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To: Kent Community Safety Partnership – 14th March 2024

Classification: For Decision

Subject: **Kent Community Safety Agreement Update**

Summary This report details the annual review of the Kent Community Safety Agreement, recommended priorities for 2024/25 and an update on the current action plan.

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 2023 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 2023.

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 Local district/borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) are in the process of undertaking their annual strategic assessments to identify their priorities and develop local plans for 2023/25. At the time of writing, draft priorities have been received from all CSPs in Kent. The following are some of the main issues that are emerging either as a priority, cross-cutting theme or as part of a broader theme. Whilst many of the overarching key issues faced by community safety partners remain largely the same, it is the focus areas and action plans which tend to change in response to the needs of the community. As some CSPs are still in the process of finalising their plans for the coming year, some themes from the list below may alter however it is not anticipated there will be significant changes to the types of priorities identified:
- Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Serious Violence
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Violence Against Women & Girls
 - Safeguarding and Vulnerability
 - Substance Misuse
 - Crime (including acquisitive crime)
 - Extremism & Hate
 - Serious and Organised Crime
 - Reducing Offending & Reoffending
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Strengthening Communities
 - Young People (engagement)
 - Road Safety
- 3.3 In terms of partnership data, the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) has commissioned the production of a strategic assessment for Kent, produced by the Kent Police Analytical Team. The document includes crime data as well as a range of datasets provided by partners on topics such as youth offending, hospital admissions, fire data, etc. In addition, appendices have also been produced providing a summary for each district/borough on a number of crime categories, these have been shared with partners via the Safer Communities Portal. The draft assessment itself has been shared with members of the KCSP Working Group for comment and feedback. The document is provisionally marked as 'restricted', but the protective marking will be confirmed once finalised. Feedback from partners is currently being incorporated into the assessment and some final changes need to be made in conjunction with the analytical team before completion. The aim is to include a brief summary of the key findings in Appendix B of the CSA, which will be updated prior to publication.
- 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 national and local elections taking place in 2024/25; introduction of new duties and strategies such as the Serious Violence Strategy; new national action plans such as the Government's ASB Action Plan and the Retail Crime Action Plan; new legislation including bills which have been enacted and those still going through parliament such as the Online Safety Act 2023 and the Criminal Justice Bill; the outcome of Government consultations which may impact the way in which Community Safety Partnerships function; cost of living crisis, financial constraints and changes to the way organisations deliver services; and new 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 In addition, the Police and Crime Plan, which is produced by the Police and Crime Commissioner, has also been taken into consideration when refreshing the CSA as the KCSP has a statutory duty to have due regard to the objectives set out in the plan. The three year plan entitled 'Making Kent Safer' April 2022 to March 2025 includes a set of guiding principles, key priorities and sets out what the PCC will do.

The plan remains unchanged for the year ahead, but as a brief summary, the focus areas for the priorities include: antisocial behaviour, violence against women & girls (VAWG), exploitation and abuse, organised crime & county lines, communities, road safety, and protecting young people. Further details can be found in Appendix D of the attached CSA and the full plan is available on the website.

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 the updates to the appendices which include the horizon scanning (PESTELO).

4.2 Although no major changes have been identified this year there are some existing or emerging issues which are worth noting, including:

- The cost of living crisis which continues to be identified as a significant issue within the horizon scanning affecting all sectors of society.
- The Home Office's statutory guidance on Serious Violence (published in December 2022) which placed a duty on CSPs to ensure preventing and reducing serious violence was a priority, as well as setting out the requirement for strategic needs assessments and serious violence strategies. Since the introduction of the guidance, the KCSP has worked in partnership with the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and the 20 specified authorities named in the duty, along with the relevant authorities and other key partners across Kent and Medway to develop the Kent and Medway Serious Violence Strategy. Work will be ongoing to support delivery against the three key strands identified in the strategy.
- The launch of the Government consultation in March 2023 and a number of associated documents including the Government's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan has brought an enhanced focus to the issue of ASB. The findings and recommendations from the consultation were published in November 2023 and subsequently the national action plan has been updated and new legislation in the form of the Criminal Justice Bill is going through parliament to strengthen the ASB powers available to agencies. In response to this renewed focus, the KCSP is hosting a multi-agency event on ASB in March 2024 and further work is already being considered for 2024/25.

4.3 As mentioned in previous reports whilst most of the current CSA priorities have been identified in the strategic assessments and community safety plans of local CSPs, 'Road Safety' is rarely listed as a standalone priority. This is not simply because it is not a concern but that local partnerships are limited in their ability to impact on this particular issue. At a county level road safety is still a focus for partners.

4.4 It is also worth noting that in 2023/24 the Government have been consulting on Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in particular looking at the relationship between CSPs and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) as well as looking at how CSPs currently work. Recommendations from the first survey have been published including closer working between CSPs and the PCC, as well as recommendations relating to the publication of strategic assessments. Findings from the second survey are yet to be released. Once the recommendations have been published and detailed guidance provided CSPs will be able to review and determine any impacts and changes required for future partnership working.

- 4.5 It is clear from the latest review that the current priorities and cross-cutting themes appropriately 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

5.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 As part of the CSA refresh the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is being reviewed. The aim of the CSA is to make Kent's communities safer and stronger by bringing together partners from across the county to agree the key priorities and to develop joined-up approaches. Whilst it is recognised that some people may be more vulnerable and at greater risk of becoming a victim, the CSA is intended to benefit all residents. As there are no proposed changes to the priorities, and based on the EqIA undertaken last year, it is not anticipated that any identified group should be adversely impacted by the refresh of the CSA or the activities within the action plan. 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) is monitoring the activities set out in the Action Plan.
- 6.2 Key achievements for 2023/24 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 Homicide Reviews (DHRs); 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 at 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 2024/25 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 The provisional date for Crime and Disorder Committee is 5th June 2024 with the lead agencies for each of the CSA priorities 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 refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement;
 - agree the priorities and cross-cutting themes for 2024/25;
 - note the duty for partners to attend the upcoming Scrutiny Committee arrangements (provisional date 5th June 2024).

Attachments:

Appendix A: Draft Refresh of Community Safety Agreement - April 2024

For Further Information:

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