

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.</p> <p>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*