

## Rother District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	14 March 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Rother Community Safety Partnership
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Service Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety - Richard Parker-Harding
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To provide an annual report on the work of the Safer Rother Partnership to address issues of Anti-Social Behaviour, crime and Community Safety across Rother

### Officer

**Recommendation(s):** 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, crime reduction and Community Safety be noted; and
  - 3) the possible impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 be noted.
- 

### Introduction

1. The purpose of this annual statutory report is to provide information on the work of the Rother Community Safety Partnership [known as the Safer Rother Partnership (SRP)]. The Committee is required to review, scrutinise and make reports or recommendations to the responsible authorities of the SRP in-line with the Council's responsibilities, under sections 19-21 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.
2. The report also includes information about the Council's own responsibilities and actions with regard to community safety and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
3. The Community Safety Partnership's 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.
4. Councillor Brian Drayson is the Council'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 2021/22

5. During 2021/2022, the Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership Board were the same as in 2020/21. The joint partnership agreed to continue with these priorities as COVID-19 had taken a considerable amount of resources from key agencies and partners and the Board wished to refocus on its priorities in 2021/22.
  - a) Street and community related anti-social behaviour – these issues impact on the quality of life of residents across Rother’s rural and urban areas. All Medium and High Risk victims continue to be supported through the multi-agency Hate ASB Risk Assessment Conference (HASBRAC) process. This delivers an efficient and effective way for partner agencies to reduce the risk to victims and the community.
  - b) Violent Crime (especially Domestic Abuse) – violence, either in public or at home is unacceptable. The Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership has a joint specific Domestic Abuse Group which delivers the White Ribbon Campaign each year, a range of initiatives and strategic oversight of issues in Rother. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 brings changes to the definition, law and responsibilities of agencies including the Council (see summary in Appendix A). The Act also makes provision for further measures for perpetrators. There is also a pan East Sussex Violence reduction Partnership which the Council is represented on.
  - c) Youth Crime and vulnerable young people – by working in partnership to reduce the occurrence and impact of young people involved in crime and ASB and as victims. This has included partnership work to address behaviour and support young people involved in and victims of Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation and violence reduction.
  - d) Road Safety - the Safer Hastings & Rother Roads Partnership (SHARRP) group, delivers a range of campaigns and actions needed to reduce injury and make road use safer. In addition, SHARRP delivers a multi-agency communications strategy which ties in with that of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and national campaigns.
  - e) Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking – this hidden issue can be found in a variety of circumstances from caring and domestic services, farming, hand car washes to nail bars and take-aways and also the trafficking of UK residents across the country. The Council also works as part of Project Discovery with police, immigration and a wide range of other agencies to identify and disrupt modern slavery activities and deliver the Council’s legal requirements under Modern Slavery Legislation. The Council has identified Council officers who lead on Modern slavery cases and is also represented on the Sussex anti-Slavery Group.
6. The joint Board meets quarterly to identify changes in crime and ASB of strategic significance to both areas, wider trends and review the work delivered against these priorities. The Board is co-chaired by Councillor Brian Drayson and his Hasting Borough Council counterpart.
7. The **Rother Joint Action Group (JAG)** (an officer operational group) meets monthly to oversee the delivery of the local priorities for Rother, which in 2020/21 were:
  - **ASB and Youth Crime** - by working in partnership to reduce the occurrence and impact of young people involved in crime and ASB and as victims.

- **Rural Crime** - including specific types of crime e.g. theft of farm and large plant machinery and cross border crime.
  - **Drug Related Harm including drug supply** - (both local and county lines) and the impact on the local community, including partnership work with drug treatment and support agencies and cuckooing.
  - **Acquisitive crime within retail** - which was stalled because of the closure of businesses under the COVID-19 restrictions and the associated reductions in this type of crime (20.4% reduction in business crime and a 25.4% reduction in theft from a shop with the largest reduction in March 2021 of 54.6% on the previous year).
  - The Rother JAG also supports and delivers work to address issues that come about through the work of partnership agencies and are priorities e.g. Operation Radcott (Camber), Herbrand Walk, Serious and Organised Crime, Safeguarding, Multiple and Complex Needs, Fly Tipping, Fire setting.
8. Certain areas of work are covered under 'business as usual' but remain priorities e.g. there are joint partnership meetings which Council officers facilitate, organise and participate in to deliver work on:
- Domestic Abuse including the White Ribbon Campaign
  - Road Safety
  - Modern Slavery – Discovery
  - High and Medium Risk Anti-Social Behaviour and all Hate crime
  - Cuckooing
9. There has also been a push to discuss Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) because of national issues, campaigns and work to look at specific issues across Sussex. This work is still being developed at a pan Sussex and local level.

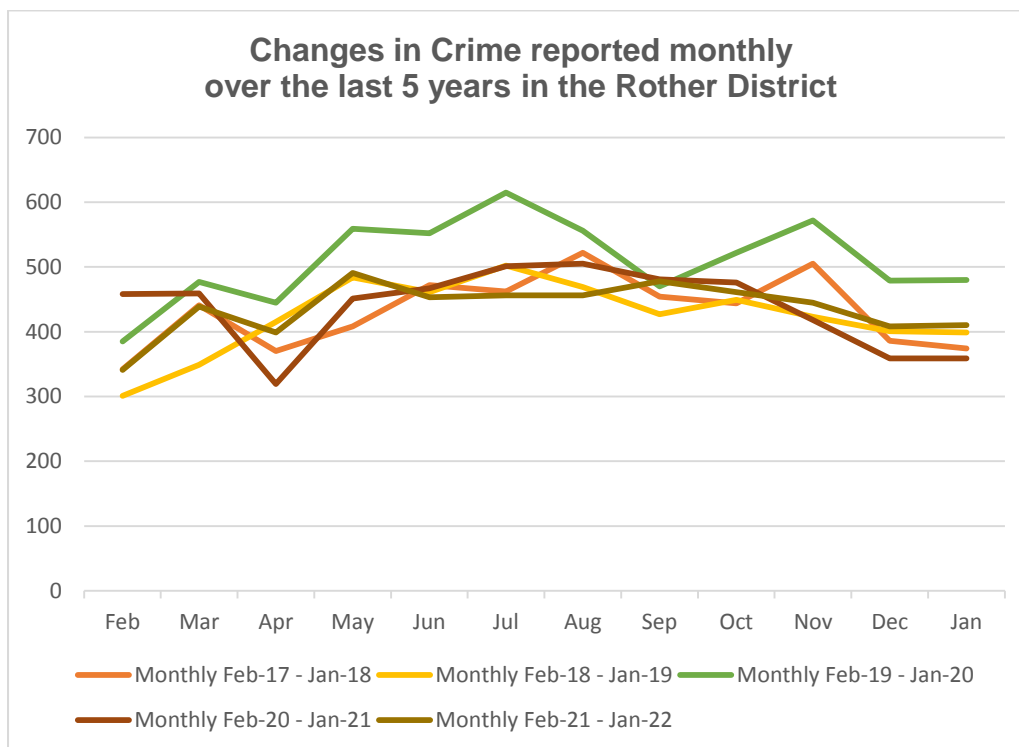
## Crimes Reported

10. There were 5,237 crimes in Rother reported to Sussex Police during the 12 months to the end of January 2022, which is 12 fewer than in the previous year.

TOTAL CRIME ACROSS EAST SUSSEX	% Increase or decrease
Eastbourne	2.7
Hastings	9.8
Lewes	5.2
Rother	0.2
Wealden	0.6
East Sussex	4.1
Force	5.2

The Rother crime data reported to Sussex Police during 2021 saw the highest percentage reductions on the previous year in March 2021 with a 17.1% reduction 1,058 fewer reports. This mirrors the pattern of reports in Wealden, albeit a month later in Rother. Hastings has seen percentage increases in November, December 2021 and January 2022, East Sussex and the Force (Sussex wide) have only seen increases in December 2021 and January 2022.

11. Over the last five years, we have seen changes to the levels of total crime reported to Sussex Police. As a result of the impact of COVID-19, we need to look at crime patterns over the last five years. The chart shows monthly crime reports for the five years from the beginning of February 2017 to end of January 2022. The highest levels of crime were reported in 2019 followed by 2021 and 2018 and then 2020. Total crime reports in 2021/22 mirror the pattern of those in other years.



12. Most crime types have seen decreases in the 12 months to the end of January 2022 compared to the previous 12 months. However, the following have seen increases of note:

- Theft from a vehicle (only started to increase in December 2021) an additional 28 reports to 165.
- Racially aggravated crime – numbers are small, however an increase of seven making 53 reports in a year. However, there were higher increases in February, March and April with a 72% increase in March. The figures have been dropping since then.
- Domestic Abuse reports classified as crimes have increased by 60 cases to 999 (6.4% rise), whereas reports of incidents not classified as crimes have reduced. Agencies providing services and support to victims of domestic abuse report increases in cases of coercion and control and end of relationship violence and suicide. Higher risk cases are discussed at the Hastings and Rother Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) who have seen a significant increase in the number of Rother cases in the latest three quarters.

	Quarter 1 April to June	Quarter 2 July - August	Quarter 3 Sept -Dec
Rother	33	36	68

There were 165 referrals to CGL Domestic Abuse Service in the same time period.

- Violent Crime – violence against a person rose by 237 report to 2,758, however this level of increased reporting has only been seen in the last three months. The overall category of violent crime has seen a rise of 292 cases to 3,045 and Violent Crime in a Public Place has seen rises since August 2021 by 217 cases to 1,318. These figures cannot be added together as individual cases so will be counted in a number of ways (and there will be double counting to reflect different types of crimes) depending on the classification used by the police.
  - Harassment - an increase of 92 reports to 274. Increases in reports of harassment have been seen in all districts and boroughs across East Sussex.
13. Reports of **anti-social behaviour** to the Council, police and housing providers increased during COVID-19 as more people were at home, noticed more behaviour and whose tolerance reduced as they experienced more incidents. We are still seeing an increase in the number of complex cases reported, but reductions in overall reports. These complex cases require significantly more work by the Council and all partners and often include safeguarding, mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.
14. Rother continues to have excellent working relationships with the key agencies and resilient and resourceful staff and structures e.g. the monthly multi-agency Hate and ASB and risk assessment group and case reviews have enabled complex cases to continue to be dealt with effectively. We are seen as an example of good practice in the way we work in Rother and our use of ECINs (a secure cloud-based case management system funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and managed by Sussex Police) across Sussex. This has not been the case across all Community Safety Partnerships. However, the following ASB cases were reported to police during the year to the end of January 2022:
- ASB Personal – 215 (-22)
  - ASB Nuisance – 1,632 (-530)
  - ASB Environmental – 65 (-39)

### Projects funded

15. In 2021/22 the SRP funded a range of projects to address priorities in Rother:
- Youth intervention - creation of films made by young people to create two promotional videos and a new brand for youth work at The Pelham in order to design the youth basement project at The Pelham, which is based in the most deprived ward in Rother (top 5% in the country) and one of the most in East Sussex.
  - Sidley Recreation Projects – provide funding towards CCTV to promote confidence for families to use the facilities and discourage criminal activities and damage.
  - Our Time 2 Talk project supports vulnerable children and young people aged 8 to 18 to improve family relationships. This is the only service in our area offering this type of support to young people and their families.
  - To enable easy sharing of the Black Cat Radar Box (speed recording of vehicles in rural areas) by Parish Councils to have one shared laptop with the required software that will be solely for use with the Black Cat Radar scheme (funded by the SRP 2020).

- In January 2021, we funded Up Grade training who provide opportunities for young offenders, at-risk and fixed exclusion students to experience positive outcomes and achieve real results via martial art, therapeutic and educational activity programme.
- Statutory Safeguarding and Exploitation Training for Taxi Drivers in Rother, which enables their licensing authorities to comply with the required standards set out by the Department of Transport's Statutory Standards July 2020. Taxi drivers have been identified as having an important role in identifying children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation, drug supply and cuckooing, safeguarding, scams and domestic abuse.
- See [Community Safety Partnership Grant Funding – Rother District Council](#)

### **Rother District Council activities**

16. Environmental Services and Licensing and Community Safety staff, the police and other agencies continue to carry out successful operational and education initiatives across Rother and Wealden to address, e.g.:
  - ASB, neighbour disputes and High and Medium risk cases are managed through the monthly Hate and ASB Case Review meeting.
  - Community safety issues arising at beaches across Rother including illegal immigration, protest groups, sleeping in vehicles, noise nuisance, ASB and specific summer operations in Camber and at Herbrand Walk.
  - Crime, safety and risk for events managed with partner agencies through Safety Advisory Groups.
  - Licensing and ASB issues in both public houses and businesses.
  - Modern Slavery through Project Discovery.
  - Safeguarding of both adults and children through case reviews and multi-agency work and fulfil the Council's duty and responsibilities.
17. The Community Safety Team also work with other council services, such as Housing (e.g. Domestic Abuse cases, offenders, victims of Hate crimes and ASB and Rough sleeping and Homelessness), and Customer Services (e.g. Safeguarding concerns).

### **Rother Priorities for 2022/23**

18. The Safer Rother Partnership Joint Action Group (JAG) agreed the priorities for 2022/23 at its February meeting and will be using an analytical product provided by the police to focus resources on those crimes and victims that have the highest risk or behaviours that have the biggest impact on the community of Rother. In addition, the JAG will also review:
  - Crime and ASB data.
  - Consultation from the Public Spaces Protection Orders process.
  - Rother Reputation Tracker Survey Report, which came from an ESCC survey of residents across East Sussex.
  - Priorities of the Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner.
  - Local and East Sussex Policing priorities.
19. The Safer Rother Partnership JAG has agreed the following three priorities for 2022/23:
  - ASB and Youth Crime

- Rural Crime
- Drug Related Harm

It was agreed that Domestic Abuse and Road Safety would be included for specific focused work.

20. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires a review of Council and partner agencies' responsibilities under this legislation. This work has started and will be a focus for the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Group. The documents in Appendix A have been shared and discussed with partner agencies and the JAG.
21. Further work is required to develop Council duties and practices for safeguarding adults and children in line with legislation and good practice. Working within a two tier local authority structure, this is carried out through continued engagement with Adult Social Care (ESCC) structures, Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and partners to delineate between East Sussex, pan Sussex work and that required at a local level on a number of crime and safeguarding related issues, e.g. child criminal and sexual exploitation, safeguarding, counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, violence against women and girls.
22. Further training for Council staff and partners on a wide range of issues such as Prevent, Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, Modern Slavery, Domestic Abuse and changes in legislation should be considered a priority for 2022/23.

## **Conclusion**

23. The SRP continues to deliver a wide range of interventions to deal effectively and efficiently with crime and ASB, that impact on the quality of life for those living, working and visiting Rother. In addition, victims and survivors of crime and ASB have been supported and the risk to them minimised by the commitment by Council officers in many departments e.g. Environmental Health, Licensing and Community Safety, Housing, Planning Enforcement and Customer Services.
24. The strength of the SRP, working relationships, knowledge and commitment has enabled a Rother response by all partners to both "business as usual", changes in behaviour and criminality related to COVID-19 and responses carried out in a timely manner to new threats during 2021/22. The work practices of the SRP and individual officers will enable work to continue to address these and new threats and risks during 2022/23.
25. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
  - (a) make any recommendations arising from the report to the Chair of the Safer Rother Partnership for consideration;
  - (b) the Council's work in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime Reduction and Community Safety be noted; and
  - (c) the possible impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 be noted.

## Crime and Disorder

26. Under s17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities, amongst others, have a duty to exercise their functions with 'due regard' to the need to prevent crime and disorder in their area.
27. Within this work there are duties and roles for the Council and partners under other legislation, including that for anti-social behaviour, safeguarding adults and children, domestic abuse, licensing, modern slavery, domestic abuse and reflect the work of many Council departments e.g. Environmental Health and Licensing, Housing, Customer Services, Planning Enforcement.
28. "Crime and disorder scrutiny functions", in relation to a council, means functions that are, or, but would be, exercisable by the crime and disorder committee of the Council under sections 19, 20 and schedule 8 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.
29. The report highlights the work of the SRP and Council officers to prevent crime and disorder, reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour and crimes and mitigate the negative impact on the quality of life of local residents, businesses, and visitors.

## Environmental Implications

30. It is well documented that crime and anti-social behaviour have a negative impact on the quality of life and residents' perceptions of the area they live in. There are also environmental implications in connection to e.g. fly tipping, graffiti, misuse of land under planning regulations, drug supply, cultivation or manufacture and paraphernalia, derelict and dangerous buildings.

## Equalities and Diversity

31. Ensure that we are fair to all, and the needs of people with protected characteristics are considered. The protected characteristics (as defined by the Equalities Act 2010) are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
32. Ensure that the voice of all communities is heard and taken into account when decisions are being made.
33. The SRP's actions have taken into account the needs of people with protected characteristics within our community, particularly with regard to preventing aggravated offences associated with hate crimes, for example, for reasons of age, disability, gender and race.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	Yes
Crime and Disorder	Yes	External Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	No	Exempt from publication	No

---

Chief Executive: Malcolm Johnston

---

Report Contact: Carol Studley – Community Safety Partnership Coordinator

---



---

Officer:	
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:carol.studley@rother.gov.uk">carol.studley@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendix:	A - Domestic Abuse Act 2021 B – Crime and ASB Overview 2021 C – East Sussex Fraud Report - October to December 2021
Relevant previous Minutes:	OSC20/46
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	<a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk">Ministry of Justice - Statutory Partnerships and Responsibilities - November 2013 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>

---

## THE DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021

- creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse;
- creates a new offence of non-fatal strangulation;
- extends the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse;
- extends the ‘revenge porn’ offence to cover the threat to disclose intimate images with the intention to cause distress;
- clarifies the law to further deter claims of “rough sex gone wrong” in cases involving death or serious injury;
- creates a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link);
- establishes in law the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of local authorities, the justice system and other statutory agencies and hold them to account in tackling domestic abuse;
- places a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation;
- provides that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance;
- places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s law”) on a statutory footing;
- ensures that when local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy;
- stop vexatious family proceedings that can further traumatise victims by clarifying the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989;
- prohibit GPs and other health professionals from charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid.

### **New statutory definition of Domestic Abuse**

Two criteria governing the relationship between the abuser and the abused:

- both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over; and
- both persons must be “personally connected” (will include ex-partners and family members).

It will also:

- include broad categories which capture a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse;
- recognise that the majority of victims of abuse are female; and
- recognises that domestic abuse can impact on a child and treat such children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right where they are related to either the abuser or the abused.