

Classification: Public
Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee
Date: 21 April 2021
Reporting officer: Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit)
Subject: Draft Community Safety Strategy 2021-24 (Gravesham Community Safety Partnership)

Purpose and summary of the report:

This report provides Members of the Committee with the draft Community Safety Strategy 2021-24 that has been prepared by the Council's Community Safety Unit (CSU) on behalf of our newly-established Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP). This Strategy now provides the foundation for the direction of multi-agency community safety activity in the Borough over the next three years.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- i) Consider and offer comment on the draft Strategy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All CSPs have a statutory duty to complete a Community Strategy or Plan to structure partnership activity in meeting their objectives of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. In January 2021, Gravesham's CSP considered the findings of the annual Strategic Assessment (an audit of recorded crime and ASB data provided by a range of partner agencies and services). This was the first stage in the process of developing a new Strategy allowing an opportunity to identify changes in levels of offending within different crime categories, any emerging trends and of course, this year, the impact of the pandemic on crime and disorder.
- 1.2 The Partnership has always recognised that it should not rely solely on recorded statistics in determining its priorities but that data-based intelligence needs to be supplemented by the views of local people. A Community Safety Public Consultation was conducted during the month of February to gather information on the experiences and concerns of local residents, those who work in the Borough and those who visit Gravesham. The key findings of the consultation have been incorporated into the draft Strategy itself and have served to support the priorities that had begun to be identified following the completion of the Assessment.

2. A dedicated Strategy

- 2.1 Members of the Committee will be aware that in October 2020, Gravesham Borough Council took the decision to withdraw from the joint Dartford and Gravesham CSP which had been in place since 2006. This has been a positive move towards creating a Partnership that can be dedicated to meeting the community safety needs of our Borough

and that has the ability to focus on those crime and ASB issues that are having the greatest impact on local people and our neighbourhoods. As a consequence of the de-merger, our CSP now has a new structure and a number of operational groups have very recently been established to ensure that we can work more effectively in meeting our objectives. The details of the structure of the new Partnership are also contained within the draft Strategy.

2.2 In addition to the findings of the Strategic Assessment and the responses received through the Community Safety Public Consultation, certain other factors have been taken into account in identifying those areas of work that form the priorities contained in this new Community Safety Strategy. These include:

- Volume – the level of offences within a crime category as a proportion of total crime;
- Level of harm – the impact that a type of offending has on victims and communities;
- Community concern – the level of priority that local people have attributed an issue;
- Partnership added-value – the extent to which a multi-agency approach can enhance the ability of agencies to tackle a particular strand of offending behaviour;
- Trend analysis – patterns of increase in an offence type (where it is possible to ascertain).

Consideration is also given to existing and emerging national priorities, legal obligations (existing or anticipated) faced by CSPs, policing priorities contain within the Kent Police Control Strategy and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's Policing and Crime Plan.

2.3 Having given due attention to the above, the following broad priorities have been identified:

- i) Violent crime including domestic abuse
- ii) Persistent anti-social behaviour and environmental crime
- iii) Preventing offending and reducing re-offending
- iv) Protecting vulnerable people and strengthening communities
- v) Communication and engagement

The rationale for the selection of each of these priorities is detailed in the Strategy together with information that describes what our focus will be, what we hope to achieve and how we will be accountable. 'Communication and engagement' has not featured as a headline priority in previous strategies but it is felt that this is fundamental in ensuring that local people are kept informed of work that is taking place, building public confidence that concerns are being listened to and efforts are being made to address them and ultimately, improving perceptions of safety across the Borough.

2.4 The draft Strategy was approved by Gravesham's CSP in March. The Partnership also agreed that work would be carried out separately to devise a suite of performance indicators using both quantitative and qualitative data (similar to the approach taken corporately by the Council for performance monitoring purposes) that will be accompanied by contextual information. Progress reports will then be provided to the CSP at each of its meetings as a standing agenda item. There may also be further actions that will be added to those already included in the Strategy as it is finalised.

2.4 The Strategy will be reviewed annually in order that we can adapt to any unforeseen changing circumstances, any changes in legislation that may create new responsibilities for the Partnership or any emergent local issue that requires a more intensive and longer-term multi-agency intervention to reach a resolution.

IMPLICATIONS	
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to work with partner agencies to address crime and ASB and SOC (Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Serious Organised Crime Act 2015).
Finance and Value for Money	Delivery of the Strategy has a resource implication in terms of officer time for all of the statutory partner agencies of the CSP but this is part of daily business. Some funding to support aspects of the project will be capable of being met through the CSU's annual working budget (and potentially through external funding subject to successful bids to the PCC (Crime Reduction Grant) and any Central Government funding streams that may become available..
Risk assessment	Failure work in partnership to try to tackle crime and disorder would be a breach of our legal obligations as a responsible authority under CDA legislation and a failure to meet our duty of care to protect our people from harm.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><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></p> <p>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>? Yes (but as approved through information-sharing protocols in existence between partner agencies).</p> <p>b. If yes to question a., have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/a</p> <p>c. If no to question b., please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>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.</p> <p>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 protect often the most vulnerable of people from harm and ensure that they have equal access to support and assistance.</p>
	<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>
Corporate Business Plan	The Strategy makes a direct contribution to improving public safety linked to People and Place in the Corporate Plan.
Crime and Disorder	The Strategy will form part of the Council's programme of work to improve community safety and protecting vulnerable people from harm.
Climate Change	None.
Digital/website website implications	Once finalised, the Strategy should be published on the Council's website (Community Safety web pages).
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	The safeguarding of vulnerable young people and adults is a high priority for the Council and all partner agencies; the work of the CSP through the delivery of the Strategy will contribute to the Authority's own objectives for reducing crime and ASB and creating a safe working and living environment.