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To: Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) – 14th July 2022

Classification: For Information

Subject: Kent Police Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021 - 2024

Summary This report provides an update on the Kent Police Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

1.0 Background / Introduction

- 1.1 The police service has come under much criticism in recent times following the sentencing of a serving police officer with the Metropolitan Police Service, for the murder of a young woman called Sarah Everard. This brutal and senseless act was carried out by someone whom the public were supposed to trust with their lives.
- 1.2 Kent Police instigated an immediate focus on how to maintain public trust and confidence following this tragic murder, and key to this has been listening and engaging with the public.

2.0 Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021 - 2023

- 2.1 Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is not a recent priority for Kent Police and has been an area of focus for many years. In 2017, the policing model changed and placed vulnerability at the heart of the service. Kent Police have continued to evolve and seek ways to improve and ensure the very best service is provided to the public.
- 2.2 This is reflected in Kent Polices Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities that provide the framework for everything Kent Police do and with this in mind have developed this overarching strategy which seeks to draw together the activity being undertaken across the Force.
- 2.3 The Tackling VAWG strategy (Appendix A) defines Kent Police’s approach to tackling crime and behaviour that disproportionately affects Women and Girls and as part of this, Kent Police will introduce an action plan to track progress and demonstrate commitment to tacking Violence Against Women and Girls.
- 2.4 The Kent Police approach underpins the principles of the Government’s Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (published in September 2021) and is consistent with the National Policing Strategy and Delivery Framework, developed by the

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Violence Against Women and Girls, DCC Maggie Blythe, which states:

“The term ‘violence against women and girls’ refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, ‘honour’-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and ‘honour’ killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online. While we use the term ‘violence against women and girls’, throughout this Strategy, this refers to all victims of any of these offences.”

- 2.5 Most importantly, the objectives have been shaped by the public, by collating feedback from community engagements that took place across Kent through October and November 2021.

3. Strategy Objectives

- 3.1 Whilst Kent Police are proud of our achievements, we recognise we can always do better and that is reflected in our plans. Our commitment is and has always been, that we will continue to work with our communities, to listen and shape our service to meet their needs. Kent Police seeks to improve our service by:
- Holding offenders to account for their actions ensuring that we effectively utilise the full range of preventative and protective measures in addition to seeking criminal justice outcomes.
 - Working with partners to create safe spaces for women and girls to live, work and socialise, improving feelings of safety.
 - Ensuring women and girls receive a quality service in line with our Mission Vision Values and Priorities by embedding the Victim Code and Witness Charter.
 - Raising standards of professional behaviour, addressing poor conduct of officers and staff and challenging attitudes that have no place in policing – conduct issues are managed by our Professional Standards Department, detailed in our Counter Corruption Strategy
 - Ensuring the effectiveness of our response by developing an evidence base on 'what works' and working in partnership to tackle the underlying causes that drive offences against women and girls
 - Supporting and delivering education programmes that address behaviours that feed negative attitudes. We will raise awareness of the experiences of women and girls and create an early intervention programme when young people are identified as presenting a risk.
 - Raising awareness throughout the organisation to ensure our attitudes and behaviours are in line with organisational expectations to enhance our culture and ensure that issues that affect women and girls are understood by all.
 - Deliver an effective communication strategy that encourages and maintains positive engagement internally and externally; keeping people informed of progress.

3.2 Kent Police will achieve this by focusing on five key areas as defined in the strategy:



4. Recommendations

4.1 The KCSP is asked to note the Kent Police Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

Attachments

Appendix A – Kent Police Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021 - 2024