

**Report to:** People Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 25 June 2018

**By:** Director of Adult Social Care and Health

**Title:** Annual Review of Safer Communities Headline Activity, Priorities and Issues

**Purpose:** To update the Committee on headline activity in relation to Safer Communities in 2017/18 and the priorities and issues highlighted in the Partnership Business Plan

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (1) to consider and comment on community safety work in 2017/18 and the priorities and issues identified for 2018/19;**
  - (2) to identify any specific issues that should be considered for inclusion in the Committee's future work programme.**
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## **1 Background Information**

1.1 The County Council's priorities for community safety are informed by the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan April 2017 to March 2020, which has been agreed by the partnership and is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.

## **2 Supporting Information**

2.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 In 2017 the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner conducted a review of the Community Safety Partnership funding. The aim of the review was to assess how the current £583,202 of Community Safety Partnership funding can be most appropriately apportioned to support the Police and Crime Plan 2017/21. As a result of the review the allocation is now apportioned across the District and Borough based Community Safety Partnerships. The overall allocation for East Sussex has increased by 20% from £186,000 to £222,897.

### Headline Activity

2.3 Over the past three years there have been significant changes nationally in the way that performance information is viewed. Agencies have moved away from numerical targets and measures, focussing instead on broader aims over longer periods. This is reflected in the Sussex Police and Crime Plan for 2017/21, and the Sussex Police Operational Delivery Plan 2017/18. The Safer Communities Partnership has also mirrored this trend and has developed a headline report, which monitors outcomes and activity as opposed to targets.

2.4 At the end of 2017/18, the recorded levels of total crime had increased by 3,051/ +9.7%. This is preceded by an increase of +3,662/ +13% in 2015/16. Although total crime appears to be increasing, an increase in the number of crimes recorded does not necessarily mean the level of crime has increased. For many types of crime, police recorded crime statistics only cover crimes that come to the attention of the police and can be affected by changes in policing activity and recording practice and by willingness of victims to report.

2.5 For example, there has been an increase (+12.9%) in Violent Crime as a whole, but we need to be mindful that these figures also include reports of Sexual Offences and Domestic Abuse, which we are actively asking people to report, and also reflects a longer term national trend. Locally, in the last 12 months (to March 2018), Serious Sexual Offences have risen by 20.3% (+176) and reports of domestic abuse crimes have increased by 632 (+15%).

2.6 Between April 2017 and March 2018, there were 732 high risk domestic violence and abuse cases discussed at the East Sussex Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs). This was an increase of 104 (+17%) when compared to the previous year. There have been two Domestic Homicides Review requests during this financial year.

2.7 According to the Office for National Statistics, Fraud is the most common type of crime in England & Wales and is becoming more complex and deceptive, much of which is targeted at vulnerable and elderly people. The East Sussex Against Scams Partnership (ESASP) launched in March 2017 to encourage organisations to sign up to the Charter and pledge their commitment to help raise awareness about scams. By the end of March 2018, 80 organisations had joined the ESASP Charter and, with the assistance of other East Sussex SCAM champions, over 822 residents had participated in Friends against Scams awareness sessions. Further information on the work that is being undertaken in East Sussex is described in the attached In Focus Newsletter (Appendix 2).

2.8 Think Protect Connect, a programme for promoting digital resilience and critical thinking skills in the online world, has been integrated into the East Sussex Community Safety Education Programme 2017/18 and is being rolled out to primary schools. Over 30 schools and organisations have received this programme reaching over 800 young people to date with over 120 sessions being delivered. The programme provides schools and other youth settings with a range of innovative resources to safeguard children and young people from online radicalisation and extremism.

2.9 The reported instances of modern slavery and human trafficking are increasing nationally each year, and the reported instances in Sussex have followed this national trend. From April 2017 to March 2018, there were a total of 119 referrals to Sussex Police from referring agencies (13 from Local Authorities). Sussex Police made 36 referrals (14 adults and 22 minors) to The National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The most recorded exploitation type for potential victims exploited as an adult was labour exploitation, which includes criminal exploitation such as cannabis cultivation and County Lines drugs supply.

2.10 The number of adults in treatment for substance misuse in East Sussex in the 12 months to March 2018 was 2,149. This was a reduction of 7.6% when compared to the previous year. Of the individuals in treatment, 49% were receiving treatment for opiate misuse, which was slightly less than the national figure of 53%. Both nationally and locally, there are fewer drug users coming into treatment, particularly in the under 25s, although the proportion of older heroin users aged 40 and over in treatment with poor health has been increasing in recent years. These individuals are also more susceptible to overdose and drug related deaths.

2.11 Nationally, there has been a dramatic and tragic increase in drug misuse deaths since 2012. This increase has also been reflected in East Sussex and the latest statistics from the Office National Statistics (ONS) shows that in 2014/2016; there were 69 deaths recorded (4.8 per 100,000 population), which is the highest number recorded since comparable statistics in 2005. Hastings has the highest rate of male drug misuse deaths of all the Local Authorities in the South East (17.4 per 100,000 males). It also has the third highest rate of all Local Authorities in England.

#### Partnership Priorities April 2018 to March 2020

2.12 The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership undertakes a Strategic Assessment of Community Safety every three years with an annual refresh in order to select work streams and plan activity for the year ahead. To ensure the partnership is embracing the Modern Crime Prevention Strategy and the Serious Organised Crime Strategy, the Strategic Assessment of Community Safety uses MoRiLE (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement), which helps us to look at the threat, risk and harm of an issue and the impact it has. It provides an evidence base for selecting and confirming partnership priorities. The refresh is informed by an Annual Safer People

Safer Places Engagement Event, where a range of individuals, who work, live and support various people in East Sussex are asked to discuss our priority areas and decide whether there are any new and emerging issues that we should be addressing.

2.13 Over the past decade, the world has changed significantly and new threats, new challenges and new types of crime have surfaced. There has been a notable shift away from traditional crime types to new emerging threats such as cyber-crime, human trafficking, child exploitation and serious organised violence related to County Lines. County Lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons. It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) with gangs using both vulnerable children and adults to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

2.14 It is evident that as we move forward, the broader threat of exploitation is something that should be considered within the field of community safety. Many of the threats identified through our engagement with a range of individuals, from directors to services users, who work, live and support various people in East Sussex, cross over into the sphere of exploitation of both vulnerable adults and young people, and it is clear that these should therefore not be considered in isolation.

2.15 There are commonalities between all of these areas, with vulnerable individuals within our communities being targeted and exploited by others for personal, commercial or financial gain. Many of these vulnerable people also have complex needs, which would relate to any one or a combination of substance misuse, accommodation and mental and physical health.

2.16 Our Partnership Priorities for 2018/19 all relate to Serious and Organised Crime and encompass:

- Vulnerable Victims of Fraud, Rogue Trading and Cyber-enabled Crime
- Cyber Crime
- Vulnerable People being Exploited and Recruited by Organised Crime Groups
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

2.17 In addition to the priorities adopted by the partnership, work will be undertaken in relation to the areas outlined below

- Preventing Violent Extremism
- Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- Offending
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse.

2.18 For those areas that have not been agreed as priorities, such as street communities, road safety and elder abuse, it is important to note that these are being dealt with through other partnership structures. It is also important to note that the partnership remains interested and involved in these areas of work and provide support where appropriate. The full descriptions of the priorities are set out in the attached Business Plan (Appendix 1).

### Community Safety Developments in East Sussex 2018/19

2.19 The Modern Crime Prevention Strategy was published by the Home Office in March 2016 and updates the way we think about crime prevention. It aims to build on the successes of the past while making the most of new research, techniques and technology. The actions outlined within the Strategy represent the start of a fundamental shift in the way all partners work together to prevent crime. It is hoped the impact of the new approach will not just be seen in crime rates, but also in public perceptions of crime, the Plans of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and members of organisations like Neighbourhood Watch.

2.20 In July 2017, the Government published the 2017 Drug Strategy which sets out clear expectations for action from a wide range of partners, including those in education, health, safeguarding, criminal justice, housing and employment. As set out in the Modern Crime Prevention Strategy, drug-related and drug-enabled activities are key drivers of both new and traditional crime.

2.21 Drugs and the associated criminality, Anti-Social Behaviour, and other social harms, are also highlighted within the Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Local Profile for 2017. This Profile helps to inform local and national partnerships of the profile of the SOC threat within each local area and to update on some of the activity that has taken place over the year. It supports a partnership plan for how to tackle any issues over the coming year and how to further develop any partnership activity. The Government has just launched a new [Serious Violence Strategy](#) which will assist in developing this work. The Strategy sets out the government's response to serious violence and recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. Action in the strategy is centred on four main themes:

- Tackling County Lines and misuse of drugs
- Early intervention and prevention
- Supporting communities and local partnerships
- Law enforcement and the criminal justice response.

2.22 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 came into force on 31 July 2015. This is intended to give this crime type a far higher profile and includes new statutory duties. However, modern slavery remains a hidden issue and available data and information is a considerable weakness, both locally and nationally. This is the second year that modern slavery has been adopted by the partnership and the significant work that is being undertaken in East Sussex is described in the attached In Focus Newsletter (Appendix 3).

2.23 In May 2017 the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) programme evolved from just looking at serious acquisitive crime to bringing all offenders into scope. The IOM cohort now includes domestic violence perpetrators, Multi- Agency Public Protection 1, serious and organised crime, child sexual exploitation, gangs and serious acquisitive crime offenders.

2.24 East Sussex County Council is currently applying to the Ministry of Defence for Silver accreditation as a Defence Employer. This award, if successful, will demonstrate the Council's commitment to supporting employees who are part of the armed forces community, either as currently serving Reservists or Cadet Armed Forces Volunteers, or as veterans/service leavers or family members. Councillor Bill Bentley is now the East Sussex Armed Forces Member Champion and the County Council has recently trained 35 members of staff to become Armed Forces Service Champions, significantly increasing the numbers of trained staff who are aware of the potential challenges faced by the armed forces community in accessing public services.

2.25 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a number of new duties for local authorities and the Safer East Sussex Team has taken the lead in implementing these duties and ensuring compliance with the legislation on behalf of the County Council. Prevent forms part of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) which is currently under review and has recently been published.

### **3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 The Modern Crime Prevention Strategy has developed the community safety agenda to consider the broader threat of exploitation. The introduction of a new style of strategic assessment has identified priorities concerning vulnerable individuals who are being exploited by others for personal, commercial or financial gain. A common theme of the work of the partnership continues to be people with complex needs, which would relate to any one or a combination of substance misuse, accommodation and mental and physical health.

3.2 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the performance and achievements of the Partnership and their plans for 2018 to 2020.

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#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None