

By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer
To: Crime and Disorder Committee – 5 June 2024
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
 - Integrated Care Boards (ICB)
 - 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 monitoring of delivery 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 2024 (see Appendix A). Full details of the review are included in the attached CSA document, however shown below are the current list of priorities for 2024/25 which remain unchanged from the previous year:

- 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 2024, a report is also attached (see Appendix B) which provides details on the related actions undertaken during 2023/24 by partners to deliver the priority outcomes from the Kent CSA published last year (April 2023).

2.6 In line with the Committee's previous requests the report (Appendix B) includes a summary of related data 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 2024) and make no comment.
- Make comment on the refreshed Community Safety Agreement (April 2024) and the year-end report on the priorities and actions for 2023/24 .
- Offer recommendations to one or more of the responsible authorities.

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Kent Community Safety Agreement April 2024
- Appendix B - Kent CSA Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Contact details:

Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer

anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk

03000 416478