

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 21 January 2021

**Reporting officer:** Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit)

**Subject:** Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the de-merger of the joint Dartford and Gravesham CSP

### **Purpose and summary of the report:**

This report is provided to ensure that members of the Committee are fully informed of a proposal that was put forward by Gravesham Borough Council for the de-merger of the joint Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) last year and which was subsequently agreed, in pursuance of Gravesham's wish to establish a dedicated District-level CSP.

A delegated decision taken by the Cabinet Lead Member, Councillor Shane Mochrie-Cox, countersigned by the Leader of the Council, for the withdrawal of Gravesham from the joint CSP was taken and published in October in order that a new Partnership could be established without delay. Reports detailing the new arrangements have been previously provided to both the Council's Cabinet and the Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee.

### **Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the content of the report and the Terms of Reference of the new Gravesham CSP.

### **1. Introduction and Rationale**

- 1.1 This report informs the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee of the de-merger of the joint CSP that was initiated by Gravesham Borough Council late last year. Following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, both Dartford and Gravesham had established Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), now known as Community Safety Partnerships, in order to meet their statutory obligations. The separate Partnerships were then merged in December 2006 following a Home Office-led review. The merger of Partnerships, particularly in two-tier Authorities, was seen at that time as a positive means of pooling resources and reducing the level of demand made on those agencies needing to participate in Partnership meetings.
- 1.2 During the lifetime of the CSP since the merger, the joint arrangements generally worked well and strong relationships have been formed across the agencies represented. However, many things have changed during the course of the last 14 years that led Gravesham to conclude it was the right time to re-establish its own separate and independent statutory CSP.
- 1.3 In respect of the Partnership directly, there had been significant changes to its structure and a shift from joint cross-Borough sub-groups of the CSP to separate working groups to address a number of very local community safety priorities. This had resulted in the CSP being the **only** joint meeting that remained. Meetings were rarely able to consider local issues or operational matters in any real detail, tending primarily to discuss issues only at a very strategic level. In

part, this is a reflection of the different approaches that have been taken at a local level, the different needs of our local communities and the fact that certain community safety issues, such as dealing with Serious Organised Crime, require a specific focus and representatives with grassroots knowledge.

- 1.4 It is also the case that whilst Dartford and Gravesham may share some headline community safety objectives, the degree to which we each need to prioritise tackling certain issues differs as our experience of them is not the same. We have a responsibility to ensure that we can, through multi-agency working, be as effective as possible in tackling the crime and disorder concerns that are most prevalent in our area and most important to our local people. Gravesham has concluded that this will be best achieved through a dedicated CSP.
- 1.5 Community safety, crime and ASB are a key priority for local people and matters that are high on the public agenda. It is hoped that establishing a new CSP serving the Borough with a strong public profile will increase confidence amongst local residents and those working in Gravesham, that the Council takes these matters very seriously and that a strong multi-agency relationship exists that it working proactively and collaboratively to reduce crime and disorder.

## **2. Gravesham Community Safety Partnership – Terms of Reference and Organisational Structure**

- 2.1 Part of the process of establishing a new CSP for Gravesham has included the creation of new Terms of Reference. Members of this Committee will be aware that a number of multi-agency groups have been in place for some time to progress work to address the strategic priorities contained in the current Community Safety Strategy. These include the Gravesham Vulnerability Panel, the ASB Strategy Delivery Group and the Serious Organised Crime Group. Prior to the dissolution of the joint Partnership, work had already begun with a view to establishing a Youth Engagement Panel (YEP) (to carry out both preventative work with individual young people identified as being at risk of becoming involved in crime or ASB or who are already involved in offending behaviour) and an Area Based Action Group (to take a multi-agency approach in reducing crime and persistent ASB in identified geographical hotspot locations across the Borough).
- 2.2 The YEP is now set to hold its first meeting in January 2021 and the first meeting of the Area Based Action Group will take place in February 2021. As both these Groups will make a valuable contribution in addressing CSP priorities, these have been incorporated into the new CSP structure and progress being made will be reported back to the CSP quarterly meetings.
- 2.3 Joint work between Gravesham Borough Council, Porchlight and Kent Police in the latter part of last year resulted in Gravesham Council producing a dedicated strategy aimed at tackling Modern Slavery in the Borough that was launched in October 2020. A Gravesham Modern Slavery Working Group has been established to take this work forward and as this too contributes to the Partnership agenda, the Modern Slavery Working Group has also been incorporated into the CSP structure.
- 2.4 The draft Terms of Reference for the CSP and the new structure will be considered at the CSP meeting to be held in January 2021 and are attached in Appendix 2 for information.

## **3. Next steps for the Gravesham CSP**

- 3.1 Gravesham Council's Community Safety Unit has completed the annual Strategic Assessment (audit of crime and disorder) on behalf of the Partnership, the findings of which are the first step in identifying local priorities that will then form the basis of a new Gravesham Community Safety Strategy. However, it is recognised good practice that there should not be reliance on the findings of the Assessment alone in determining future work but that formally recorded data should be supplemented with the outcomes of a public consultation exercise.

The Community Safety Unit is now in the process of arranging a public community safety survey that will shortly go live for a period of 4 weeks. This will aim to collect the views of local residents and people working in the Borough on what they feel are the key priorities which the Partnership needs to address to improve community safety and reduce crime and ASB in their neighbourhoods.

- 2.2 The public consultation survey will be published on the Council's website but will also be shared with all statutory and other partner agencies who may wish to promote it through their own media channels. The intention is to publicise the survey as extensively as possible to encourage a good return that will be representative of the local population. The Council's CSU will also ensure that links to the survey are circulated to a range of community groups and organisations to allow as many people as possible to participate.

### **3. Recommended priorities for the new Community Safety Strategy**

- 3.1 The expectation is that the public consultation survey findings may provide local information that will add detail to the intelligence picture that can be taken into account when developing initiatives or targeting activity. The recommended priorities emerging from the Assessment and at this early stage are:

- Violent crime and domestic abuse;
- Persistent anti-social behaviour and environmental crime;
- Preventing offending and reducing reoffending;
- Protecting vulnerable people and strengthening communities.

- 3.2 Members of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee will be provided with a summary of the key findings of the Assessment, the outcomes of the public consultation process and the new Community Safety Strategy at the Committee's meeting scheduled for March 2021.

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b>Legal</b>	The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on 'responsible authorities' to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are made up of representatives from the following responsible authorities: police; local authorities; fire and rescue authorities, probation/community rehabilitation services; health authorities (clinical commissioning groups). The de-merger of the joint Partnership has been formally approved by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (under powers vested in him through the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011).
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	The move to an independent Gravesham CSP rather than a joint Dartford and Gravesham CSP does not carry any financial implications. Funds used to support community safety activity are through the Council's internal budget (which will not be affected) and through funding secured by the Community Safety Unit through external bidding processes. A locally-focussed CSP will be cost-effective as officer time will be dedicated to local issues rather than on occasion having to take account of community safety matters across both Dartford and Gravesham.
<b>Risk assessment</b>	Failure to have an effective Partnership in place would be damaging to the Council's reputation and be a failure of the duty created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<i>A data protection impact assessment (OPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i> a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <u>personal data</u> or <u>special category data</u> or <u>criminal offence data</u> ? No. b. If yes to question a., have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/a c. If no to question b., please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? No. b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? Yes – it will increase our ability to focus on areas and communities that experience crime and ASB disproportionately.
	<i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i>
<b>Corporate Business Plan</b>	The establishing of a District-level CSP makes a direct contribution to improving public safety linked to People and Place in the Council's Corporate Plan.
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The Gravesham CSP will be a key driver of the Council's programme of work to improve community safety and reduce crime and ASB.
<b>Climate Change</b>	None.
<b>Digital/website website implications</b>	Once established, the Community Safety pages on the Council website will need to be updated. The public consultation process in developing the new Community Safety Strategy will include an online survey and its findings and the final Strategy should be published on the Council's website.
<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	The safeguarding of vulnerable young people and adults is a high priority for the Council and partner agencies and this will be reflected in the new Community Safety Strategy.