

By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer
To: Crime and Disorder Committee – 8 June 2022
Subject: Kent Community Safety Agreement

Summary: This report briefly explains the background of Community Safety Agreements and the development of Kent's Agreement. This report also seeks to outline the role of the Committee in scrutinising the Kent Community Safety Agreement and as a 'critical friend' to the Community Safety Partnership.

1. Community Safety Agreements

- 1.1 Community Safety Agreements (CSAs) are mandatory for two tier authorities and are used by the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to meet their statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006). Additionally, the 2006 Act required CSPs to include anti-social behaviour (ASB) and substance misuse within their strategies. The Police and Crime Act 2009 added reducing reoffending to the areas to be addressed by CSPs.
- 1.2 The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 revised the 1998 Act, altering the manner in which District and Borough Council evaluated their Community Safety arrangements. The previous method of three yearly audits was replaced with an annual strategic assessment, triennial partnership plan and public consultations. These district/borough level assessments feed into the higher authority's CSP and influence the Community Safety Agreement.
- 1.3 The broad range of public safety considerations addressed by CSPs requires joint work from the partners that serve as responsible authorities:
 - Police
 - District and Borough Councils
 - County Council
 - Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
 - Fire and Rescue Service
 - Probation Service
- 1.4 The CSA draws together the key strategic aims of all the relevant services in the crime, disorder and public safety sectors, promoting a joint approach that enables more effective and co-ordinated inter-agency planning that will result in improved outcomes.

1.5 Each CSA reflects its own areas priorities based on needs assessment and shared intelligence between the partner agencies. Since the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) Community Safety Partnerships must give due regard to the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. The strategic assessments undertaken by local Community Safety Partnerships are reviewed for common issues and priorities, which are then consulted on with relevant stakeholders to confirm their inclusion in the CSA. This engagement with stakeholders also provides opportunities for gaps to be identified and broader cross-cutting themes to be taken into account.

2. Kent Community Safety Agreement

2.1 Responsibility for delivering the CSA priorities rests with the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP). The CSA is a rolling document which is reviewed annually and refreshed as appropriate, along with the associated CSA Action Plan.

2.2 The Kent CSP has delegated performance monitoring to the senior officer led working group and relevant priority leads from the partner agencies. Any points of concern or anomalies are reported to the KCSP for consideration.

2.3 The latest refresh of the Kent CSA took place in April 2022 (see Appendix A) and resulted in some changes to the previous priorities and cross-cutting themes. Full details of the review are included in the attached CSA document, however shown below is the updated list of priorities for 2022/23:

- Domestic Abuse
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable People
- Preventing Neighbourhood Crime & Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Preventing Extremism and Hate
- Substance Misuse
- Road Safety

2.4 Details of the relevant Leads for each priority are contained within the main CSA document along with a summary of the key issues identified by the local CSP strategic assessments.

2.5 In addition to the newly refreshed CSA for April 2022, a report is also attached (see Appendix B) which provides details on the related actions undertaken during 2021/22 by partners to deliver the priority outcomes from the Kent CSA published last year (April 2021). It should be noted that as 'Violence Against Women and Girls' (VAWG) is a new priority for 2022/23, and 'Preventing Neighbourhood Crime' is also a new addition to the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) priority, these topics are not covered within the attached report. Activity relating to these two new focus areas will be undertaken in 2022/23.

- 2.6 As per the Crime and Disorder Committee's previous requests the report (Appendix B) includes a summary of performance and contextual information
- 2.7 The Kent Community Safety Agreement also works to deliver against the countywide ambitions of the statutory responsible authorities. The core focus on effective partnership working embedded within the Kent Community Safety Partnership and the Agreement reflects the need for continued joint working with relevant agencies to meet the needs of Kent's communities.

3. Committee Role

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is required to meet annually in the form of the Crime and Disorder Committee to review and scrutinise work undertaken by relevant partner agencies and authorities responsible for managing crime and disorder in the County. This duty arises from the Police and Justice Act 2006 which introduced Crime and Disorder Committees to fulfil this scrutiny function.
- 3.2 The Committee exists as a 'critical friend' of the Community Safety Partnership, considering the strategic level approach on crime and disorder and should not seek to challenge operation level actions.
- 3.3 Reviewing, considering and commenting on the current Community Safety Agreement and the activities undertaken to address the priorities serves as a constructive approach for the Committee to fulfil its statutory requirement to scrutinise the strategic activity in the arena of crime and disorder. The focus of the Committee's scrutiny should be on the collective work of the partnership rather than the activities of the individual agencies.
- 3.4 All district/borough CSPs across Kent have scrutiny functions in place meeting the benchmark for annual scrutiny set out in the legislation; with some local Scrutiny Committees meeting more frequently to review the CSP plans as well as other Community Safety related topics.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Committee may resolve to:

- Note the refreshed Community Safety Agreement (April 2022) and make no comment.
- Make comment on the refreshed Community Safety Agreement (April 2022) and the year-end action plan and performance summary for 2021/22 .
- Offer recommendations to one or more of the responsible authorities.

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Kent Community Safety Agreement April 2022
- Appendix B - Kent CSA Action Plan and Performance Summary 2021/22

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