

**Report to:** Children Services Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015

**By:** Director of Adult Social Care and Director of Children's Services

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

**Purpose:** To update the Committee on performance in relation to safer communities in 2014/15 and the priorities and issues for 2015/16 highlighted in the Partnership Business Plan, focusing on Domestic Abuse, Prevent and Youth Offending Team.

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## ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

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The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the performance in 2014/15 and the priorities and issues identified for 2015/16
  2. Note the relevant components of the agenda specific to Children Services.
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### **1 Background**

1.1 The County Council's priorities for community safety are informed by the East Sussex Safer Communities Partners Business Plan 2015/16 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. The Safer Communities budget position for 2014/15 showed £297,253 being carried forward to 2015 which is the sum of the Local Area Agreement accrual (£246,000) and the carried forward underspend/reserve (£51,253). The reserve carried forward will be required to fund the shortfall in the base budget for 2015/16.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has indicated that the allocation of £275,000 from the Sussex Safer Community Fund will be maintained at this level for 2015/16.

#### Performance Summary

2.2 During 2014/15, overall crime in East Sussex has increased by 15.7% when compared to the previous year. This comes after significant reductions over the past 8 years. However, this increase is in part down to the changes in recording practices that were introduced across the country and the drive to increase the reporting of Sexual Offences, Hate Crimes and Domestic Abuse will have also impacted on this figure.

2.3 The number of cases discussed at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) in the county continues to rise. A total of 535 cases were discussed at MARAC in East Sussex during 2014/15, an increase of 40 on the same period in the previous year. While this rise in volume is welcome, by April 2014, MARACs in the county had moved from a monthly to a weekly cycle resulting in an increasingly effective process for the safeguarding of domestic violence victims, children and others at risk.

2.4 The total numbers of police recorded reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in East Sussex continue to fall. Sussex Police recorded a total of 15,965 reports during 2014/15, a reduction of 891 on the previous year. Although this reduction does not align with the Police and Crime Plan, the Sussex Police Local Neighbourhood Survey shows that negative perceptions of

ASB<sup>1</sup> amongst the public have also reduced, with only 16.9% of those surveyed explaining that they thought ASB was a fairly big or very big problem, compared to 27.3% in 2013/14.

#### Partnership Priorities 2015/16

2.6 Each year, the Safer Communities Partnership undertakes a Strategic Intelligence Assessment to examine emerging trends in relation to community safety and to inform the business plan priorities for the coming year. This year the priorities for the partnership are, anti-social behaviour and hate crime; domestic abuse; reducing offending; preventing violent extremism; road safety; sexual violence; street communities; substance misuse. The full descriptions of the priorities are set out in the attached **Business Plan**.

#### Community Safety Developments in East Sussex 2015/16

2.7 This financial year will see a number of significant developments in safer communities work; the selection of new priority areas of preventing violent extremism and street communities; commissioning of domestic and sexual abuse services, the implementation of East Sussex County Council's White Ribbon action plan and the development of a Local Policing Model for Sussex.

2.8 In response to the growing security threat the Government introduced the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This legislation has introduced a number of new duties for local authorities. A Counter Terrorism Local profile has just been published and this highlights the threats to East Sussex, some of which will require further work by East Sussex County Council. From 1st July 2015 East Sussex County Council will have a legal obligation to comply with the new Prevent statutory duty. More information on the role of the County Council in Preventing Violent Extremism can be found in the **Scrutiny Information Pack** (appendix 2).

2.9 Street Communities includes rough sleepers as well as those who are in hostels or Bed and Breakfast, squatting or sofa surfing. In East Sussex the percentage of women within this group is higher than the national average at 25% and they represent a particularly vulnerable sub group. Members of the street community generally have significant mental health, drug, alcohol and physical health problems, but have difficulty engaging with health and support services. In order to address these issues the Safer Communities Partnership has established a Steering Group and is in the process of developing a multi-agency action plan to address the issues raised.

2.10 There have been a number of significant developments relating to domestic abuse including; increased investment from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Joint Commissioning, alignment of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, and the White Ribbon Award. These developments are discussed in more detail in **Scrutiny Information Pack**.

2.11 The Local Policing Model sets out the vision for policing Sussex in 2020 as a service that protects the community, is relentless in the pursuit of criminals and has an empowered workforce with integrity at its core. The new model, which will be implemented in stages over the next four years, shapes the service so that Sussex Police are best equipped to deal with emerging threats, within their financial constraints. This will result in a smaller organisation but one that works differently, giving officers and staff the tools they need to deliver a service to the public in the way they best want it. The key changes for the future is contained in the **Scrutiny Information Pack**.

### **3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

3.1 The Safer Communities Partnership has agreed their priorities for partnership working for 2015/16. Two new priorities have been selected, preventing violent extremism and street communities. There have been many achievements delivered by the Partnership and East Sussex County Council including gaining the White Ribbon Campaign award. The Police and Crime Commissioner has provided additional investment in victim services for domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Partnership will be working closely with Sussex Police as the new Policing Model is developed.

3.2 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the performance and achievements of the Partnership and their plans for 2015/16.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey asks the public if they perceive various strands of ASB as a fairly big or very big problem

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**LOCAL MEMBERS**

This report impacts on all wards across the County.

**APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan 2015/16
- Appendix 2 Scrutiny Information Pack