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To: Kent Community Safety Partnership – 25th March 2025

Classification: For Decision

Subject: Kent Community Safety Agreement Update

Summary This report details the annual review of the Kent Community Safety Agreement and recommended priorities for 2025/26

1.0 Background

1.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave statutory responsibility to local authorities (KCC/District/Boroughs), Kent Police and key partners to reduce crime and disorder in their communities. Under this legislation Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (now Community Safety Partnerships) were required to carry out 3 yearly audits and to implement crime reduction strategies. A formal review of the 1998 Act took place in 2006, with the result that three year audits were replaced with annual partnership strategic assessments and rolling partnership plans, whilst in two tier authority areas a statutory County Community Safety Agreement was introduced.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) outlines the key community safety priorities for the county along with the cross-cutting themes that support the identified priorities. It is a rolling document which is reviewed and refreshed annually with the relevant chapters and appendices being updated as required.
- 2.2 In the last review of the CSA which took place in March 2024 there were no changes to the priorities or cross-cutting themes, although it was noted that the cost of living crisis was the most significant emerging issue at that time affecting all sectors of society. However, it was agreed that any partnership activity which related specifically to that issue could be incorporated into existing priorities or themes. The current published version took effect from April 2024.
- 2.3 The following report details the latest review process that has been undertaken including the proposed refresh to the priorities and cross-cutting themes.

3.0 CSA Review Process

3.1 The review of the new Community Safety Agreement has taken into consideration the outcome of local district/borough strategic assessments, partnership plans, emerging issues and new legislation. Details of these elements are included in the draft refresh of the Community Safety Agreement attached.

3.2 Following strategic assessments undertaken by district/borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), partners are in the process of reviewing the priorities and local plans for 2025/26. At the time of writing, draft priorities have been received from all CSPs in Kent and although there may be some amendments prior to finalising the plans, it is not anticipated there will be significant changes. The following are some of the main issues that have been identified either as a priority, cross-cutting theme or as part of a broader theme:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Domestic Abuse
- Violence Against Women & Girls
- Serious Violence
- Safeguarding and Vulnerability
- Strengthening Communities
- Substance Misuse
- Extremism & Hate
- Crime (including acquisitive crime)
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Reducing Offending & Reoffending
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Young People (engagement)
- Road Safety

3.3 To help inform the review of the CSA, the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) commissioned the Kent Police Analytical Team to produce a strategic assessment for Kent. The document includes crime data as well as a range of datasets provided by partners including hospital admissions, fire data, road casualties, youth offending data, etc. The draft assessment, which is provisionally marked as 'restricted', has been shared with members of the KCSP Working Group and data providers for comment and feedback. The team are currently working with partners to produce an 'official' version that can be shared more widely and to inform an executive summary.

3.4 Using PESTELO analysis (horizon scanning) members of the KCSP Working Group helped to identify existing or emerging issues and opportunities that may need to be considered. Including: Government plans for devolution and local government reorganisation; elections taking place in 2025/26; introduction of new legislation including bills which have been enacted and those still going through parliament such as the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 and the Crime and Policing Bill; the outcome of Government consultations and new strategic guidance; the high cost of living and financial constraints for organisations; and opportunities and threats such as the use of artificial intelligence in everyday life. A brief summary of the PESTELO analysis is included in Appendix C of the attached document

3.5 There is a statutory duty to have due regard to the objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan, as such this has also been taken into consideration when updating the CSA. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner has produced a new Police and Crime Plan for 2025-2029. The PCC's strategic outcomes are to: Cut Crime, Support Victims, and Build Trust, which are supported by 4 key priorities: Protecting People, Protecting Places, Protecting Property, and Productive Partnerships. A brief overview is included in Chapter 6 of the CSA and a link to the full plan on the PCC's website, will be added when available.

4.0 Proposed Changes

4.1 There have been a number of minor changes within the document (as detailed in the version control) however the most significant updates are in the chapters covering key changes to the community safety landscape, key achievements, and updates to the appendices which include the horizon scanning (PESTELO), as well as a new chapter which includes details of the Police and Crime Plan (Chapter 6).

- 4.2 Although no major changes have been identified this year there are some existing or emerging issues which are worth noting, including:
- The high cost of living and ongoing funding pressures which continue to be identified as a significant issue affecting all sectors of society.
 - The Serious Violence duty placed on CSPs.
 - The Crime and Policing Bill, currently before parliament, which aims to introduce a range of measures to support delivery of the government’s Safer Streets Mission to reduce knife crime and violence against women and girls, and to increase public confidence in policing and the wider criminal justice system.
- 4.3 Whilst most of the current CSA priorities have been identified in the strategic assessments and community safety plans of local CSPs, ‘Road Safety’ continues to be a focus for partners at a county level and has been included in the Kent PCC’s new Police and Crime Plan within the ‘Protecting Places’ priority.
- 4.4 Based on the latest review, the existing priorities and cross-cutting themes continue to reflect the key issues for community safety partners and as such it is recommended that they are retained within the CSA as outlined below:

Priorities

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

Cross Cutting Themes

- Early intervention, prevention & education
- Reduce re-offending and support victims
- Improve quality of life and enhance community resilience
- Support mental health and wellbeing
- Response and Recovery from Significant Community Events

- 4.5 Although the recommendation is to retain the same priorities, the diagram used in previous version of the Community Safety Agreement has been updated (see Chapter 7). The PCC’s previous priorities from the former Police and Crime Plan (Making Kent Safer 2022-2025) have been removed and details of the new Police and Crime Plan have been included in a new Chapter (see Chapter 6).

5.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 As part of the CSA refresh the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is being reviewed. However, as there are no proposed changes to the priorities at this stage, and based on previous assessments, it is not anticipated that any identified group should be adversely impacted by the refresh of the CSA. In addition, in compliance with current requirements the CSA document will be accessibility checked prior to publication.

6.0 CSA Action Plan and Achievements

- 6.1 Partners are continuing to work towards the activities identified in the current CSA action plan linking in with various organisations and multi-agency groups across the county to help tackle the identified priorities and themes. The KCSP Working Group

which meets as a sub-group of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) continues to monitor the activities set out in the Action Plan.

- 6.2 Key achievements for 2024/25 delivered by partners are outlined in Chapter 5 of the draft Community Safety Agreement as well as in other papers that will be presented at the meeting including: Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) (formerly Domestic Homicide Reviews); funded projects delivered by a range of partners, workshops and events, information sharing, etc. Final feedback on all the actions within the plan will be sought from partners following year-end and if appropriate some additional details may be added to the key achievements section.
- 6.3 Following the refresh of the Community Safety Agreement, the action plan will also be reviewed and updated for 2025/26 by the KCSP Working Group with the support of the Kent Community Safety Team and presented at the next KCSP meeting.

7.0 Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

- 7.1 The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced the requirement for a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee to review the work of the partnership, as such on an annual basis KCC's Scrutiny Committee meets as the Crime and Disorder committee to act as a critical friend to scrutinise and challenge the work of the partnership and the outcomes from the Community Safety Agreement.
- 7.2 A date for the Crime and Disorder Committee has not been confirmed as yet but the lead agencies for each of the CSA priorities will be in attendance to represent the KCSP and respond to any queries raised. Any recommendations or suggested changes arising from Scrutiny will be fed back to the KCSP members and the Working Group for action as appropriate.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 The Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) is asked to:
- consider and comment on the draft Kent Community Safety Agreement;
 - agree the priorities and cross-cutting themes for 2025/26;
 - note the duty for partners to attend the Scrutiny Committee

Attachments:

Appendix A: Draft Refresh of Community Safety Agreement - April 2025

For Further Information:

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