive relationship.
Generate and publish Maidstone Borough Council at work domestic abuse policy	Ongoing	Maidstone CPT are currently working with MBC to adopt a DA policy to support staff and managers in supporting victims of domestic abuse in our workforce. An initial draft has been shared with the aim to adopt this in the coming months.

Domestic abuse is a cruel and complex crime that can affect anyone, leaving physical and emotional scars that can last a lifetime. Domestic Abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

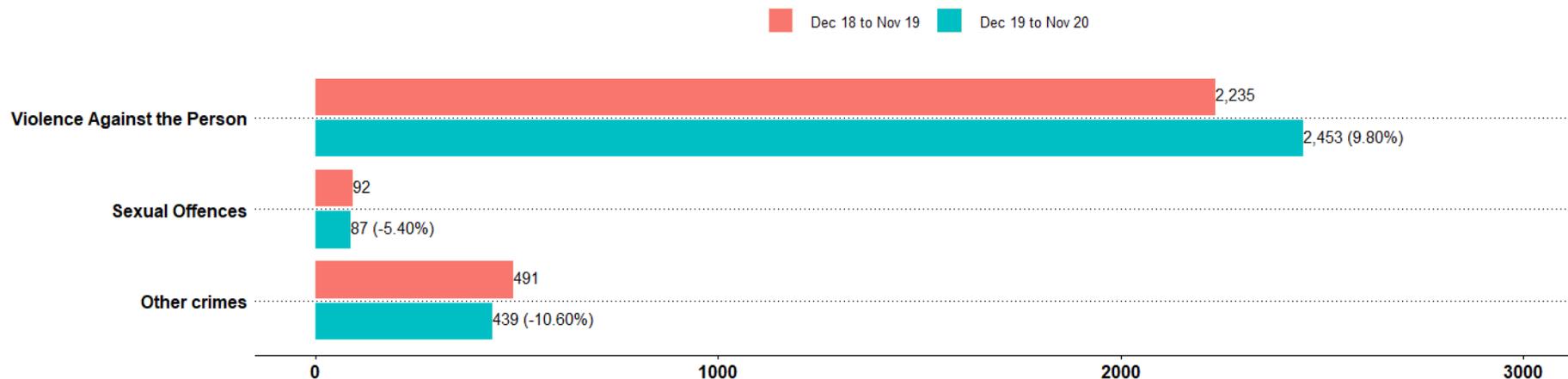
Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial, Emotional

Domestic abuse sits as a local, county and national priority which is supported through local mechanisms such as the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which provides support and protection to families and individuals in high-risk domestic abuse situations. The Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service (IDVA), commissioned by KCC, provides support and guidance to victims of DA. Each district also delivers a 'one-stop shop' where all victims of domestic abuse can receive advice and support.

27

Currently, **19%** of all crime in Maidstone Borough is related to Domestic Abuse and this equates to **33%** of all violent crime.

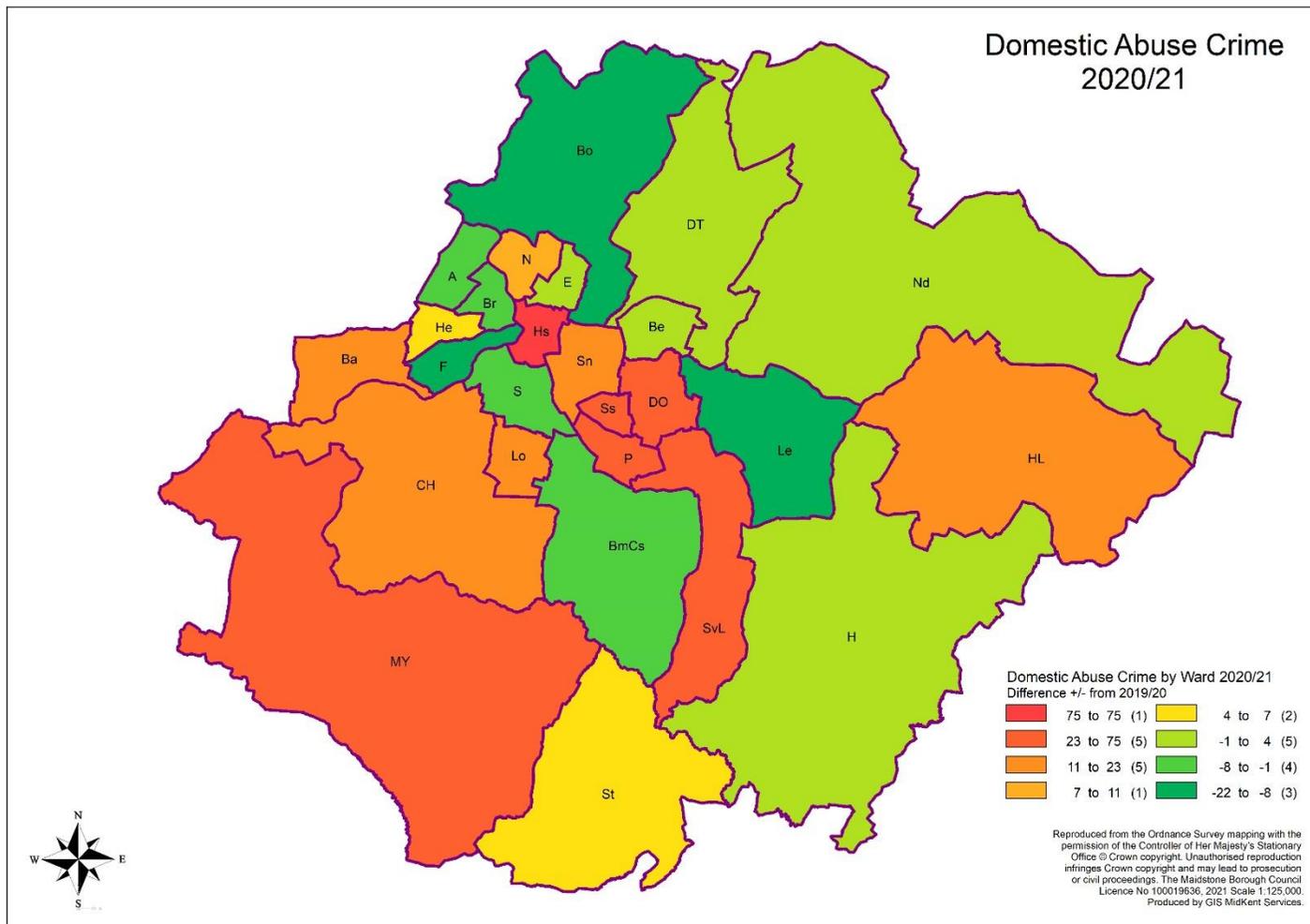
Change In The Number Of Domestic Abuse Crimes



Recorded domestic abuse has gone up by 5.7% and this is mainly driven by 'Violence Against the Person' with an increase of 9.8% which accounts for 82% of all domestic abuse crimes. Sexual offences (-5.4%) and other domestic abuse crimes (-10.6%) have dropped.

Ward based analysis of the domestic abuse crimes (financial year to date) showed that the High Street Ward remained the ward with the highest amount recorded domestic abuse. The heat map below provides an indication of how domestic abuse crimes have changed during 2020.

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Owing to the lack of NTE, previously believed to be the primary source of domestic abuse in High Street ward, further work is now required interpret and respond to why this remains significantly higher than any other wards. Park Wood, Shepway South, Bridge and Shepway North make up the remaining top 5. Over rural areas, there were notable increases in recorded domestic abuse in Sutton Valence & Langley, Marden & Yalding and Downswood and Otham. Sutton Valence & Langley was the only rural ward to feature in the top 10 with day incidents increasing by 150%.

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced. Many cases will not enter the criminal justice process as they are not reported to the police. The coronavirus lockdown restrictions, which came into effect from 23 March 2020, imposed strict limits on daily life. There was fear amongst SMP partners that these restrictions would limit access to services and support. Support programs, which rely on group work became difficult to deliver. The delivery of virtual support to victims itself presents significant challenges, particularly to victims with children or living with their abuser.

One-Stop Shops & Sanctuary

Domestic Abuse 'One Stop Shops' offer free advice, information and support from a range of agencies under one roof to help victims of domestic abuse. Whilst Maidstone's one stop shop is ordinarily hosted at the Salvation Army in Union Street, the pandemic meant that it wasn't possible to provide this face-to-face service. Adaptation by the partnership has seen the creation of a virtual One Stop Shop, who are receiving calls and signposting victims to appropriate support, whether that is housing, legal matters, policing or specialist DA advice.

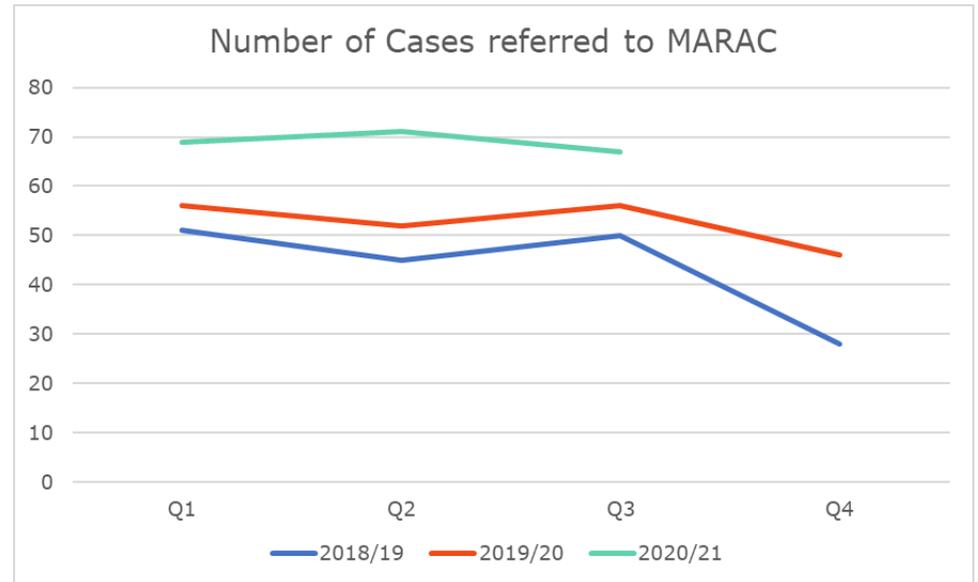
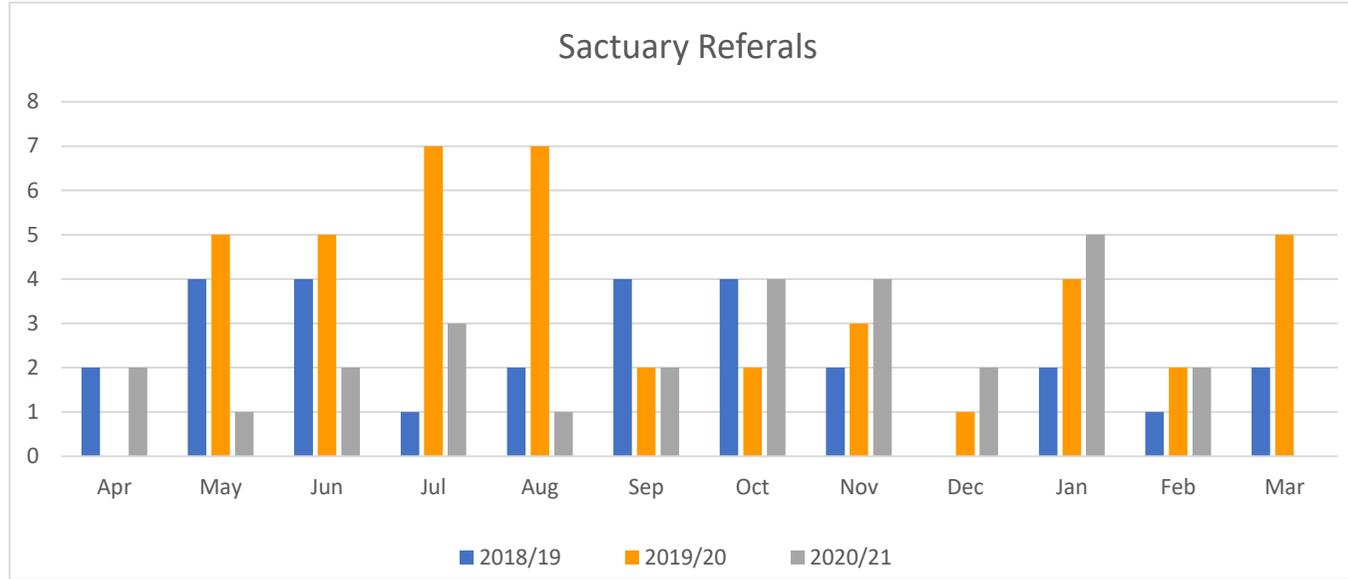
Sanctuary assessments are undertaken by the Community Protection team, usually on referral from MARAC or the IDVA service, where a victim of domestic abuse expresses a desire to stay in their family home, but requires assistance to do so. Where it is deemed proportionate to do so, officers attend the victim's property and undertake an assessment. The assessment determines what works need to be undertaken in order to safeguard the victim against their abuser. This can include a variety of property alterations, including changing locks and installing PIR lights, which are undertaken by the handy man service provided in partnership with Involve Kent.

Sanctuary referrals were of a similar number to the previous period, 33 and 32 respectively, although, as shown in the graph below, the 2020/21 referrals were reduced over the first lockdown, but increased after.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARACs)

MARACs are meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, a risk-focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn together to support the victim. MARACs now cover all victims aged 16 years and over.

Maidstone has had 266 MARAC cases in the period Dec 2019 - Nov 2020. This compares to 194 cases the previous 12 months, an increase of 74 cases. Of the 266, 85 were repeat cases, this equates to 32% of all cases. There were 294 children living in these households. Under the new DA Bill, outlined below, all children in these circumstances are to be



considered victims. The voice of the child is considered in all MARAC cases.

The reason for the increase in cases coming to MARAC in 2020/21 is not yet clear. Intensified Domestic Abuse in households forced into lock down as a direct result of the pandemic is likely to have contributed. In addition, it is felt that an increased awareness of coercion and control, particularly within the police following a training input, may also be a contributory factor. The police are also currently piloting a new assessment tool as an alternative to the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour-based violence risk identification, assessment and management model (DASH). The trial of the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) is currently subject to a review as to whether it will be adopted formally.

Domestic Abuse is everybody's business

The Domestic Abuse Bill seeks to encourage good practice in preventing domestic abuse, identifying victims, survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse, as well as children affected by domestic abuse and improving the protection and provision of support to people affected by domestic abuse. New legislation will drive changes that will:

- promote awareness
- protect and support victims
- transform the justice response
- improve performance of Domestic Abuse Services

Domestic Abuse remains a national priority, requiring everyone to play their role in breaking the silence of abuse. The SMP, through the Domestic Abuse Forum, should remain focused on supporting victims, challenging perpetrators, creating survivors and raising awareness. The Domestic Abuse Bill introduces statutory obligations for the Kent and Medway domestic abuse and sexual violence executive (KMDASVG) and introduces the role of Domestic Abuse Commissioner, focused on quality of service and consistency over Kent and Medway. The DA Forum's members will need to work together to respond to the legal changes around housing and refuge and additional support provided to victims. We will also need to work with the county council when they undertake annual needs assessments.



Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community- delivered through Community Protection Team and Licensing

Substance abuse or misuse is formally defined as the continued misuse of any mind-altering substance that severely affects person's physical and mental health, social situation and responsibilities.

Actions	Status	Update
Develop a bottle watch programme that is deliverable where alcohol is sold or consumed by people at risk, such as vulnerable or young people	On hold	On hold due to the pandemic.
Investigate the use of powers against illegal sales of tobacco/alcohol to support Trading Standards	Ongoing	Discussions were held with KCC Trading Standards. KCC opted to use their own powers to pursue businesses, but the use of the ASB closure powers has not been ruled out and will be considered when appropriate.
Engage in pilot of a 'Co-occurring Conditions' Multi-Disciplinary Team for people who have Mental Health and Substance Misuse Issues from January 2021	Ongoing	MBC CPT and Housing staff are engaging in a pilot led by KCC and the NHS to look at an alternative approach to supporting people with complex needs due to co-occurring conditions, such as substance misuse and mental health concerns. The objective is to create a skilled multi-disciplinary team (MDT) who will work holistically on complex cases to improve outcomes for the individuals in need. The creation of the MDT is being developed by the CCG and we are awaiting details of the proposed roll out.
Deliver a drugs and substance misuse day of action with the Maidstone Task Force	Delivered	A week-long targeted social media campaign supported by Crime Stoppers was delivered in the Shepway area, alongside a day of partnership action in the area. An Ad van and leaflet drops to shops and youth hubs raised awareness in the community. Increased police activity led to 2 arrests for drug related offences, 1 summons for possession of drugs. 17 stop searches were undertaken, and 16 intelligence reports were submitted. Significant seizures were also undertaken, as well

		as support visits to a known user and a recent victim of drugs related crime in the area. Data sourced from Maidstone A&E also identified that alcohol related admissions are particularly high from the Shepway Wards. Discussions are ongoing with KCC Public Health with a view to delivering a partnership initiative in the Shepway Wards in the next 6-9 months.
Renewal of the Maidstone town centre PSPO and agreement with One Maidstone for delivery	Delivered	Following a review, the PSPO was successfully renewed in October 2020 and will remain in place for the town centre for 3 years.

Substance misuse relates to the use of drugs, alcohol and includes New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) previously known as 'legal highs'.

33

Kent police recorded drug offences include both offences of drug supply and possession. Under this category of crime Maidstone has seen a **21%** increase in drug offences in 2020 compared to 2019. This is an increase from **415** offences to **502** offences (**87** more crimes this year). Overall, Kent saw an increase in drug offences of **28% (+994) from 3,552 to 4,546**. Drug offences are primarily identified and detected through proactive policing. The increase in recorded offences has been attributed to Maidstone Police's successful use of stop search powers and the use of intelligence reports to build successful warrant packages that have enabled warrants to be obtained, resulting in more than £100,000 of money and illegal substances being seized. Substance Misuse is also a consideration at the weekly partnership meeting known as the Community Safety Vulnerability Group (CSVG). In this meeting, which looks at the most vulnerable people in the borough with their needs are impacting more than one agency, 37% of the cases closed had either a diagnosed or undiagnosed substance misuse concern.



21%

Increase in Drug offences

Needle Finds

The following table shows the official annual figures for needle finds in the borough removed by the council's waste management service for the period December 2017 to November 2020. These figures include the contents of external needle bins that are strategically placed in the town to try to reduce discarded needles. 2,511 needles were found/retrieved in the current period, which is a 55% increase from 1,621. However, 1500 of these needles refer to two incidents where unused needles were found, bagged and sealed and tucked behind a parked vehicle wheel. There was no evidence as to who had placed them there or for what purpose. With this outlier removed from the data, the needle finds show a decrease of 37% which is more reflective of what was collected in other months.

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
2017/2018	283	126	218	106	155	69	189	113	9	468	283	381	2,400
2018/2019	196	143	164	84	205	87	85	85	203	120	136	113	1,621
2019/2020	97	59	54	138	1,542	117	27	104	128	107	121	17	2,511

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Within the borough the top five locations for needle finds are as follows:

<i>Dec-18 to Nov-19</i>		<i>Dec-19 to Nov-20</i>	
Location	Count	Location	Count
River steps	344	Alexander Street	1500
Needle bins	175	River Steps	231
Viaduct	162	Amphitheatre	222
Amphitheatre	114	Rose Garden	110
Whatman Park	90	Wallis Avenue	52

This information is fed into local policing teams and partners so that plans can be built around supporting those likely to be responsible for the needles.

Tackling supply and demand

The recorded increase in drug offences is in part due to proactive stance taken in Maidstone in undertaking stop searches in the district. It was reported via a Kent VRU monthly tactical report, by a known user and suspected supplier, that during 2020 Maidstone had become “too difficult” to establish strong drug supplies. This was attributed to the proactive work of policing teams, such as RAPTOR, who disrupt County Line activity. As detailed in the section below, substance misuse is a priority area of concern in the Shepway Wards.

Extensive work has been undertaken in relation to the supply of illegal substances, but with Shepway South recording the highest number of alcohol related hospital admissions, the task force is now looking to engage with the local health provisions and support charities to develop a better understanding of the problem. Links to financial worries are being addressed in partnership with officers from the Department of Works and Pensions who have become active members of the task force. The creation of multi-agency teams to look at co-occurring conditions (typically mental health and substance misuse) it is hoped will provide a more joined up approach to supporting our most vulnerable, substance dependent, people.



Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

Mental health refers to our cognitive, behavioural, and emotional wellbeing - it is all about how we think, feel, and behave. The term 'mental health' is sometimes used to mean an absence of a mental disorder.

Actions	Status	Measure
Developing a leaflet to raise awareness of vulnerable people who self-neglect and how to refer them for support	Delivered	Information/signposting leaflets have been disseminated to vulnerable individuals/families/carers during specialist PCSO home visits.
Arrange a self-neglect summit for 2020/21 that brings together different agencies and experts to raise awareness of self-neglect and hoarding	On hold	Postponed to 2021/22 due to pandemic
Identify funding opportunities to run a hoarding and self-neglect project	On hold	Due to COVID-19 restrictions this has been postponed.
Engage in pilot of a 'Co-occurring Conditions' Multi-Disciplinary Team for people who have Mental Health and Substance Misuse Issues from January 2021	Ongoing	As detailed under Substance Misuse. In addition, work is being undertaken to work closely with specialist mental health nurse commissioned by the Homeless Outreach Team

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Under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act the police have the power to remove a person from a public place, when they appear to be suffering from a mental disorder, to a place of safety. It cannot be used to remove people from their own home, or someone else's home.



20%

Decrease in the use of Section 136

Figures for Section 136 use in the borough (where an individual is sectioned for their own or others safety) have decreased, in 2020 it was used **115** times, as opposed to **143** in 2019 a **20% (-28)** decrease.

Last year in Maidstone, mental health referrals into younger adult (18-64) services (including acute/community recovery services) saw a decrease of **2.5%** to **1307** cases compared to **1341** the previous year. In older adults (65+) there was an increase of **5%** to **893** cases compared to **851** the previous year.

Mental Health still matters

In 2020 approximately 71% of the cases at the weekly partnership meeting, the CSVG, related to people who had either a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health concern.

One of the largest concerns associated with the pandemic has been the impact of Mental Health. The Public Health England report, Covid-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing surveillance report, as updated in February 2021*, identified that mental health has been impacted by the national lockdowns. Anxiety, depression, loneliness and poor life satisfaction were notably significantly higher, in relation to the 1st lockdown. A survey undertaken by MBC in 2020, in relation to the first pandemic lockdown, showed that 52% of the 1245 respondents' felt they had experienced at least a fairly negative impact on their mental health as a result of the pandemic. The ongoing nature of the pandemic means that the full extent of the mental health impact has not yet been assessed. It is also too early to determine whether suicide has increased as a result of the pandemic. As indicated by the CSVG figures, Mental Health remains a factor in most cases brought to the CSVG. It has also been a factor in complex ASB cases. In one case, the mental health of both a mother and her young son reached crisis point with their behaviour, often as a result of interacting with each other, spilt out into the local community. A history of domestic abuse, a brain injury and addiction all contributed to the mother making some poor decisions and did not allow her to control her son's behaviour. His behaviour led to criminal investigations and his mother's behaviour put her home at risk due to a court injunction. Intensive support work put around the family as a whole saw positive reductions in the ASB and whilst this case is very much a work in progress, the impact on the community reduced significantly and the son is engaging positively with his school and support services.

MBC's Outreach Service, which was formed to deal with rough sleepers in the borough, provide intensive support to many people with complex needs. Some clients also require support to address co-occurring conditions including mental health and substance misuse. In October 2020, the team, in partnership with four other Local Authorities and the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust welcomed the introduction of 3 mental health professionals who work across the 4 areas. Since their introduction in Maidstone they have engaged with 19 individuals, with 7 of them now on psychiatrist plans. This represents a significantly joined up approach to a shared problem. This was funded through a successful bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government initiated by MBC; however funding is time limited and discussions are now in progress with the CCG with the aim of putting this essential service on a sustainable footing.

Mental Health remains a priority theme that is intrinsically linked to the other 4 priority areas. Whether it is the control and coercion used by a domestic abuse perpetrator or adverse childhood experiences stunting development in our young people, mental health remains at the heart of the SMP's work.

* [COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report)

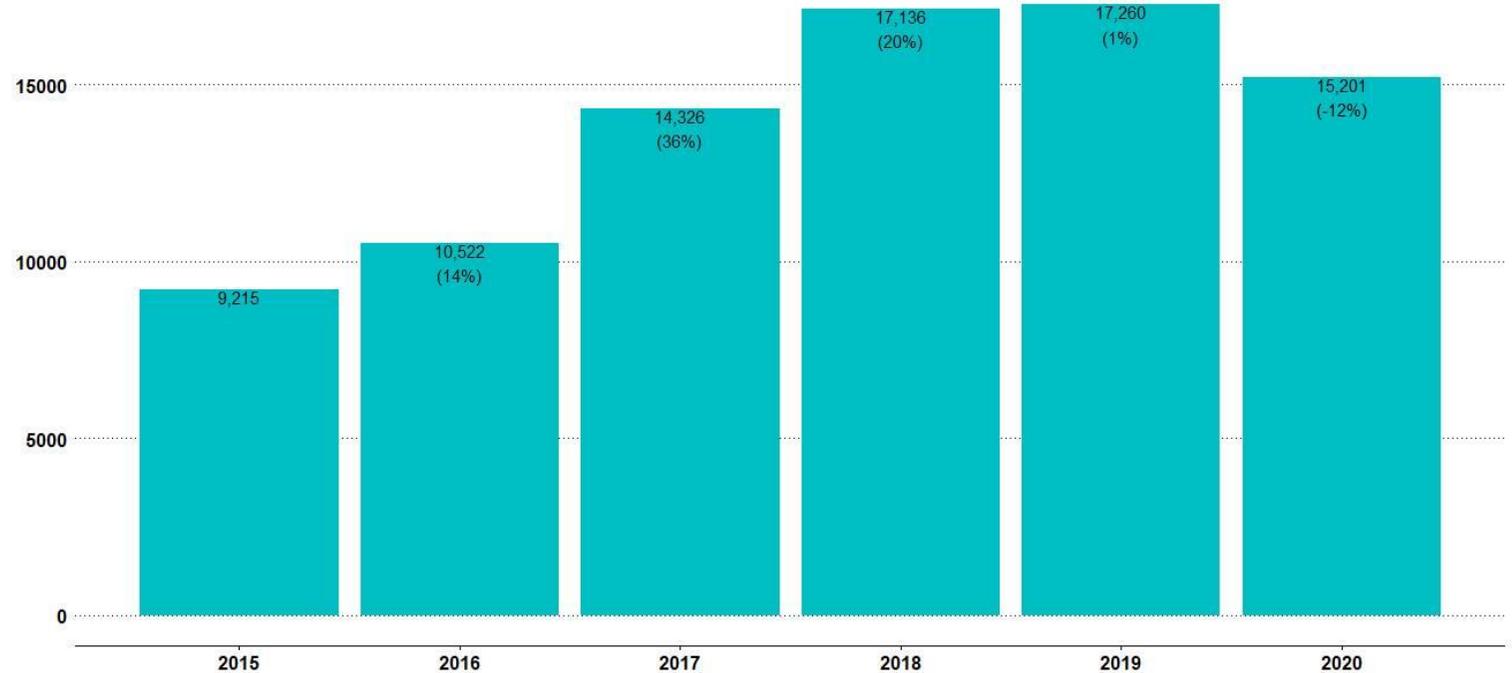
Other Police Data

Police Crime Data

Overall reported crimes in Maidstone borough dropped by **12%** in 2020 compared with 2019, from a total of **17,260** crimes to **15,201** crimes. The graph here shows how crimes in the Borough have changed over the last six years.

The decrease in the number of crimes in 2020 is in line with the overall Kent percentage change which has dropped by **10%**, which is believed to be as a direct result of lockdown restrictions, which shut down night time economies , restricted movement without reasonable excuse and saw more people spending time at home.

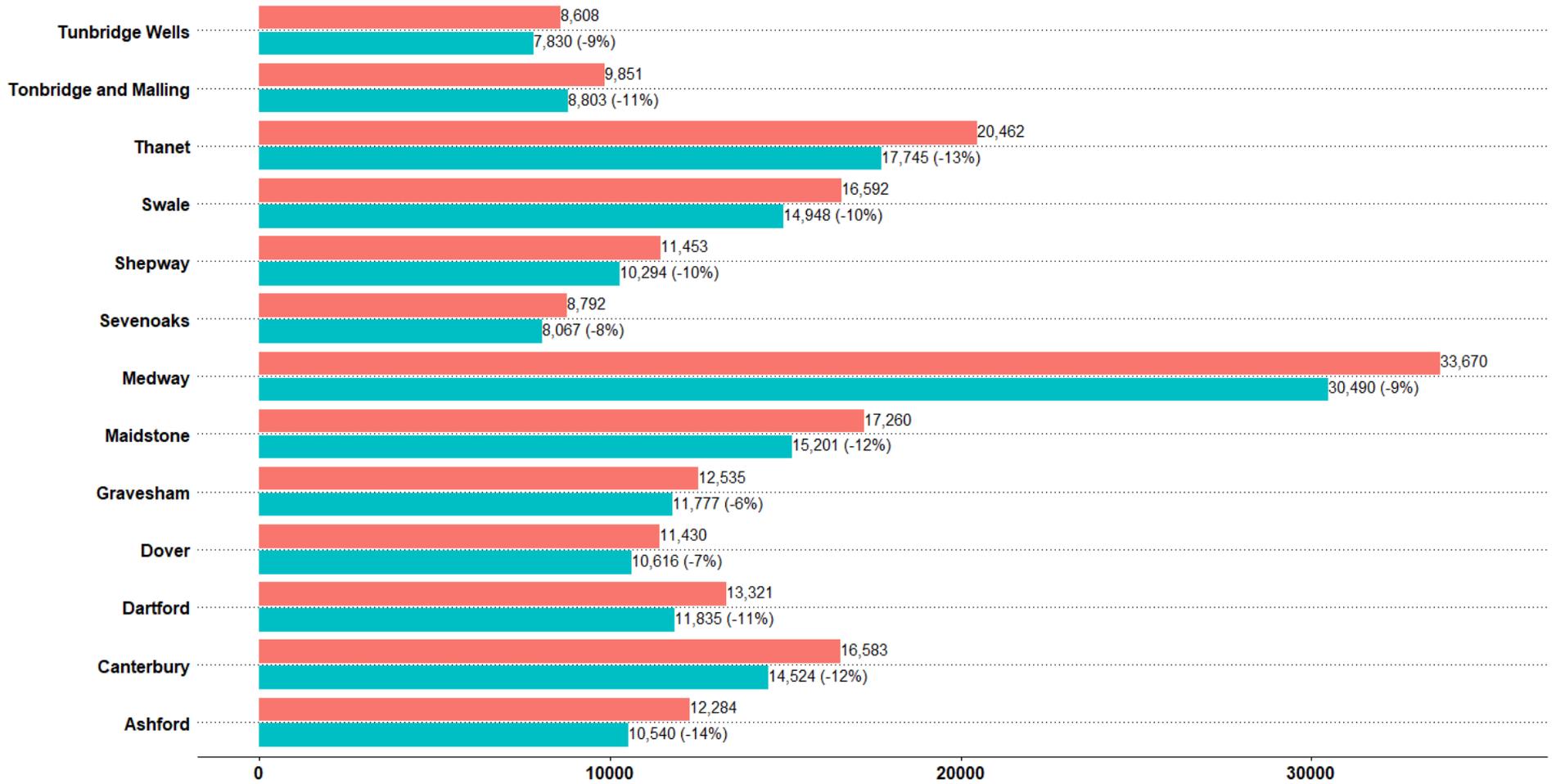
Number of Crimes in Maidstone over time
(Percentage Change From Last Year)



The graph below shows how the Borough compares to other Kent districts.

Change In Number Of Crimes by District

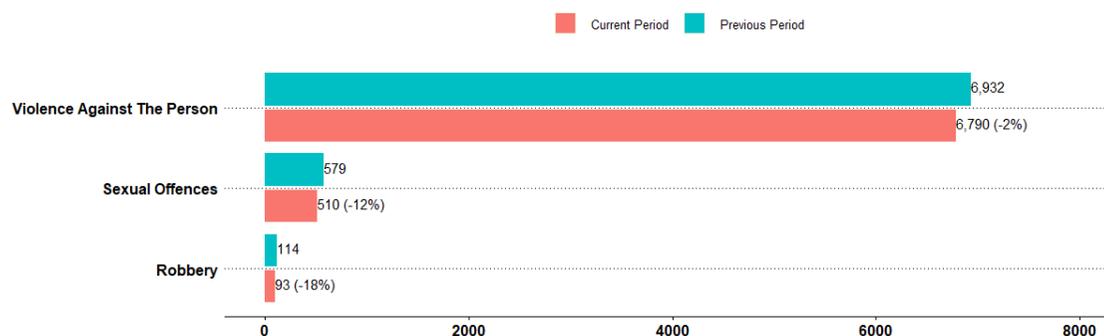
Jan 19 to Dec 19 Jan 20 to Dec 20



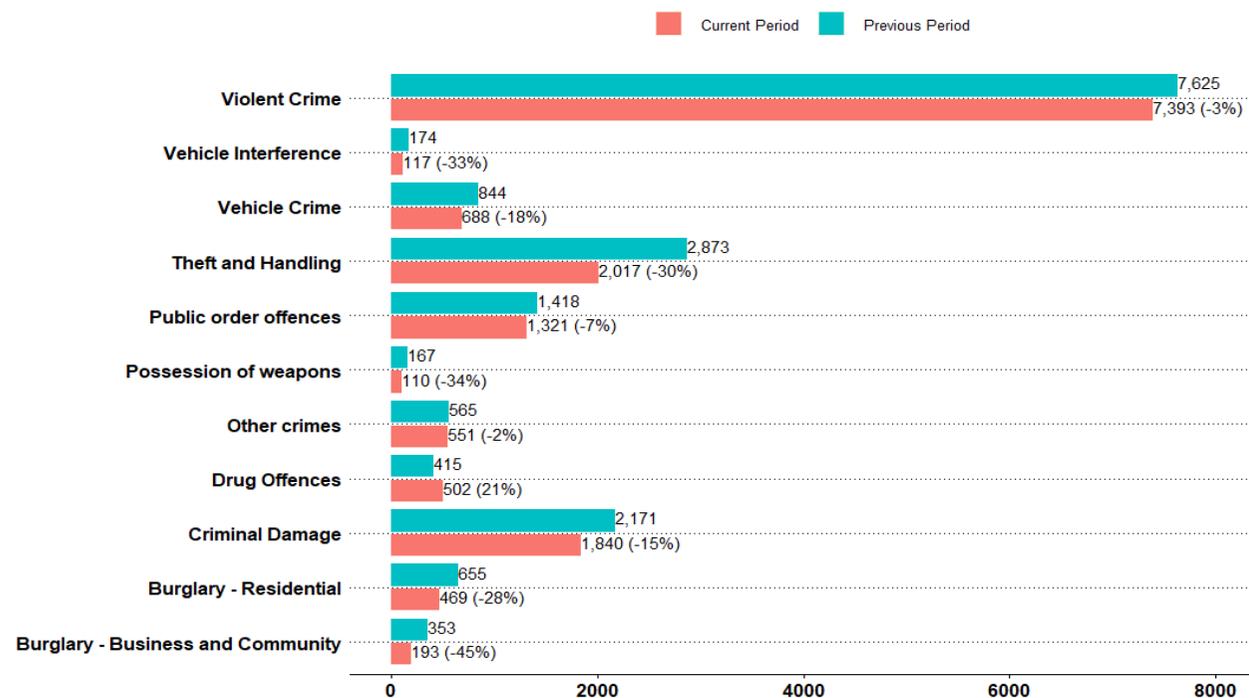
39

Violent crime in this chart is made up of different crime types of a violent nature. The chart shows how Maidstone's violent crime has changed in 2020 compared to 2019. We have seen an overall **3%** decrease in violent crimes which is mainly driven by 'Violence against the person' as it accounts for 92% of the overall violent crimes. However, there is a significant drop of **12%** and **18%** in sexual offences and robbery respectively compared to the previous period.

Change In Violent Crimes



Change In The Number Of Crimes by Crime



The chart on the left shows how different crime types have changed in 2020 (current period) compared with 2019 (previous period). Burglaries in businesses and the community (non-residential) have seen the biggest percentage drop of 45%, although numbers were already relatively low.

Whilst we have seen a decrease year-on-year in all of the crime categories listed here, drug offences have significantly increased by 21%. This is believed to be as a result of Maidstone Police undertaking more stop searches.

Regulatory response to the pandemic

During the pandemic, alongside the reactive response from services, SMP partners have also actively participated in implementing the many new laws introduced by emergency legislation. MBC's Environmental Health team were empowered to ensure businesses introduced measures to protect customers including enforced closures. The police were given a number of powers to ensure social distancing legislation was adhered to, adopting their '4E' approach of engaging, explaining and encouraging the public to keep to the rules before enforcing as necessary.

As with any regulatory activity, prevention is always prioritised against enforcement. In the build up to the reopening of non-essential shops and services on 15th June 2020, a multi-agency working group, consisting of representatives from MBC, KCC, Kent Police and One Maidstone, worked together to create a "High Footfall Plan". Restrictions around the number of people allowed into stores safely and the likely intensified demand created a significant risk to users of the town and the surrounding transport infrastructure. The plan put in place measures to address anticipated risks due to high footfall. These measures included introducing new road traffic restrictions, new barriers and other traffic calming measures at key access points in order to protect people queuing from large delivery vehicles. Further measures included swim lanes, one-way systems, and marshals to reduce pedestrian congestion at key pinch points and busy stores. The work of the working group was underpinned by a very successful joint media strategy to ensure the public and businesses were fully aware of the restrictions within the town, the need to social distance, the potential for long queues at peak times; extensive information was provided on how to comply with regulations and where to get advice. Regular dialogue with the Chair of the Kent Association of Local Councils enabled feedback about any concerns in parished areas of the borough; advice and support was provided through MBC with respect to Covid-secure management of parks, open spaces and public toilets when needed.

Between April 2020 and December 2020, the Environmental Health Service received 351 service requests, including reports via police intel, relating to alleged Covid 19 breaches and requests for advice. Over 700 inspections have been undertaken by a special Covid 19 response team, made up of officers from across the Local Authority, who visited premises across the district to check for compliance. The visits identified generally minor contraventions, typically poor signage in premises or staff not wearing face coverings. Signs were provided to premises by MBC to assist them, which greatly improved compliance. The wearing of face coverings is a personal responsibility which can only be enforced by the police. The relevant intelligence was provided to them for follow up as required. 86 reports required follow up visits for further advice and possible enforcement through Environmental Health officers.

In response to guidance published by the Home Office, Kent Police have also engaged in enforcement of the pandemic. During 2020 the role advocated by the home office was for the police to take a supportive and advisory role. More recently the police have looked to use their powers more readily to challenge those knowingly breaching the legislation. Since December 2020 115 FPNS have been issued in Maidstone and three £10k fines have been issued for serious offences.

The Maidstone Task force



In September 2020 the Maidstone Task Force was launched. Following an uplift in staffing for Kent Police, the decision was taken to utilise resources to provide the framework for an exciting new multi-agency task force for Maidstone. As one of the largest districts in Kent, it was recognised that some areas in Maidstone have disproportionate levels of crime, social/economic deprivation and health inequality. The Task Force's objective is to seek to redress these imbalances, to work with those communities to provide resilience and long-term/permanent improvements.

The taskforce built on the existing strengths of the Safer Maidstone Partnership and a multi-agency team has now been established to provide enhanced joined up solutions to complex multi factorial problems.

Albeit there have been challenges as a result of the pandemic, the implementation phase of the project saw the creation of a new collaborative workspace within Maidstone House. The space, which without social distancing restrictions will house up to 25 people from across the partnership, will form a Community Safety collaboration hub for both the task force focus and the borough as a whole.

The first focus area selected for the task force was the combined wards of Shepway South and Shepway North. Analysis of the available crime data revealed high levels of ASB, particularly around the shops and in housing blocks, and Domestic Abuse in both Wards. Analysis of the health data revealed that residents in the wards:

- had a lower life expectancy and fewer healthy years lived than the national average and other parts of the borough (Male and Female)
- were more likely to die prematurely (Coronary Heart Disease, Cardiovascular disease, Cancer)
- experienced higher rates of mental illness
- represented greater proportion of residents claiming benefits than the national average
- had the highest A&E attendance and admission rates for the borough



Delivery in the focus areas is centred around “Building Community Engagement and Cohesion”. Using a problem-solving model, known as OSARA, the task force is taking a partnership approach to challenging some of the social norms that are particular to the wards. Tackling ASB in partnership with Golding Homes, who have provided a dedicated officer into the task force, has already seen some improvements in the area according to residents.

TASK FORCE IN ACTION

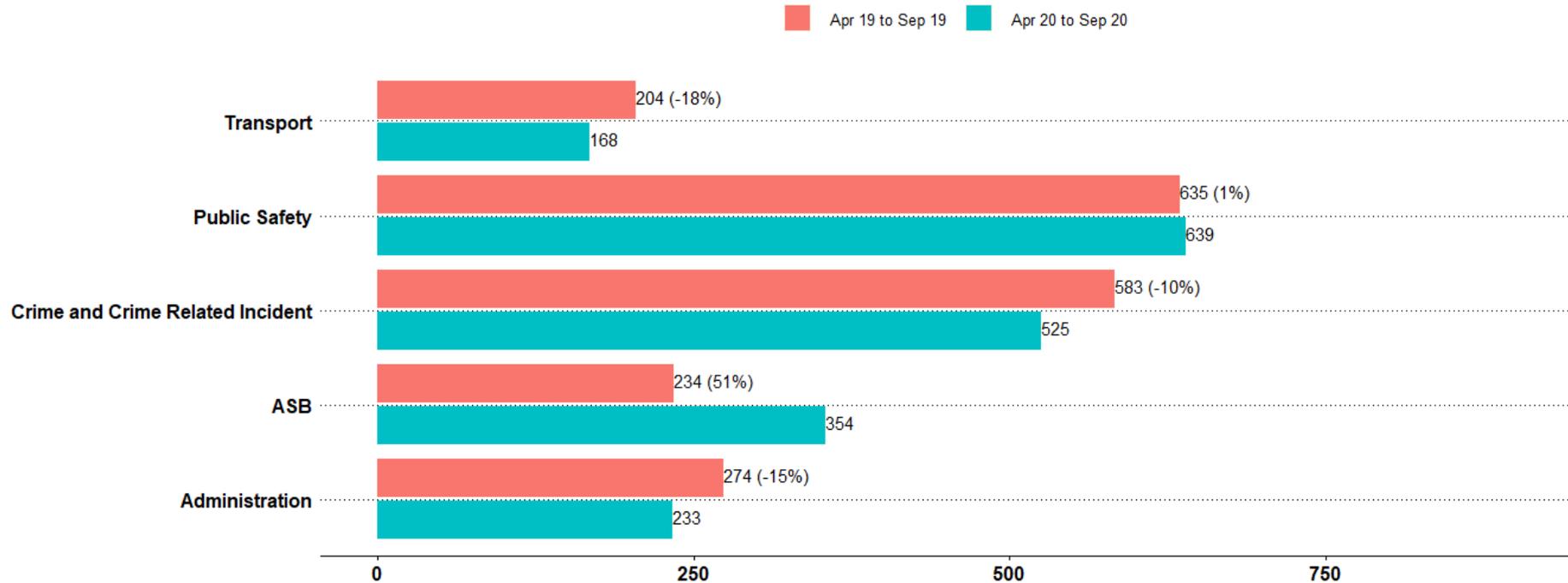
Enforcement (December 2020 to February 21):

- 32 Arrests for drug, weapon, and domestic abuse offences
- 60 Stop searches
- 95 intel reports submitted to the Central Intelligence Unit.
- £22,000 cash seized (£17k and £5k)
- Arrest for offensive weapon and recalled to prison in partnership with the Probation Service.
- Double arrest for possession with intent to supply Class A drugs
- Formal warnings and behaviour plans developed for the top 11 offenders impacting on the focus area.

Engagement (since September 2020)

- Shepway Community Survey launched
- Community Hub to be created in the shopping parade.
- Days of action delivered for:
 - Knife crime
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Waste Crime
 - Substance Misuse
 - Exploitation
- Shop keeper’s alliance created.
- Links with community assets), including the church and youth centre.
- Employability initiative being developed with DWP and the Youth Hub (KCC Early Help)
- Loan sharking awareness initiative planned.

Change In The Number Of Calls by Type (Shepway)



44

Given that the Task Force was introduced in September 2020, during a pandemic, it is still too soon to identify the impact the service has had. Work will continue to deliver a public health approach to the area and comparative data sets will be drawn when it is appropriate to do so.

Community Protection Team Activity

Description	2019	2020	Comments
All Anti-social behaviour complaints	217	440	Significant increases were reported in ASB especially throughout the summer lockdown. Concerns in relation to young people gathering and neighbour tensions driven by the lockdown are believed to have contributed to this significant increase.
All noise nuisances including amplified music and barking	569	693	As with ASB complaints, the increase in people working from home, particularly in the initial lockdown saw significant increases in service requests in April, May and June. In May the noise from one construction site, who were undertaking necessary piling works, generated more than 20 complaints, which was more than any other noise type for that month.
Other Nuisance (Odour, dust etc.)	208	349	The impact of the pandemic saw an increase in nuisance complaints, particularly between neighbours. We saw a 250% increase in bonfire smoke complaints between April and June. It is felt that a combination of lots of people undertaking gardening whilst on lockdown, restricted access to recycling centres and fear around Covid-19 being linked to respiratory issues all led to an increase in reporting. Most reports related to one off incidents.
Dangerous and Nuisance dogs (Not strays)	57	47	No significant change.
Dog Fouling	12	30	The increase may be associated to more people walking locally during lockdown leading to more reports. No area was identified, and most incidents appeared to be isolated.
Straying and lost dogs' enquiries	411	261	Although there is a reduction in the number of strays it is unclear if the pandemic specifically influenced the number of reports. It may be that more dogs were being walked on leads as part of permitted exercise and therefore less likely to be left in gardens or running off lead in public areas. New Public Space Protection Orders were introduced in relation to dog control in September 2020.
Street trading enquiries/complaints	11	9	No significant change.

Enforcement Action

The Community Protection Notice remains one of the most effective tools in the Community Safety tool kit. Introduced by the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the Community Protection Notices (CPNs) allow authorised officers to require those who are behaving in an antisocial way or are allowing that behaviour to occur to take action to prevent its recurrence. It is a legislative requirement to issue a written warning prior to issuing a CPN, which are still proving to be the most effective aspect of this power as compliance with warnings is relatively high.

Breakdown of Community Protection Warnings Issued

Reason	2019	2020
ASB	13	29
Nuisance/Dangerous Dog (Inc. Barking)	5	8
Noise (Inc. with ASB)	4	18
Nuisance	1	14
Planning related issues	0	3
Unauthorised Encampments	5	2
Total	28	74

Breakdown of Community Protection Notices Issued

Reason	2019	2020
ASB	1	20
Nuisance/Dangerous Dog (Inc. Barking)	0	0
Noise (Inc. with ASB)	1	2
Nuisance	0	8
Planning related issues	0	3
Unauthorised Encampments	1	1
Total	6	34

In February 2020, having secured funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner, the CPT hosted a training event entitled "Tackling ASB and problem solving in Partnership". The training, delivered by a leading consultant in the field, allowed partners to explore the use of the powers together and develop new problem-solving models to tackle shared issues. For colleagues, such as planners, the power provides a mechanism to tackle behaviour whilst following planning process. But it was our police colleagues who embraced, leading to 38% of CPWs being issued in partnership with Kent Police officers. This was as a direct result of the training which provided Kent Police Officers with an insight into the usefulness of these powers. Officers were encouraged to consider their use to tackle low level ASB and to tackle traditional crime in a new way, when appropriate.

Where CPWs did not lead to a change in behaviour notices were issued. And, as a result of subsequent breaches, Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to 15 offenders.

Unauthorised Encampments

In 2019 the CPT introduced the use of ASB powers to challenge the behaviour of those individuals or groups who created unauthorised encampments in the borough. This led to a significant reduction in the impact the encampments were having on our communities. In 2020 this trend continued with all, but one encampment removed within hours of first engagement by the team.

Year	No. Encampments	No. Locations	Avg. Time in Situ	Total Days of disruption	No. of
2018	10	6	3.7	37	
2019	7	5	1	11	
2020	6	5	10.5	67	

As a result of the pandemic, additional safeguarding was introduced around encampments. As a result, the processes available to Local Authorities to move them on were limited. Unless encampments were impacting unreasonably on the surrounding community, they could stay, to stop the possible spread of the virus. One of the encampments was in situ for 62 days. They were situated on a business park which was largely closed and could stay in situ as there were no complaints of ASB or nuisance. All other encampments demonstrated behaviour or alleged criminality that meant that they were not afforded the same tolerance.

Community Trigger

The 'Community Trigger' gives victims of persistent anti-social behaviour the ability to demand a formal case review where the locally defined threshold is met, in order to determine whether there is further action that can be taken. In 2020, one community trigger was instigated. This is related to a neighbour issue where the Police had issued a formal warning. The issue was ongoing, and the Community Trigger was activated.

A review was undertaken with the Police and it was felt that more action could be taken by the police. An enforcement notice was issued on the offending party and additional support was provided by a PCSO to help support all parties.

Other Relevant Data

Hate Crime Data

0.8%

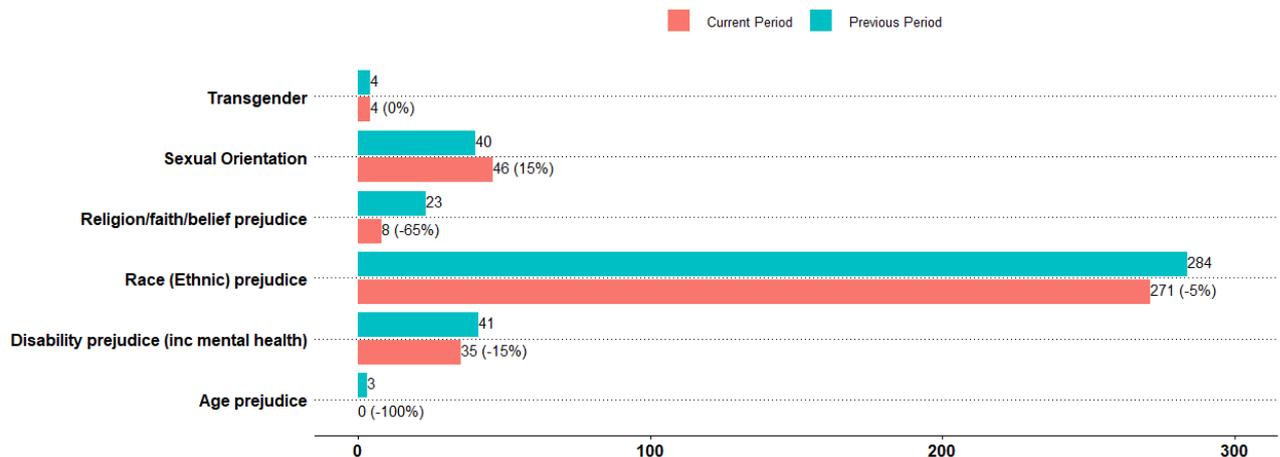
*Decrease in
Hate Crimes*



The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

Over the last reporting period (Dec 19 to Nov 20) there have been **380** reported hate crimes this is compared to **383** the previous year a decrease of 3 cases. Race prejudice accounts for **74%** of all hate crimes, followed by Sexual Orientation hate related crimes which accounts for 13% of all hate crimes. In addition, there were no reported crimes relating to gender and age prejudice this year. The table below shows a breakdown of the hate crimes.

Change In The Number Of Hate Crimes



Within the police Community Safety Unit (CSU) a specialist role of Community Liaison Officer works with victims of hate crime and liaises directly with community groups to address any community fears.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Data

The IOM process is a multi-agency approach to manage individuals, both young and adult, who are at risk of causing the most harm to their communities. The emphasis has moved away from solely Serious and Acquisitive Crime (SAC) to a more Threat, Risk and Harm approach which includes not only SAC, but Domestic Abuse (DA), Serious Violence, Gang activity, Organised Crime Groups (OCG), Troubled Families, Terrorism, Trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The IOM Cohort is currently at **243**, this is **0.8%** increase (+2) compared to the same time last year. West Division represents **35.8%** of the cohort followed by East Division (**34.6%**) and North (**29.6%**). Around 70 of the Kent Cohort are in the Maidstone area, but this is fluid in line with the outcomes in court case and prison releases.

Update from Maidstone Mediation

Maidstone Mediation is in its 32nd year of delivering a free mediation service to the residents of Maidstone. In 2020 they received over 70 referrals; 40 of those were for conflicts between neighbours, issues ranging from noise nuisance to fireworks and several disputes over ownerships of pets. In normal circumstances mediation sessions are face to face however for the most of 2020 Maidstone Mediation used WhatsApp, facetime and MS Teams for the mediation process and talking to their clients. Mediation is voluntary whereby all parties involved in the conflict want the situation to change for the better. Of the 40 neighbourhood referrals, 10 resulted in a virtual face to face mediation with agreements reached, 15 referrals resulted a shuttle mediation process or the mediators worked with just one party. 15 referrals did not go ahead due to various reasons including preferring to wait until face to face meeting can be facilitated, one or other party withdrawing or deciding to follow the legal route through court. Those that did engage said that they were glad that they had taken part, that their situation was better and that there was greater understanding by all parties. Their own community was a better more peaceful place to live.

A further 29 referrals were for family and parent to teenager mediation. The majority of the family referrals were about child access and maintenance payments. It was evident when speaking to the parties that these issues had arisen or been made worse because of the lockdown restrictions. Child access had been made more difficult because of restrictions and payments of maintenance were late because of loss of jobs, furlough, and the distance to travel to physically hand the payments over. It can be said there were instances when the restrictions were also an excuse to not pay. Some parents have really struggled to communicate to their ex-partner and mediation has made a huge difference to their wellbeing and finding a good, fair resolution for everyone.

There was also increase in adult referrals, 11, for the anger management course, these were facilitated via zoom etc. the course material was sent out to the client ahead of the course starting. The clients told us of feelings of frustration, anxiety, worry, feelings of being 'caged in' had manifested into feelings of anger. The anger was then taken out on family members and partners. All of those that engaged in the full course, 9, said that it was the best thing that they had done and it had made a big difference to how they felt about themselves and their circumstances.

To date the types of referral received are around the same issues, ASB and noise from neighbours because people have been in their homes more often, family conflict because families have been together in confined spaces for long periods of time, mental health has suffered because of the latter and because of financial worries, clients have expressed feelings of being sad because they have not seen their family, especially their children. Maidstone Mediation expect the referrals to continue and probably increase as lockdown restrictions end, as some adults and young people will continue to suffer and struggle in their relationships and with their neighbours as a direct consequence of the Pandemic.

Key Conclusions and Recommended Changes to the Community Safety Partnership Plan

Despite the challenges of an unprecedented year, the SMP continues to develop new levels of synergy across the partnership. The strength of the partnership is no better demonstrated than by the agile way the partnership evolved in order to comply with the requirements of the national lockdowns with minimal impact on service delivery. The global pandemic has had a significant impact on how front-line services have operated and how people have behaved. The combined impact of reduced contact with the public, significant limitations on travel and social contact, and closure and strict restrictions in public spaces and recreational spaces, is that almost all services have seen unprecedented shifts in demand. As a result, some of the data for the last year is highly irregular. Observations and analysis have considered the context of the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on 'normal' day-to-day life.

Rather than focus on Covid-19 as a single specific priority or risk to community safety, the impact of the pandemic on each of the priority will be considered as the live action plans for each priority theme evolve.

As a result of the conclusions outlined below the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan will also be refreshed to identify the key themes to be reflected in the action plans.

Protecting our communities against serious, violent and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)

The Serious and Organised Crime Panel (SOCP), who deliver the action plan for this area have worked to disrupt and close an active OCG in the area. However, a new OCG has recently been identified and mapped, relating to drugs/money laundering linked to sites in and around the town centre and plans will be built around disrupting their activity. In the last 12 months the pandemic had a significant impact on the night-time economy (NTE). As we work to deliver the government's recovery "road-map" it will be important that the SMP works to support the reopening of the NTE. The pandemic has also highlighted another form of organised crime in relation to the supply of dogs. Changes in people's lifestyles as a result of the pandemic have seen significant increases in demand for puppies in particular. Unlicensed breeders and puppy farms are actively exploiting this demand and a partnership approach is needed to disrupt the illegal activity and to ensure animal welfare standards are met.

Action Plan priorities for 2021/22 include:

- Support the reopening of the NTE as lockdown restrictions are lifted.
- Work to disrupt a new OCG relating to drugs/money laundering with links in and around the town centre.
- Work with partners to identify and disrupt illegal puppy farms and unlicensed breeders.

Keeping children and young people safe

Reported issues around increased risk-taking behaviour and young people gathering remain a concern for the coming months. The return of support services and outreach will only be strengthened by the return of natural diversions. The partnership will continue to support/assess those individuals and locations identified as either at risk or as a focal point respectively. The Youth Safety Survey will provide information, from a young person's perspective, that will help agencies understand the fears and challenges that young people face. This will also link into providing more support for parents. Using new initiatives such as Caring Dads and the Barnardo's Dice programmes which are being championed by KCC Early Help and Youth Services respectively, the partnership will look to provide parents with the skills needed to support young people in modern times. With restrictions lifting on people's movements, the "My Place" initiative will also be revisited to support young people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) moving to Maidstone.

Increased use of OSARA across the partnership will provide more opportunities to consider not just those at risk of offending, but will look to provide more guardianship over specific locations and design out concerns, particularly in those areas, such as Brenchley Gardens, with a protracted history ASB and youth related issues. The addition of new safeguarding police officers into the RAPTOR team and School's policing team will increase not only the resource but the opportunity to engage early with families in need of support.

Action Plan priorities for 2021/22 include:

- Introduce the new "My Place" initiative, supporting young people whose families are placed in Maidstone as a result of violent or gang related concerns which had been delayed by the pandemic
- Use the results of the Voice of Young Maidstone survey to guide the professionals and parents in the borough in protecting young people
- Implement new initiatives to support parents, including Caring Dads and DICE training

Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)

The full extent of the impact of the pandemic on the levels of domestic abuse is, as yet, unknown but it is feared that this under reported crime has increased significantly in the last year. Increased financial pressures, uncertainty and fear are all factors that will inevitably lead to increases in both physical abuse and controlling and coercive behaviour. The partnership will also pay particular attention to the upcoming European Football Championship which will likely be a catalyst for more abuse over the summer.

The Domestic Abuse Forum will continue to look for opportunities to build on the government's agenda to ensure that domestic abuse is made everyone's business by supporting the introduction of measures in the Domestic Abuse Act. The Domestic Abuse Champions initiative will see domestic abuse forums, from across Kent, come together to create an army of volunteers who are able to recognise and signpost victims into support services. Awareness events for professionals in education and care will be revisited alongside initiatives that ask men to challenge abuse when they see it.

Action Plan priorities for 2021/22 include:

- Support the roll out of Domestic Abuse Champions across Maidstone and Kent in partnership with Kent Independent Domestic Abuse Services
- Deliver more awareness raising events, such a Cradle to Grave, that target nurseries, schools and professionals who will be less aware of the impact of Domestic Abuse and availability of support

Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community

As outlined in the report the need to continue to disrupt supply and demand of illegal drugs remains an area that the SMP will continue to treat as a priority. The increase in identification of drug offences is a good indicator of the police's proactive stance on tackling those who prey on people that are vulnerable. In 2021/22 more focus is needed on understanding the demand associated with illegal substances. In the task force focus area it has been identified that supply chains continue to target certain areas to meet the demand of local users and to prey on those that are vulnerable due to social/economic factors. Closer work is needed with local public health leads and specialist substance abuse support services for both adults and young people. Consideration is being given to the re-introduction of the substance misuse forum.

The renewal of the town centre public space protection order which incorporates an offence of alcohol related ASB provides partners, such as Kent Police and one Maidstone, with powers to challenge those whose behaviour is inappropriate in the town centre area. As Part of the government's pandemic recovery road map, Maidstone's NTE is beginning to return. This will enable the SMP to revisit the safe socialising scheme, encouraging NTE businesses once again to have greater awareness of issues, such as domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health.

Action Plan priorities for 2021/22 include:

- Improving partnership working with public health leads including considering reintroduction of a Substance Misuse Forum
- Revisit the powers available to disrupt the illegal sale of tobacco/alcohol including closure orders
- Support the introduction of the Safer Socialising Scheme
- Review the substance misuse responses to the Voice of Young Maidstone Survey and adapt services as necessary

Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

The ongoing nature of the pandemic means that the full extent of the mental health impact has not yet been assessed. The restrictions put in place as a result of each of the lockdowns have seen national concerns around increases in anxiety, depression, loneliness and poor life satisfaction. In the Maidstone Resident Covid-19 Impact & Response Survey 52% of the 1245 respondent stated that their Mental Health had been negatively impacted. The survey also demonstrate very strong links between mental health and feelings of safety.

The relationship with mental health services continues to improve with more consistent attendance at the weekly CSVG. The introduction of mental health specialists into the homeless outreach team is a good example of how engagement with mental health services can lead to significant improvements in individual outcomes, with support plans being built around individual's needs. The pilot initiative to utilise a Multi-Disciplinary Team to support people with 'Co-occurring Conditions' also presents a great opportunity for the SMP in 2021/22.

- Host an awareness raising summit that ensures partners are aware of the signs and dangers of self-neglect in the community
- Engage in pilot of a 'Co-occurring Conditions' Multi-Disciplinary Team for people who have Mental Health and Substance Misuse Issues from January 2021
- Work with the CCG to ensure sustainable funding for mental health services for homeless/rough sleeping people

Additional areas for consideration 2021/22

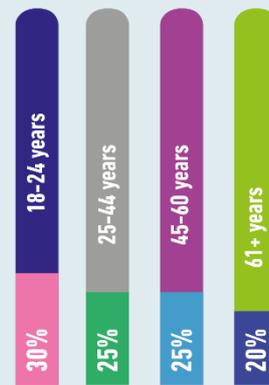
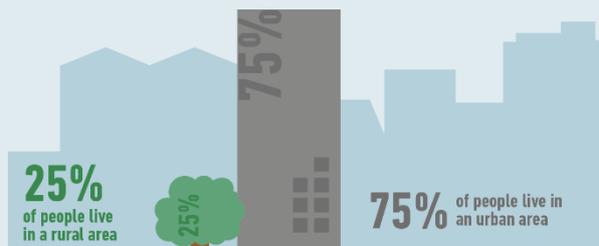
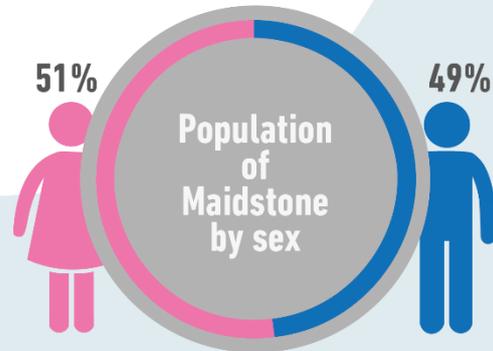
Although the priority areas remain unchanged for the final year of the current Community Safety Partnership Plan, the impact of the pandemic remains a factor that the SMP needs to monitor closely. The SMP has demonstrated its ability to respond to changes in need and demand, incorporating agile working and strong partnership links throughout the previous lockdowns. Support is already being provided to enable safe and secure re-opening and operation of both the day and night time economy as things begin to return to normal, but it is too early to assess fully what the new normal might look like for many people and what the long term impacts on health and wellbeing will be. The SMP will need to be mindful of how the pandemic has impacted on specific business areas, such as the hospitality sector and events. The Safety Advisory Group will face increased demand inline with the governments phased lifting of restrictions and will need to ensure social distancing controls continue to be used until it is safe to remove them.

The Task Force provides a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference in the current focus area. Greater understanding of the factors that sit behind the areas of social, economic and health deprivation is needed and will hopefully be provided through specific insight work and opportunities to engage with the community once restrictions are lifted. As partnership engagement increases there remains an opportunity to introduce and pilot new initiatives that will address the public health needs of the community. Initiatives that can be rolled out to the wider borough if deemed successful and sustainable.

170,000 People Live in Maidstone

Maidstone Borough is the largest Kent local authority district area.

Over the last 10 years Maidstone's population has grown by 13.5%. The growth in Maidstone's population is set to continue with current forecasts suggesting a further increase of 18% by 2037.



Appendix 2

MoRiLE

The Kent Community Safety Unit has explored the use of the MoRiLE (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement) scoring matrix to look at ranking offences based on threat, risk and harm. Maidstone Borough Council and others in Kent have again incorporated this methodology within this year's Strategic Assessment.

The rationale behind MoRiLE is that it targets resources at offences that would have the biggest impact on individuals and organisations/areas. This contrasts with concentrating solely on crime figure tables which can sometimes provide a skewed view on threats and risk based only on the frequency/volume of crimes.

Each thematic crime area is scored individually against various criteria. There is then a formula that calculates a final score. These are then ranked high to low, listing priorities based on threat, risk & harm which can then contribute to the SMP's final recommendation of priorities.

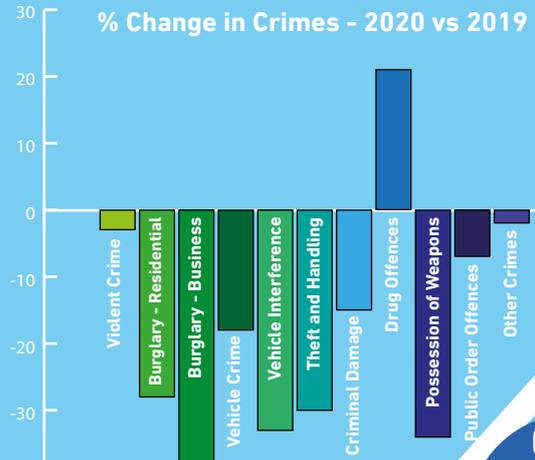
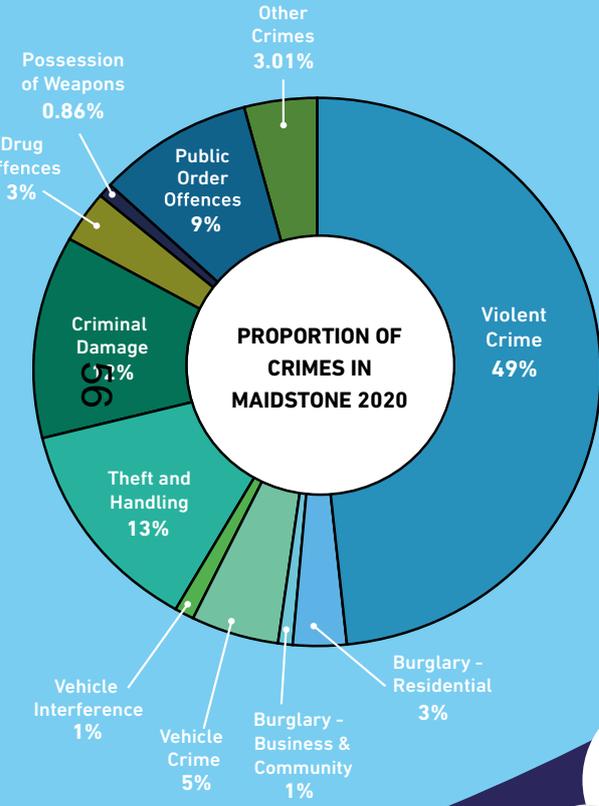
Appendix 3

Acronym Glossary

- **ASB** = Anti-Social Behaviour
- **BOTD** = Burglary Other Than Dwelling
- **CCG** = Clinical Commissioning Group
- **CDAP** = Community Domestic Abuse Programme
- **CDRP** = Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- **CGL** = Change, Grow, Live
- **CPT** = Community Protection Team
- **CSE** = Child Sexual Exploitation
- **CSP** = Community Safety Partnership
- **CSU** = Community Safety Unit
- **DA** = Domestic Abuse
- **DTE** = Day Time Economy
- **HMIC** = Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary
- **IDVA** = Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
- **IOM** = Integrated Offender Management
- **JSNA** = Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- **KCC** = Kent County Council
- **KFRS** = Kent Fire & Rescue Service
- **KSSCRC** = Kent Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company
- **MARAC** = Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- **MBC** = Maidstone Borough Council
- **MOJ** = Ministry of Justice
- **MoRiLE** = Management of Risk in Law Enforcement
- **MSG** = Most Similar Groups
- **NPS** = National Probation Service or New Psychoactive Substances depending on context
- **NTE** = Nighttime Economy
- **OCG** = Organised Crime Group
- **SOCP** = Serious and Organised Crime Panel
- **PCC** = Police & Crime Commissioner
- **PS** = Psychoactive Substances
- **SMP** = Safer Maidstone Partnership
- **SOC** = Serious Organised Crime
- **UE** = Unlawful Encampments
- **VATP** = Violence Against the Person
- **VCS** = Voluntary & Community Service

Strategic Assessment Summary

An overview of the year 2020 and the priority areas identified within the plan



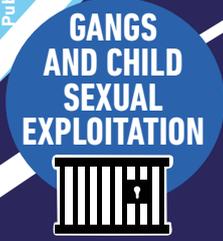
19% OF ALL CRIME IS RELATED TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

AND DOMESTIC ABUSE EQUATES TO **33%** OF ALL VIOLENT CRIME



YOUTH OFFENCES HAVE DECREASED FROM **110 TO 87**

AN DECREASE OF **21%**



HOWEVER THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS COMMITTING CRIME, FROM **35 TO 39**



SECTION 136 FIGURES HAVE DECREASED FROM **143 TO 115**

AN DECREASE OF **20%**



INCREASE IN DRUG OFFENCES **21%**

AN INCREASE FROM **415 TO 502** OFFENCES



Maidstone Community
Safety Partnership Plan
2019-2022

June 2021 Update

**'Where people feel safe
and are safe'**

maidstone.gov.uk



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Hello and Welcome from the Leader of Maidstone Borough Council

Welcome to the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan - our aim is that Maidstone will be a place **where People feel safe and are safe.**

As we enter the final year of our safety plan, we do so in a world where we are hopeful that the recovery from the impacts of the global pandemic. Our thoughts are as always with the families of residents who have lost loved ones in this most difficult of times.

Our community safety partnership is rich with key workers and other staff who have faced the challenges of Coronavirus on the front line. To you all, I offer on behalf of all our elected members, my heart felt thanks and gratitude.

You are all heroes!

Maidstone Borough Council's Chief Executive, Alison Broom has been joined by Kent Police Chief Inspector, Gary Woodward to co-chair our partnership going forward. They, alongside senior officers from the Maidstone Borough Council, the Police, Health, Probation, Fire Service, the County Council and the voluntary sector work with other key agencies to improve community safety in our borough. Additional support is provided from housing providers, community groups and other organisations, many representing the voice of local people. The richness of our partnership, known locally as the Safer Maidstone Partnership or The SMP for short, gives it an unrivalled strength. Strength that will be needed as the partnership continues to tackle the community safety issues identified as a priority for Maidstone as a borough.

We know we face challenges in the borough as we look to recover from the coronavirus pandemic. Changes in funding, resources and demand for services are all likely to play a role. But by working together as a partnership with our local communities, we can continue to build on the work to date, improving community safety and reducing the fear of crime within the borough.

Our three-year plan aims to address local priorities, as determined by assessing the data and listening to residents, sets out how the SMP will work together, in both new as well as tried and tested ways, and shows how we will measure our performance against these aims.

This Community Safety Partnership Plan will tell you:

- a) What we want to do
- b) Why we have chosen these areas to focus on
- c) What we plan to achieve



**Councillor David
Burton, Leader of
Maidstone Borough
Council**

Forward by Co-chairs of the Safer Maidstone Partnership Executive



Alison Broom
Chief Executive,
Maidstone Borough
Council



Gary Woodward
Chief Inspector
Kent Police

The Maidstone Community Safety Partnership has a good track record of collaborative working to keep our communities safe and feeling safe. Our 2019-22 plan builds on extensive experience of working together and the productive and resilient relationships developed, which enable us to identify and tackle local community safety issues that matter to Maidstone residents. The plan will be revised annually following review of information and the details of this, as well as the progress against this plan, will be set out in our Strategic Assessment.

We want our approach to be evidence based, objective led, and outcome focussed – but just as importantly to include proper consideration for both the victims and the witnesses and their needs. In these unprecedented times it would be remiss to not address the impact of the global pandemic on our borough. Covid-19 has impacted on each of the priority areas set out in this plan already and its continued impact will be considered as the live action plans for each priority theme evolve.

The plan seeks to build on what has already been achieved and give greater emphasis to prevention and reducing harm. Overall, our aim remains to reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour and the number of crimes which occur in the Maidstone borough and the harm caused. However, some crimes, for example domestic abuse, are historically under-reported and so our aim is to create an environment where people are confident to come forward and report it.

This will ensure we have a more accurate picture, and can use our resources to reduce the threat, risk and harm for the most vulnerable members of our community.

We all have a responsibility to prevent crime and disorder from happening in the first place – SMP partners will work not only with each other but also with communities to achieve this, as well as tackling crime and disorder when it occurs. The Safer Maidstone Partnership will work to strengthen community cohesion as part of its community safety role, protecting the vulnerable and supporting our communities by creating a borough where people feel safe and are safe.



Introduction

Community safety in Maidstone is not the sole responsibility of one agency or body. Regulation requires that we form a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) made up of 'responsible authorities'; those agencies with a duty participate, as well as other interested bodies from across the borough and beyond. The CSP work to implement and deliver initiatives that will help keep Maidstone borough a safe place to live, work, learn and visit.

In Maidstone, the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) is the name given to Maidstone's CSP, who work collectively to protect the vulnerable, pursue those who do not respect our borough or the law and to raise awareness of priority themes that the data we collect and the people we speak to say are the areas that threaten our communities the most. This refreshed version of the 2019-2022 CSP Plan is a continuation of previous plans, building on 20 years of work by the partnership, tackling crime and improving safety in the borough.

The SMP, which is co-chaired by Alison Broom, Chief Executive of Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and Chief Inspector Gary Woodward of Kent Police, is made up of responsible authorities (those bodies for whom membership of the CSP is a statutory obligation) and many community, voluntary and private sector partners. Collectively we work to deliver the CSP Plan, forming specialist sub-groups and measurable action plans that deliver against high level outcomes for each of the priority themes.



Safer Maidstone Partnership Priority Setting:

What data we used and what it told us:

The SMP has a duty to produce an annual strategic assessment to measure our performance against priority performance areas under the CSP Plan 2019-22 and other crime and disorder issues in the borough. It gathers research, evidence and intelligence from local and Kent-wide sources, as well as drawing upon the professional expertise of those working at District level.

The data provided by Kent Police is recognised for its high ethical standard of crime recording. Whilst longer term data comparison is challenging, due to changes in the way crime was recorded compared to historical data on their previous system, the data is now building on the new police system which we enable us to develop analysis of the data to see what trends exist.

What people told us:

The 2017 Resident's Survey captured individual's perceptions or feelings of safety. These can be influenced by a number of factors which may or may not relate to whether someone has been a victim of crime.

The survey received 2350 responses; most respondents (66%) said that "a clean and safe environment" was the most important of our Council priorities to them. It also showed that whilst in general our residents feel safe in the borough with 93% of people saying they feel very safe or fairly safe in their home and 94% people said that they felt safe in their local area in the day. Whilst less people said they felt safe in their local area at night (60%).

Residents also provided information about their fears of specific crimes which we can link to wider CSP issues; 46% of respondents were concerned about someone breaking into their home and 56% were worried about being a victim of fraud or identity theft. We know that burglary and rogue trading, a type of fraud, are common amongst serious organised crime groups and that burglary is also often used to fund dependencies associated with substance misuse.

Some residents (29%) are worried about being attacked or assaulted. A further 38% are worried about being pestered or insulted in the street. These can be linked to substance misuse, mental health issues or general Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), but can also be linked to domestic abuse, with 50% violent crime not occurring in a public place.

Overall, the survey showed that residents support the need to continue to actively work towards reducing and preventing crimes in our community. More information on the resident survey results is available [here](#).

In 2020 MBC undertook a survey in relation to the impact of the pandemic. Alongside an increased impact on mental health (52% negative impact), other factors such as anxiety about being outside, financial pressures due to employment issues and fear associated with the virus itself have impacted many people in our communities.

MBC's Strategic Plan 2019-2045 includes Safe, Clean and Green as a priority. Within the Strategic Plan it identifies that, between 2019-2024, particular importance will be placed on improving community safety by working with our partners to make people less vulnerable to crime.

Local Community Safety Considerations:

The borough of Maidstone covers 40,000 hectares and is situated in the heart of Kent. The borough's population of over 171,000 is the largest in Kent with approximately 75% of its population living in urban areas and is strategically located between the Channel Ports and London, with direct connections to both via the M20 and M2 motorways. Maidstone is the county town of Kent and hosts one of the largest retail centres in the South East and is serviced by three central railway stations which connect to London, the coast and to the Medway towns. It also boasts one of the largest night-time economies in the county. The town itself now benefits from the introduction of the Maidstone's Business Improvement District which, alongside a growing MaidSafe community, works in partnership with the police, local authorities and local businesses to reduce business crime in Maidstone, increase trade and make Maidstone a safer environment for its staff, customers and visitors.

Where our borough is located and our economy, including the sheer number of visitors the borough has throughout the year, are all factors that are considered as part of our priority setting.

Direct links to London and the Medway towns provide fantastic connectivity for people who live and work in the borough, however they also provide opportunities for criminals who exploit these networks to access vulnerable people and places in our borough. A direct example of this is the threat of County Line gangs who use the rail networks to illegally distribute and deal dangerous drugs from one city/town to another.

Geographical breakdowns of crime types is now being developed alongside other partner data. This will improve identification of trends and concerns raised in both urban and rural communities. To support this with a local narrative, the Community Safety team, in 2021, introduced "Ward Cluster" meetings. In these meetings, elected members from, up to 4 similar, wards meet with representatives of the SMP to discuss their Community Safety concerns and to work collaboratively with the SMP to deliver against an agreed plan for their areas. The clusters have been created using wards that are neighbouring, with similar demographics and concerns.

Priority Setting- 2021 Update:

The SMP sets the priorities for the CSP Plan based on the analysis and interpretation of the data and survey information analysed through the strategic assessment.

Analysis of the data and professional input from the existing sub-groups in the 2021 Strategic Analysis supports the SMP Priorities set out in the 2019-2022 Community Safety Plan. These priorities remain as:

- Protecting our communities against serious, violent and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)
- Reducing the impact of substance misuse on our community
- Safeguarding people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

The global pandemic has had a significant impact on how front-line services have operated and how people have behaved. The combined impact of reduced contact with the public, significant limitations on travel and social contact, and closure and strict restrictions in public spaces and recreational spaces, is that almost all services have seen unprecedented shifts in demand. As a result, the data for the last year, analysed in the 2021 Strategic Assessment, is considered highly irregular. Observations and analysis have considered the context of the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on 'normal' day-to-day life.

Rather than focus on Covid-19 as a single specific priority or risk to community safety, the impact of the pandemic on each of the priority areas will be considered as the live action plans for each priority theme evolve.

In addition to these priorities, work will continue around the Government driven Prevent duty and the general duty to reduce ASB as cross-cutting themes. Reducing reoffending will also be a core part of the work undertaken by each sub-group.

The priorities identified for Maidstone borough are reflective of those identified across the county and collated by the Kent Community Safety Partnership in the 'Kent Community Safety Agreement' (KCSA). They also link to the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) 'Safer in Kent Plan 2017-22*'. An illustration of the KCSA and PCC Plan priorities is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

*refreshed annually

Safer Maidstone Partnership Governance:

The success of the SMP is linked to the work of its sub-groups and the leadership of its Executive Board and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This section, supported by the diagram in [Appendix 2](#), describes how the Partnership works as a structured entity and how it delivers its community safety priorities through the work of its sub-groups.

Safer Maidstone Partnership Executive Group (SMPEG):

The Safer Maidstone Partnership Executive Group (SMPEG) works with all other strategic boards in the borough. It offers strategic governance to ensure high quality and cost-effective services are provided within the borough. The key functions of the executive group are to:

- Provide strategic leadership and vision to make Maidstone a safer borough
- Be a strategic driver, working with all partners to support the direction of the partnership
- Deliver sustainable Community Safety Strategy (CSS) priorities and any relevant targets arising from these priorities
- Deliver statutory responsibilities held by the SMPEG
- Have oversight, receive and agree funds and funding applications relating to community safety within Maidstone

Crime and Disorder Committee:

Under the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, every local authority is required to have in place a Crime and Disorder Committee. The Committee is empowered to review, scrutinise and make recommendations regarding the work of the responsible authorities regarding their crime and disorder functions. The Communities, Housing and Environment Committee undertake the role of the Crime and Disorder Committee at specified meetings throughout the year. MBC Elected Members are also invited to 'Members Briefings' and training sessions, where specialist training is provided to support members in their understanding of the priorities themselves and the work that is being undertaken to address them.

Safer Maidstone Partnership:

The SMP is responsible for:

- Delivering CSP strategic priorities and any relevant targets arising from these priorities on behalf of the SMPEG
- Fulfilling statutory responsibilities held by the SMPEG
- Responding to other issues relating to community safety, which include those that may arise, from government policies or other developments

SMP Subgroups:

The Partnership is structured so that it has subgroups to develop, co-ordinate and deliver the activities to achieve the outcomes for each of the priority themes. Each sub-group is responsible for:

- Producing an annual action plan containing measurable activities and indicators
- Ensuring that there are resources available to deliver these plans
- Submitting funding applications to obtain additional resources where required

The nature of some of the work is such that it is difficult to measure or show a direct impact of the work undertaken. For example, it is not possible to measure how many people are able to avoid an abusive relationship after an awareness raising event but we are able to measure the usage of the 'one-stop-shop' for people seeking further advice and assistance with domestic abuse.

For each priority theme an action plan will be agreed that has:

- A high-level outcome which set out what the Partnership is aiming to achieve
- Indicators which measure trends in associated behaviours, crimes, service usage, etc
- A series of measurable actions that the partnership believes will achieve the higher-level outcome

Using the same example, one such action is to ensure that temporal and geographical data from the 'one-stop-shop' usage is reviewed to ensure it is available to those at risk but might not be able to visit the current town centre location. The potential is to have 'pop-up' sessions if the review finds it to be necessary.

It has been agreed that the CSP governance structure for 2020/21 will not have specific working groups for mental health or substance misuse, although consideration is being given to reintroducing the substance misuse forum.

For mental health it was agreed that there were already strategic and operational meetings which focus on this area of work and therefore the creation of a group for the SMP was unnecessary. The weekly Community Safety and Vulnerability Group (CSVG) provides an opportunity to help the most vulnerable and to gather grass roots intelligence that help partners to understand any growing trends. In the absence of a specific subgroup the terms of reference for the CSVG have been reviewed to maximise its effectiveness.

During the first two years of this plan it was felt that the substance misuse did not require a specific sub-group. As our partnership develops with KCC Public Health, Change Grow Live and other partners, conversations have started around reintroducing a new partnership meeting. With substance misuse often an underlying factor in the concerns raised by the other subgroups, such as 'Keeping children and young people safe', where substance misuse is identified as a particular area of concern, the work of those sub groups will also include actions for the substance misuse theme and will be developed into conversations in any new group as it emerges.

[Appendix 3](#) provides a summary of the sub-groups and working groups that work in each of the priority areas.

Each sub-group is also responsible for ensuring that equalities analysis is carried out to ensure that their plans conform to duties under the Equalities Act 2010.

The Maidstone Task Force

In September 2020 the Maidstone Task Force was launched. Following an uplift in staffing for Kent Police, the decision was taken to utilise resources to provide the framework for an exciting new multi-agency task force for Maidstone. As one of the largest districts in Kent, it was recognised that some areas in Maidstone have disproportionate levels of crime, social/economic deprivation and health inequality. The Task Force's objective is to seek to redress these imbalances, to work with those communities to provide resilience and long-term/permanent improvements.



The taskforce built on the existing strengths of the Safer Maidstone Partnership and a multi-agency team has now been established to provide enhanced joined up solutions to complex multi factorial problems.

Albeit there have been challenges as a result of the pandemic, the implementation phase of the project saw the creation of a new collaborative workspace within Maidstone House. The space, which without social distancing restrictions will house up to 25 people from across the partnership, will form a Community Safety collaboration hub for both the task force focus and the borough as a whole.

The first focus area selected for the task force was the combined wards of Shepway South and Shepway North. Analysis of the available crime data revealed high levels of ASB, particularly around the shops and in housing blocks, and Domestic Abuse in both Wards. Analysis of the health data revealed that residents in the wards:

- had a lower life expectancy and fewer healthy years lived than the national average and other parts of the borough (Male and Female)
- were more likely to die prematurely (Coronary Heart Disease, Cardiovascular disease, Cancer)
- experienced higher rates of mental illness
- represented greater proportion of residents claiming benefits than the national average
- had the highest A&E attendance and admission rates for the borough

Delivery in the focus areas is centred around "Building Community Engagement and Cohesion". Using a problem-solving model, known as OSARA, the task force is taking a partnership approach to challenging some of the social norms that are particular to the wards. Tackling ASB in partnership with Golding Homes, who have provided a dedicated officer into the task force, has already seen some improvements in the area according to residents.



Linked Boards

Although there is no longer a requirement for Local Strategic Boards, the Partnership and its officers are just one of a number of strategic and statutory groups across the borough where cross-cutting themes are discussed. Where possible the priority themes of this plan will be carried through into these groups to ensure that community safety priorities are embedded in other partnership strategies and in turn, those strategies are taken into account in both the CSP Plan and the work of the Partnership.

DRAFT

Priorities



Protecting our communities against serious, violent and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)



Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)



Keeping children and young people safe



Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community



Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable



Protecting our communities against serious, violent and organised crime (including modern-day slavery):

Why is this important?

Serious and organised crime cost the UK billions of pounds each year and pose a risk to both our communities and our national security. This can clearly be seen in the rise in violent crime and knife crime on a local and national level. The Serious Violence Strategy (2018) recognises that a range and powers are held by agencies, such as local authorities, that play a vital role in supporting the police to disrupt serious and organised crime activities in the borough. Organised Crime Groups (OCG) are groups of individuals involved in serious or organised crime for personal gain. Crime is often regarded as their 'occupation'. The work of the SMP can often disrupt OCGs activity, particularly targeting those outside the protected core. Serious organised crime, whilst often linked to OCGs, can also be undertaken by individuals exploiting opportunities and vulnerabilities to undertake criminal activities for gain. These can be broad ranging from burglary through to gang related activities, such as moving drugs (County Lines) into the borough or exploiting women sexually.

In Maidstone, we have an established Serious and organised Crime Panel (SOCP). The Panel meets regularly to tackle the threat, risk and harm of serious organised crime through a coordinated approach. Over the last year the SOCP have worked to actively disrupt four OCGs in both rural and urban areas, where their activities have threatened vulnerable people and the environment. Work has also disrupted repeat offenders of organised crime.

Working with the Kent Violence Reduction Unit, SMP partners will look to use analytical data and intelligence to put in place support, diversions and actions that will reduce violence in young people, particularly in relation to knife crime.

SMP Objective: The SMP will protect our communities from the illegal practices of serious organised crime groups.

What is our focus?

The SOCP has adopted the national SOC 4Ps framework, which from a local perspective, means that in relation to OCGs and crime series:

Pursue: prosecuting and disrupting criminal activity

Prevent: deterring individuals, including reducing reoffending

Protect: helping communities protect themselves against SOC

Prepare: manage the impact or consequence of SOC to protect communities

Year 3 - What will we do?

The SOCP will refresh its action plan to help deliver on our SMP Objective. Actions from the plan will include:

- Support the reopening of the NTE as lockdown restrictions are lifted.
- Work to disrupt a new OCG relating to drugs/money laundering with links in and around the town centre.
- Work with partners to identify and disrupt illegal puppy farms and unlicensed breeders.



Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking):

Why is this important?

Domestic abuse is broadly described as any incident(s) of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. The abuse can be, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.



The Domestic Abuse Act became law in April 2021 and places new duties on local authorities to help tackle domestic abuse. In two-tier areas, such as Kent, the lead authority is Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council officers are taking an active role on the Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and through the Maidstone Domestic Abuse Forum to help shape the new Kent-wide Domestic Abuse Strategy and develop services for people experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, staff have been updated on changes made to the homelessness legislation brought about by the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act, which will be reflected in the review of the Council's new Housing Strategy due to be adopted in late 2021.

SMP Objective: The SMP will ensure that all communities residing in the borough can live their lives in safety without the fear or harm caused by domestic abuse.

What is our focus?

The continued increases in reporting and attendance at the 'one-stop-shop' indicates that the SMP should prioritise supporting the victims of domestic abuse through the provision of local services like MARAC, Sanctuary and IDVA.

The partnership needs to find new innovative ways to raise awareness so that people can seek advice and are confident in reporting abuse when it occurs. The increase of victims coming forward should not be seen as a negative as we need victims to continue to come forward so that we can determine the full extent of the issue within our borough.

We will support children who witness domestic abuse in their home and through our Keeping Children and Young People Safe group will promote safer relationships, helping young people make better choices and increasing their confidence to report issues.

Year 3 - What will we do?

The Domestic Abuse Forum will refresh their action plan to deliver on our SMP Objective. New actions for the plan will include:

- Support the roll out of Domestic Abuse Champions across Maidstone and Kent in partnership with Kent Independent Domestic Abuse Services
- Deliver more awareness raising events, such as Cradle to Grave, that target nurseries, schools and professionals who will be less aware of the impact of Domestic Abuse

Keeping children and young people safe:

Why is this important?

We know that some of our children and young people live in abusive and violent households and some are affected by drugs and alcohol. We also know that many are confident and driven. Young people are often affected by issues across our priority themes which affect them more deeply, causing longer term damage. We must safeguard our young people from individuals that intend to cause them harm through the supply of drugs and sexual exploitation (CSE). We must also challenge growing trends such as knife crime, serious youth violence and the impact of gang culture in our young people.



In Maidstone, cannabis use continues in our young people is high and has increased steadily over the last 8 years. For young people, cannabis is more readily available than alcohol but can be expensive, resulting in more young people becoming involved in offending to fund their drug use.

There also remains a concern that the behaviour of some of our young people puts individuals and communities at risk and that increases in our young people's own fear is leading to a worrying national trend of carrying knives for safety.

SMP Objective: The SMP we will protect our young people from those that put them at risk.

What is our focus?

Through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting (DCSM), as part of the Adolescent Risk Management structure, SMP Partners will continue to work collaboratively to identify individuals and locations of concern and put in place support for individuals and undertake location assessments to identify opportunities to provide contextual safeguarding in areas of concern. Where necessary, individuals, groups and places will be escalated to a Complex Adolescent Risk Meeting (CARM) for further support. With no "home grown" gang in Maidstone, vigilance is needed to ensure our young people are aware of the threat posed by London and other Kent based gangs, gang culture itself and the associated CSE/substance misuse issues. We must also identify and divert the activities of disruptive groups of young people within our communities where their behaviour causes an increase in the fear of crime.

The SMP will also ensure the DCSM feeds into the revamped Local Children's Partnership Group "Reconnect" strategy and utilise funding opportunities provided by the VRU to reduce violence in young people

Year 3 - What will we do?

The DCSM will update their action plan to help deliver on our SMP Objective. Actions from the revised plan will include:

- Introduce the new "My Place" initiative, supporting young people whose families are placed in Maidstone as a result of violent or gang related concerns which had been delayed by the pandemic
- Use the results of the Voice of Young Maidstone survey to guide the professionals and parents in the borough in protecting young
- Implement new initiatives to support parents, including Caring Dads and DICE training

Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community:

Why is this important?

People who misuse drugs, alcohol or other substances cause considerable harm to themselves and to our communities. The harm they cause is not only their own physical and mental health but can also impact on the wellbeing of their families. The communities in which they live can also be harmed through crime, disorder and ASB associated with substance misuse. The impact of substance misuse across each of the priorities has led to this area being kept as a priority, not just a cross-cutting theme. It has been agreed that whilst it is not necessary to have a specific sub-group for this theme in itself, there is still a need for an action plan that can be delivered through specific teams and through the work of Serious Organised Crime Panel (gangs and supply chains) and Youth Safety sub-groups (cannabis, cigarette and alcohol abuse in young people).



SMP Objective: The Safer Maidstone Partnership will encourage people to seek the support to overcome addiction, particularly those who are part of 'high risk' cohorts.

What is our focus?

The Serious Organised Crime Panel, and associated policing teams, will play a key role in ensuring that drugs and illicit substances are difficult, if not impossible to find in Maidstone. Where this extends to illicit tobacco, relationships are being put in place with KCC Trading Standards to undertake joint action to rid the borough of this illegal trade. For the DCSM, there will be a focus on ensuring that our young people are reminded of the dangers that exist, particularly in relation to gangs and County Lines trafficking. We will build on the success of the Housing First project in supporting our street homeless, particularly those individuals that are the hardest to engage, to assist them accessing the support they need to overcome their addictions. A new project will be launched to help reach treatment-resistant drinkers and we will change the way the enforcement of the current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for drinking is enforced to empower officers to tackle people who are drinking and are anti-social in a public place.

Year 3 - What will we do?

The Community Protection Team on behalf of the Safer Maidstone Partnership will develop an action plan to help deliver on our SMP Objective across the sub-groups and services. Actions from the plan will include:

- Improving partnership working with public health leads including considering reintroduction of a Substance Misuse Forum
- Revisit the powers available to disrupt the illegal sale of tobacco/alcohol including closure orders
- Support the introduction of the Safer Socialising Scheme
- Review the substance misuse responses to the Voice of Young Maidstone Survey and adapt services as necessary

Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community:

Why is this important?

The mental health of our residents can be affected greatly by the behaviour of others, particularly where the behaviour goes unchallenged. Whether that is the behaviour of inconsiderate neighbours or a coercive and/or controlling partner, the impact can have a significant impact on an individual's quality of life. Mental Health concerns can lead to people targeting their vulnerability and abusing them for financial or other forms of gain. People with mental health concerns can also be the cause of anti-social behaviour themselves, which affects others or a wider community. They can also become isolated, lose their support network and neglect their own care.



Mental health, like substance misuse, cuts across all our priority themes and is a growing concern in Maidstone with more police and local authority investigations containing concerns about the mental health of either the victim or the perpetrator. This is evident in the weekly Community Safety and Vulnerability Group (CSVG) where an estimated 75% of cases relate to Mental Health for either the perpetrator or the victim.

Across the priority themes there are also cohorts, like our young people, the victims of domestic abuse and those who misuse substances, that are experiencing higher prevalence of mental health problems.

SMP Objective: The Safer Maidstone Partnership will work to reduce the community impact of Mental Health, particularly where a person's poor mental health results in them being either the cause or the victim of anti-social behaviour or crime.

What is our focus?

The CSVG will continue to meet weekly to support the most vulnerable in our community. We will look to introduce a steering group for vulnerability to oversee the CSVG and support its work and identify trends that need more support. Across the Priority Themes we will ensure the mental health of the vulnerable is protected from activities and behaviours that threaten to cause harm.

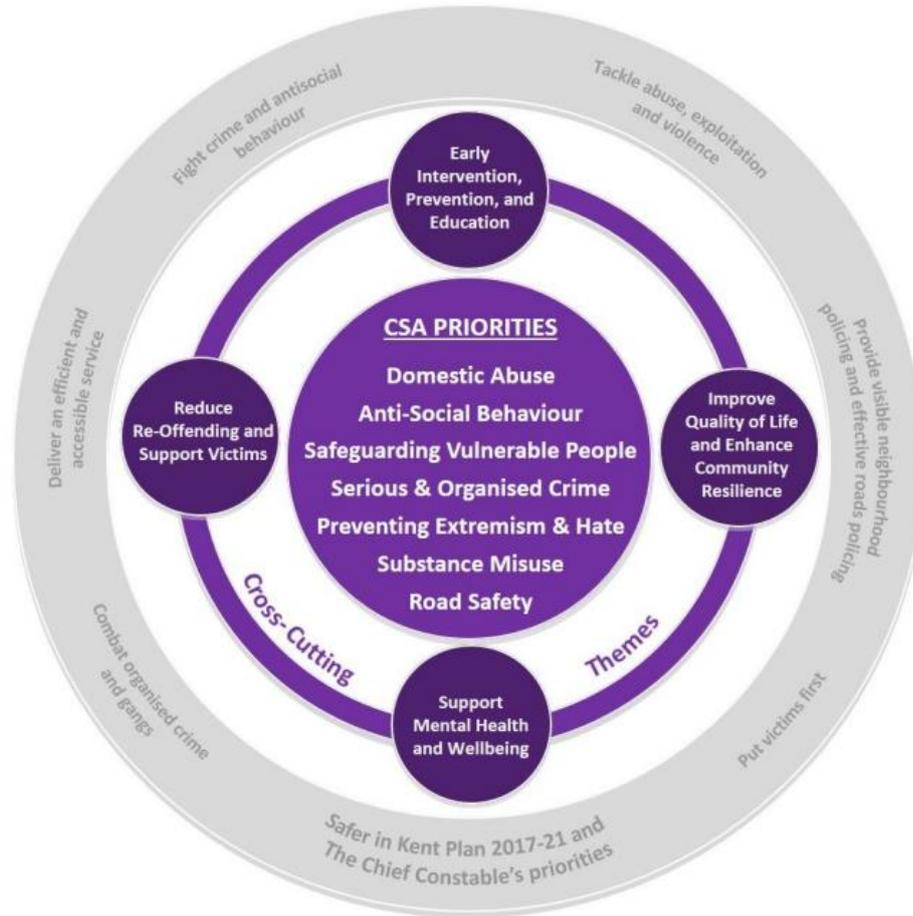
Year 3 - What will we do?

The Community Safety Unit, including the Community Protection Team, will develop a revised action plan to help deliver on our SMP Objective across the sub-groups, the CSVG and relevant services. The action plan will include:

- Host an awareness raising summit that ensures partners are aware of the signs and dangers of self-neglect in the community
- Engage in pilot of a 'Co-occurring Conditions' Multi-Disciplinary Team for people who have Mental Health and Substance Misuse Issues from January 2021
- Work with the CCG to ensure sustainable funding for mental health services for homeless/rough sleeping people

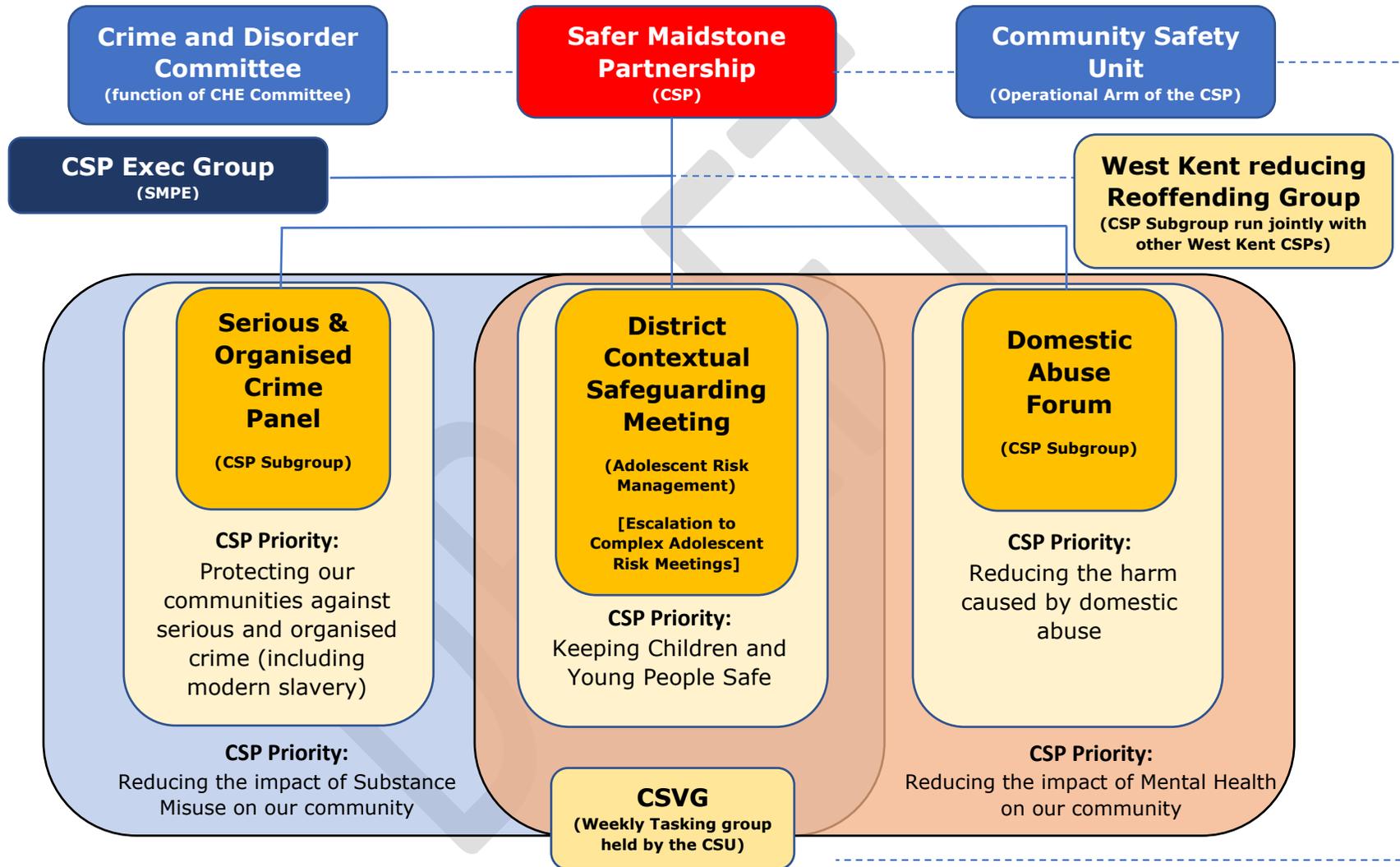
Appendices

Appendix 1- Priorities & cross cutting themes for the CSA and the PCC:



Source= Kent Community Safety Partnership 'Kent Community Safety Plan- April 2018'

Appendix 2- Safer Maidstone Partnership Structure and Priorities:



Appendix 3- Summary of the sub-groups and working groups that work in each of the priority areas:

Priority Theme	<u>Sub-groups and Working Groups delivering the action plans (not an exhaustive list)</u>
Protecting our communities against serious and organised crime (including modern slavery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Serious & Organised Crime Panel</u> • Kent Environmental Crime Waste Practitioners Group
Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Domestic Abuse Forum</u> • Vulnerable Investigation Team Professionals meeting for repeat victims
Keeping Children and Young People Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting (DSCM), with escalation to Complex Adolescent Risk Meetings • Maidstone Local Children's Partnership Group • Adolescent Risk Management panel
Reducing the impact of Substance Misuse on our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of DCSM • The work of the Community Protection, Homeless Outreach with Change Live Grow (CGL) and Licensing teams
Reducing the impact of Mental Health on our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety and Vulnerability Group and its steering group • MBC Safeguarding Board

Appendix 4- Glossary of terms and acronyms:

ASB = Anti-Social Behaviour	IOM = Integrated Offender Management
CCG = Clinical Commissioning Group	KCC = Kent County Council
CDAP = Community Domestic Abuse Programme	KSSCRC = Kent Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company
CDRP = Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	MARAC = Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
CARMS= Complex Adolescent Risk Meetings	MBC = Maidstone Borough Council
CGL = Change, Grow, Live (West Kent Drug & Alcohol Wellbeing Service in Maidstone)	Modern-day slavery= Human trafficking– involves transporting, recruiting or harbouring people for the purpose of exploitation, using violence, threats or coercion.
County Lines= County lines commonly involves the illegal distribution and dealing of seriously dangerous drugs from one city/town to another.	NPS = National Probation Service or New Psychoactive Substances depending on context
CSE = Child Sexual Exploitation	OCG = Organised Crime Group
CSP = Community Safety Partnership	One Stop Shop= Drop in service for victims of Domestic Violence.
CSU = Community Safety Unit	PCC = Police & Crime Commissioner
CSVG= Community Safety and Vulnerability Group	PSPO = Public Space Protection Order
DA = Domestic Abuse	SMP = Safer Maidstone Partnership
DCSM = District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting	SMPE= Safer Maidstone Partnership Executive Group
IDVA = Independent Domestic Violence Advisor	VRU = Violence Reduction Meeting

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and are safe'**

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