

Rother District Council

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| Report to | - | Overview and Scrutiny Committee |
| Date | - | 16 March 2020 |
| Report of the | - | Executive Director |
| Subject | - | Annual Report of the Safer Rother Partnership and Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety |

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee make any recommendations arising from the report to the Chair of the Safer Rother Partnership for consideration;
 - 2) the Council's work in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety be noted; and
 - 3) the legislative changes to Safeguarding work on Council Policy and Procedure be noted.
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Head of Service: Richard Parker-Harding

Introduction

1. The purpose of this annual report is to provide information on the work of the Rother Community Safety Partnership [known as the Safer Rother Partnership (SRP)] for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review, scrutinise and make reports or recommendations to the responsible authorities of the SRP in-line with the Council's statutory responsibilities, under sections 19-21 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. The report also includes information about the Council's own responsibilities and actions with regard to community safety and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
2. The Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) responsible authorities are; Rother District Council (RDC), Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Probation Service and Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group.
3. Councillor Jay Brewerton is RDC's nominated representative, Chair of the SRP, Co-Chair of the Joint Community Safety Partnership Board with Hastings and the Council's representative on the Board of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Performance of the Safer Rother Partnership 2019/20

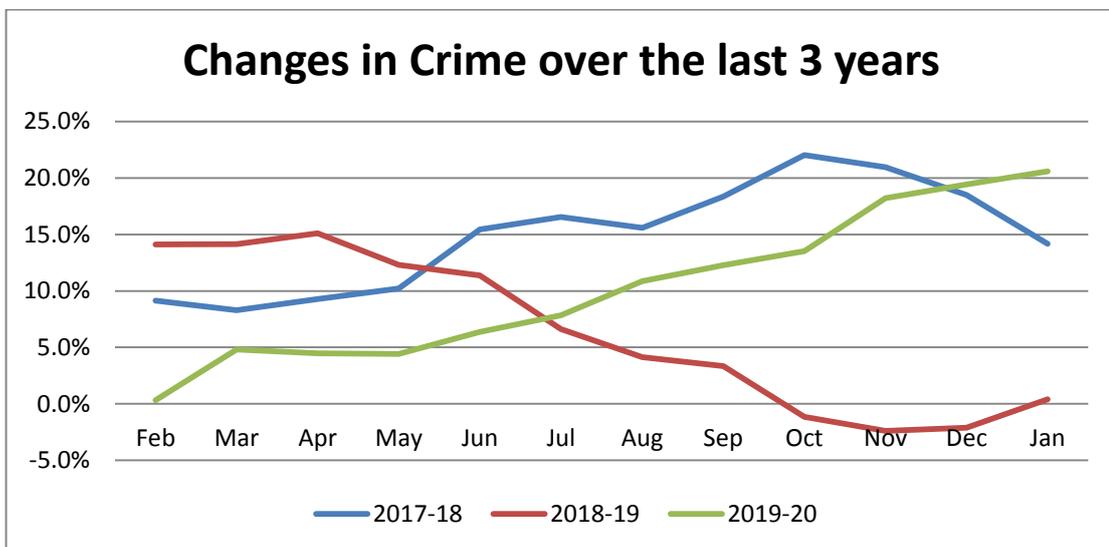
4. During 2019/20, the Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership Board's joint priorities were:
 - The Street Community
 - Violent Crime (including Domestic Abuse)
 - Youth Crime and vulnerable young people

- Road Safety
- Partnership communications and reassurance messages

5. There were 6,112 crimes in Rother reported to Sussex Police during the 12 months to the end of January 2020, which is 1,044 more reports than in the previous 12 months, and the increase of 20.6% is nearly twice that for East Sussex as a whole (10.4%). In comparison, Eastbourne saw the smallest increase in reports of 5.8%.

| TOTAL CRIME ACROSS EAST SUSSEX | % INCREASE |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Eastbourne | 5.8 |
| Hastings | 7.3 |
| Lewes | 10.7 |
| Rother | 20.6 |
| Wealden | 13.0 |
| East Sussex | 10.4 |
| Sussex | 10.6 |

6. Over the last three years we have seen changes in the total crime reported to Sussex Police which were similar to the countywide picture. In Rother, the highest percentage increase was in December 2017 (22%) and the lowest (-2.3%) in December 2018. The green line shows the percentage change this year, however as the starting point in February 2019 was very low, the percentage increase seems high in percentage terms. This may reflect that last year was lower than the usual base line for most areas.



7. The following crime types have seen decreases in the 12 months to the end of January 2020:

- Arson
- Robbery Business
- Serious Sexual Offences
- Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) against Person

There have been increases in most crime types, however high percentage increases in certain crimes are actually only small numbers. Of the violent crimes recorded there was an increase of 481 crimes, 199 of these were

Domestic Violence Crimes. The SRP has carried out another successful White Ribbon Campaign and other initiatives to encourage reporting and signposts victims of domestic abuse to access vital services e.g. the Portal, the Council's Housing Department and Refuge.

8. There was an overall increase in reports of ASB in 2019/20:
 - ASB Nuisance – 1,468 reports
 - ASB Environmental – 97 reports
 - ASB Personal – 193 reports

9. The SRP delivered numerous key initiatives in 2019/20 to reduce crime and the impact of crime and ASB:
 - a) Provided the support for high and medium risk victims of ASB through multi-agency monthly meetings with e.g. Police, Mediation, Registered Social Landlords. Community Protection Warning Letters significantly reduced the significant impact of ASB by eight households on three roads. The Safe From Harm service was also funded and has proved successful in case managing complex cases that were resource intensive for the Council and Police.

 - b) The CSP has also funded The Pelham to provide a safe space after school as additional provision for young people in Sidley and CCTV for Bexhill Museum, which provides CCTV coverage of Egerton Park and outside the public toilets. Recordings from the CCTV coverage outside the Devonshire Square toilets has been used a number of times this year by Sussex Police to assist with prosecutions of offences in Bexhill Town Centre.

 - c) A significant amount of work in 2018/19 and 2019/20 has focused on rough sleepers and members of the street community. Seaview Outreach Service continues to use CSP funding to identify rough sleepers in Rother, engage and support them to access services such as housing, mental health, substance misuse, Seaview and the Homeless Unity Group (HUG). The previously funded refurbishments and equipment enables a church to provide both a night shelter and a safe space for members of the street community and other vulnerable residents in Bexhill.

 - d) The two shared committees for Domestic Abuse and Road Safety provide an efficient and effective mechanism for Hastings and Rother CSPs to meet these two key priorities. Both have delivered a wide range of interventions including: White Ribbon and Deer Awareness Campaigns, Safety in Action workbooks for school children, support for Community Speedwatch, start up equipment and bedding packs for people leaving a refuge.

 - e) Environmental Services and Licensing staff, the Police and other agencies continue to carry out successful operational and educational initiatives to address modern slavery and cuckooing across Rother, as a priority. The modern slavery project Discovery has been recognised as excellent practice nationally and has been rolled out across Sussex.

10. The East Sussex Residents Tracker Survey is completed yearly. In September 2019, 200 Rother residents were asked to select which three of the community safety priorities that they felt were most important for the CSP to tackle in Rother. This report was made available in February 2020 and has informed the work of the CSP's working groups and priority setting.

The community safety priorities most selected by residents as either a first or second choice by respondents were:

- Sexual Violence and Abuse (46%)
- Serious Violent Crime, including Knife Crime (35%)

The ASB types most selected for first, second or third choices were:

- Street Begging (35%)
- Drug Dealing in Public Places (34%)
- Underage Drinking (30%)

11. The Council has a legal duty to co-operate with ESCC and the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) on matters relating to the safeguarding of adults (and children). Work of the SAB and that of the Council is directed by legislation under the Care Act 2014 which became law on 1 April 2015 and The Mental Capacity Act 2005. All councils must produce a revised Safeguarding Policy which reflects this legislation and the Competency Framework (The Mental Capacity Act). This Framework describes the staff groups and the competencies staff should achieve. The Community Safety Coordinator is working with colleagues across East Sussex to deliver this. The Policy will also reflect new areas of work such as Modern Slavery, County Lines, and Cuckooing.

12. The Rother priorities for 2020/21 include:

- Acquisitive crime within retail, initiatives to reduce the impact on shoppers and local business and the links to crime and ASB.
- Rural Crime, including cross border crime especially burglary and speciality thefts e.g. large plant and vehicles. This includes joint initiatives with Wealden, Kent and Surrey Policing and partner agencies in Rother.
- County Lines – drug supply and cuckooing in both urban and rural areas of Rother. This work will continue to focus on victims of cuckooing, the impact on the wider community and will include intense periods of joint work when new county lines move/expand into Rother from Hastings and other areas.

13. Although work has been carried out during 2019/20, the following continue to be prioritised in Rother and interventions will continue during 2020/21:

- Drug Supply and Cuckooing
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – Discovery
- Rough Sleepers and the Street Community
- Delivering interventions to reduce the impact of ASB through multi agency interventions, Council interdepartmental working, use of Public Space Protection Orders and Community Protection Notices

Conclusion

14. The SRP continues to deliver a wide range of interventions to deal with crime and ASB that impact on the quality of life for those living, working and visiting Rother.
15. The strong working relationship and commitment to addressing issues across Rother, especially that between the Council and the Police, has enabled the partnership to deal effectively and in a timely manner with new threats, such as modern slavery and cuckooing and to deal with those issues that present on a daily and weekly basis, but that have a significant impact on residents, businesses and visitors e.g. ASB, theft etc.
16. These challenges are likely to continue in 2020/21 and prioritisation of resources based on need and risk is essential across all agencies.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

The risks are associated with the potential impact of reduced resources within partner agencies. It is important that the current efficient working practices continue to be delivered by all agencies working to address crime and ASB.

These practices will need to continue with the direction of resources to deal with issues quickly and efficiently, effective communication, joint prioritisation and further use the tools and powers to prevent the escalation of anti-social behaviour cases that require enforcement.