

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

9 APRIL 2014

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report prepared by Sarah Robson

1. Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013 - 2018

1.1 Key Issue for Decision

1.1.1 Cabinet is asked to:

- Consider the SCRAIP comments of the Communities and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee as attached as Appendix A to this report; and
- Consider and recommend the draft Community Safety Partnership Plan to full Council in April 2014 for final approval, as attached as Appendix B to this report.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Housing and Community Services

1.2.1 The Community Safety Partnership Plan discharges the council's statutory requirement to produce a plan for community safety.

1.2.2 The Community Safety Partnership Plan forms part of the Policy Framework and the consultation requires the Cabinet to finalise its proposals for the Council to consider having taken into account any proposals from Overview and Scrutiny.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Plan is based on robust evidence and places Maidstone in a stronger position to reduce crime and disorder within the Maidstone borough.

1.3.2 The Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013 – 2018 will be delivered by the Community Partnerships team, which incorporates the Community Safety, Community Development teams, working with

Housing, alongside statutory partners, including Kent Police, Kent County Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Kent Probation.

- 1.3.3 The Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013 – 2018 provides a strategic framework to deliver the priorities, which have been reviewed and determined using evidenced based information, including comparative county-wide performance, through the annual Strategic Assessment, a copy of which is attached at Appendix C.
- 1.3.4 Crime over the last year has reduced by 6.5%, which equates to 577 fewer offences being committed across the borough. During 2012/13, the biggest reductions were in reported incidents of anti-social behaviour (-9.6%), criminal damage (-8.5%), sexual offences (13.2%) and theft offences (-8.0%) as well as major reductions in both deliberate and accidental fires. Over the past four years 2009-10 to 2012-13 crime in Maidstone has fallen 11.8%, or over 1,000 fewer crimes per year. The Partnership has achieved this by delivering actions contained within last year's plan, but also investing time realigning some functions and improving efficiency by integrating services into day to day working practices. A copy of the Strategic Assessment (data and findings) is attached as Appendix D.
- 1.3.5 In contrast to the overall fall in crime in 2012/13, the first two quarters of 2013/14 saw an increase of some 24% or 481 additional recorded crimes against the same period in 2012/13. Violent crime in particular rose in the first two quarters by 35% (317 more offences) through increased domestic abuse reporting and incidents reported from the night time economy. Theft (shoplifting) in the town centre also saw an increase in the first two quarters of 2013/14, by 19.8% or 92 additional offences.
- 1.3.6 The refreshed Plan will therefore focus on the following strategic priorities:
- Antisocial Behaviour
 - Reducing Reoffending
 - Road Safety (killed or seriously injured)
 - Substance Misuse
 - Violent Crime (domestic abuse)
 - Violent Crime (night-time economy)
- 1.3.7 The refreshed Plan incorporates an annual action plan, which addresses how partners will jointly address these priorities through targeted early intervention, education, prevention and enforcement.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Because the Plan focuses on the role of one unit within the council, there is an argument that consultation with partners or the public isn't strictly necessary. However, as a partnership plan, it will contribute towards the Council's statutory requirement to reduce crime under Section 17 Crime & Disorder Act and will have a high profile. The Plan is an enabling one, co-ordinating the work of a range of partners to benefit residents and businesses and as such it is essential that partners have the opportunity to understand and comment on the approach being developed by the Council and its partners. Finally, it is essential that the public has the opportunity to consider and comment on the approach being promoted by the Council as they are the key partners and beneficiaries of the work of the team.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Community Safety Partnership Plan will contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities; For Maidstone to be a decent place to live and Corporate and Customer Excellence. In addition, the Community Safety Partnership Plan supports the delivery of two out of three cross cutting objectives within the Borough Council's Community Development Strategy; Tackling Disadvantage and Building Stronger Communities.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 Risks associated with delivery against the strategic priorities within the Plan will be managed by the Safer Maidstone Partnership and the individual agencies that make up the partnership.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial	X
2. Staffing	X
3. Legal	X
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment	X
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6. Community Safety	X
7. Human Rights Act	

- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management



- 1.7.2 Financial – From 2013/14, all Community Safety Grant funding is allocated directly to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who uses this money to target her identified priorities and support the ongoing delivery of the Crime Plans. Having evidenced and demonstrated its ongoing successes, Maidstone Borough Council has attracted PCC funding of £38,449, calculated on a population basis, for 2014/15. 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.
- 1.7.3 Staffing – The priorities within the Plan cross cut 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, including this year’s Community Safety Grant allocation.
- 1.7.4 Legal – 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:
- a) A strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area; and
 - b) A strategy for combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
 - c) A strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area.

By virtue of section 5(1)(a) of the 1998 Act, the Council is the “responsible authority”.

By completing an annual refresh of the Community Safety Plan based on the findings of a comprehensive Strategic Assessment, Maidstone is fulfilling its statutory requirement.

There are reputational, environmental, economical and legal risks to the Council for not pro-actively pursuing an improvement 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.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
National and local publicity.	Could affect the public perception of crime and therefore impact upon performance in these key areas.	Ensure that we take all available opportunities to publicise good news stories.
Decreased Agency "buy in".	Changes in leadership, staffing or resources could reduce the involvement of key agencies.	Ensure that agencies are aware of the impact of dis- engagement upon their own service delivery/performance. Ensure that strategic members of the Community Safety Partnership are made aware of any situation as it arises.
A wide range of CSP (Community Safety Partnership) objectives.	Means that the CSP may be spread too thin and not have the resources to deal with all aspects so there may be gaps in service.	Prioritisation based on Strategic Assessment.
Legislation	Government guidance could change focus for CSP.	CSP to maintain strong communication with LGA/Home Office in order anticipate changes.
Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plans.	In order to develop their plans the PCC must consult the public, in particular victims. The plan must also be scrutinised by the police and crime panel before it is issued, although there is no set timetable for this. 31 March is the deadline for PCCs to issue their police and crime plans.	Continued engagement with the PCC.

1.7.5 Equality implications – The benefits of delivery against the plan will apply across the Maidstone borough, although by adopting an evidence based approach more benefit should be felt in areas where identified problems are greatest.

1.7.6 Community Safety – The Community Safety team has been brought under the reporting line of the Community Partnerships team, with a reduced number of staff. The focus will be strongly on preventative work while continuing to be co-located and working closely in partnership with the police and other community safety related partners.

1.8 Conclusions

1.8.1 The refreshed Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2018 reflects the key priorities for Maidstone borough.

1.9 Relevant Documents

1.9.1 Appendices

Appendix A – SCRAIP Response from the Community & Leisure Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix B – Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-18 (refreshed January 2014)

Appendix C – Strategic Assessment (annual refresh)

Appendix D – Strategic Assessment (data and findings)

1.9.2 Background Documents

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected: ...All wards and parishes.....

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How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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