

Rother District Council

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny
Date:	18 March 2024
Title:	Annual Report of Rother Community Safety Partnership
Report of:	Richard Parker-Harding, Head of Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	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; and
- 2) the Council's work in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour, crime reduction and Community Safety be noted.

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.
2. The Council has designated the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee with responsibility for scrutinising crime and disorder and community safety matters and meets in this capacity at least once a year.
3. The report also includes information about the Council's own responsibilities and actions related to community safety and anti-social behaviour (ASB).
4. The Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) responsible authorities are: Rother District Council (RDC), Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS), East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Probation Service and NHS Sussex.
5. Councillor Jimmy Stanger is RDC's nominated representative, Chair of the SRP, Co-Chair of the Joint CSP Board with Hastings and Councillor Brian Drayson is the Council's representative on the Board of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Performance of the Safer Rother Partnership 2023/24

6. The Rother Joint Action Group (JAG) (an officer operational group) meets monthly to oversee the delivery of the local priorities for Rother which in 2023/24 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.
 - 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.
 - Rural Crime, including specific types of crime e.g. theft of farm and large plant machinery and cross border crime.
7. It was agreed that domestic abuse, business crime, the impact of the cost of living crisis and road safety would be included, but not as priorities.
8. Rother JAG continued to support and deliver work to address issues that are business as usual through the work of partnership agencies e.g. there are joint partnership meetings which Council officers facilitate, organise and participate in to deliver work on:
 - Cuckooing (multi-agency case management of complex cases in Rother in last 12 months).
 - Domestic Abuse including the White Ribbon Campaign.
 - High and Medium Risk ASB and all Hate crime cases - multi-agency case management of High and Medium Risk cases in Rother and ASB Case Reviews for Rother (and Wealden as part of our shared service).
 - Modern Slavery – Operation Discovery.
 - Road Safety.
 - Professional/Safeguarding/and case meetings.
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Case Reviews.
9. Rother JAG also supported and delivered work to address issues that come about through the work of partnership agencies and are operational priorities e.g. Operation Radcott (Camber), Herbrand Walk, Serious and Organised Crime, Safeguarding, Multiple and Complex Needs cases, Community Tensions and protests around Northeye and immigration, Shoplifting and other Business Crime types, Rural Crime, Hate Crime Awareness Week, ASB young people project, films and infomercial and ASB tools and powers, Drug Related Harm, Civil Parking Enforcement, Fly Tipping, Criminal Damage, Fire setting.
10. The work plan for Rother JAG for 2023/24 is attached as Appendix A.
11. 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 Jimmy Stanger and his Hastings Borough Council counterpart.
12. During 2023/24, the Safer Hastings and Rother Partnership Board priorities were:

Protecting Vulnerable People

- a. Raise awareness and implement measures to deter Violence Against Women and Girls and meet the requirements of the Serious Violence duty.

- b. Raise awareness and encourage reporting of concerns of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation.

Making the Streets and Businesses safer

- a. Tackling street related crime and ASB.
- b. Deliver campaigns for Road Safety.

Identifying Those at Risk of Harm

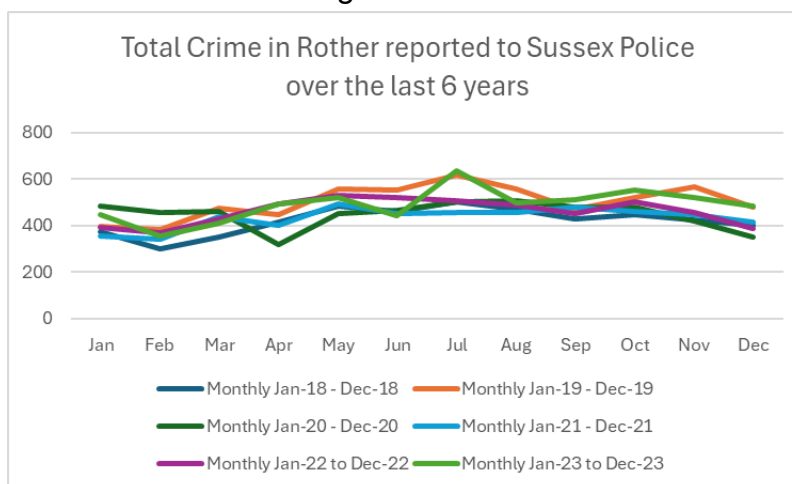
- a. Ensuring those with substance misuse issues, particularly those who have experienced multiple disadvantage, are supported.
- b. Not condoning domestic abuse to all (White Ribbon).

Crimes Reported

- 13. The time frame used for most data presented in this report is 12 months rolling year ending 31 December 2023. The date may be compared to the previous rolling 12 months to the year ending December 2022, or over several years which will be highlighted where relevant.
- 14. There were 5,879 crimes in Rother reported to Sussex Police during the 12 months to the end of December 2023. Which is 355 more than the previous 12 months. This is a similar pattern in East Sussex as a whole, Wealden and Sussex. All areas except Hastings have seen an increase in reports.

Total Crime Across East Sussex	% increase	Number of reports	Increase
Eastbourne	16.8	11,057	1,588
Hastings	-0.3	9,692	- 31
Lewes	0.1	5,850	8
Rother	6.4	5,879	355
Wealden	6.4	6,880	412
East Sussex	6.3	39,358	2,332
Force (Sussex)	7.6	136,193	9,561

- 15. Over the last six years the level of crime reported to Sussex Police for Rother has remained fairly consistent considering COVID restrictions and guidance. The lowest rolling year was to the end of January 2019 (5,068) and highest rolling year to end of January 2020 (6,112); the figures for the year end December 2023 sit within this range.



16. There are some crime types we would wish to see increases in reporting, as they demonstrate confidence in people feeling able to report and referrals can be made to support services e.g. Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime. There were 1,882 reports of Domestic Violence crime in the year ending 31 December 2023.
17. The Council, Police, social housing and support agencies continue to work with cases presented. Higher risk cases are discussed at the Hastings and Rother Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and CGL [Alcohol and drug advice and info from Change Grow Live](#) provide support for higher risk and more complex cases.
18. SRP delivered another successful White Ribbon campaign which included a webinar presented by [Hourglass](#) the UK's only charity focused on the abuse and neglect of older people. Note: the 1,882 reports to Sussex Police will contain multiple reports about the same individuals and lower level cases will be offered support from a range of other agencies including victim support.
19. There slightly fewer reports of Hate Crime (all categories) 130 in total. SRP agencies supported an LGBTQIA+ event organised by the Police at the De La Warr Pavilion as part of Hate Crime awareness week.
20. Reports of ASB to the Council, Police and housing providers continue to be managed by these agencies. Complex cases require significantly more work by the Council and all partners, often include safeguarding, mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse.
21. 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. Rother is an active member of pan Sussex working groups for ASB and [ECINS - Empowering Communities with Integrated Network Systems](#) replacement. Reductions in reporting of ASB Nuisance are mirrored in East Sussex. There were the following ASB cases reported to police during for the year to the end of December 2023:
 - ASB Personal 149 (+50)
 - ASB Nuisance 751 (-20)
 - ASB Environmental 66 (+8)

ASB Tools and Powers including ASB case Reviews have been the focus all CSPs and through active participation in the pan Sussex ASB working group the Rother Community Safety Team have worked on a consistent approach across Sussex which demonstrated significant areas of good practice in line with the ASB Action Plan published in 2023.
22. There have been increases in reporting of shoplifting across Sussex (65%) with a significant increase in Eastbourne 196.6% (1,272 reports) Rother saw an increase of 182 reports (391 in total) which is an 87.1% rise. In April/May the Police and Council will be introducing an online reporting scheme called [Disc - A Crime Information-Sharing System For UK Business & Rural Communities \(discagainstcrime.com\)](#) to support retailers and businesses report crime and receive reports on successful prosecutions and interventions.

23. In 2023/24, the SRP funded a range of projects to address priorities in Rother. Funding for the partnership projects comes from the Office of PCC £35,077.
- Airtime agreement for deployable CCTV cameras used by Sussex Police in Rother.
 - Contribution to Domestic Homicide Reviews.
 - Hire of Variable Messaging Signs during Sussex bonfires and for road safety initiatives.
 - Young People's Voices films on ASB and an Infomercial on ASB supported by key agencies working to address ASB which was funded from Safer Streets 5 funding.
 - Hate Crime Awareness Event for LGBTQIA+ to build trust and confidence in police, the Council and other agencies.
 - Equipment and materials for the youth space at the Pelham.
 - Mural at Sutton Place – previously a graffiti hot spot.
 - Doorbell CCTV for victims of crime, ASB, Domestic Violence and Hate Crime living in social housing.
 - Removal of signage contributing to community tension.
 - Equipment and resources for Fire Service Cadets.

Applications for a [Community Safety Grant](#) can be made to the Joint Action Group

24. 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 SAGs.
 - 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.
 - Counter Terrorism, PREVENT and the PROTECT Duty (Martyn's Law).
 - Serious Violence Duty.
25. The Community Safety Team (CST) also work with other Council departments to both fulfil the Council's duty and responsibilities and cases and enquires from residents and Members, such as Housing (e.g. Domestic Abuse cases, Multi Agency Public Protection and other offenders, victims of Hate and ASB and Rough sleeping and Homelessness), Planning and Planning Enforcement (e.g. neighbour disputes, ASB and criminality), Customer Services (e.g. Safeguarding and assessment of need for callers to the Council).
26. During 2023, a significant amount of work has been required by Rother's community safety team to deliver the transition phase of the Public Facing CCTV changes for Rother. Sussex Police informed the Borough, District, Parish, Town and City councils that the current agreement for Public Facing CCTV will end on 1 April 2024. This would bring Sussex in line with other areas

of the country where Public Facing CCTV is owned and run by local authorities and businesses. In order to facilitate this change:

- Sussex Police will hand back ownership of public facing CCTV to local authorities/areas.
- A pan Sussex working group was established.
- The new scheme requires the replacement of nine cameras and purchase of routers and recorders at a one-off cost of £42,941 (procured under the current agreement with Sussex Police).
- New contracts would be agreed with a different supplier, significantly reducing the revenue costs for use of the cameras from the 1 April 2024.
- Sussex Police will continue to monitor all 12 Public Facing CCTV cameras across Rother (and Sussex).
- The formal offer from Sussex Police for Data Governance support is being finalised and expected by the end of February 2024. Sussex Police will handle all Freedom of Information Requests and Subject Access Requests which relate to the existing cameras.

27. Funding has been secured from the SRP and Safer Streets funding through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to replace nine cameras in Bexhill, Sidley and Battle and provide the routers and equipment required for the new scheme. Additional funding is available to pay a proportion of the running costs (not electricity) in year 1 (2024/25). Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council has agreed to take on the funding for Public Facing CCTV for Bexhill and Sidley from April and discussions are underway with Battle Town Council about their three cameras.

28. In previous years the SRP has also purchased cameras for Council-owned properties, community groups and re-deployable cameras for police operations. All of which assist in the reduction and detection of crime and ASB.

2024/25

29. SRP JAG will agree its priorities for 2024/25 at its March 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 and that have the biggest impact on the community of Rother. In addition, the JAG will evaluate:

- Rother Crime and ASB data.
- Monitoring and evaluation provided to the OPCC.
- The results of future consultation with residents and businesses as part of the violence reduction and contextual safeguarding work being carried out.
- Local and East Sussex Policing priorities.
- East Sussex and Pan Sussex risk assessments and plans.

30. Priorities will be reviewed after the election to the OPCC in May 2024 and the launch of their priorities for the following four years. Funding of the SRP is conditional on delivery against these as well as delivering local priorities.

31. However, the work and priorities outlined in this report will continue to be delivered by both the Council and the SRP going forward.

Crime and Disorder

32. The report highlights the work of the CSP (the SRP) and Council officers to:

- prevent crime and disorder;
 - reduce the impact of ASB and crimes;
 - mitigate the negative impact on the quality of life of residents, businesses, and visitors; and
 - deliver crime and ASB duties.
33. 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.
34. Within this work there are duties and roles for the Council and partners under other legislation, including those for ASB, safeguarding adults and children, domestic abuse, licensing, modern slavery, Counter Terrorism, PREVENT, PROTECT, Serious Violence and reflect the work of many Council departments e.g. Environmental Health and Licensing, Housing, Customer Services, Planning Enforcement, Neighbourhood Services.
35. "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.
36. Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 makes changes to section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requiring CSPs to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Environmental

37. It is well documented that crime and ASB 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.

Equality and Diversity

38. Given the nature of Crime and Disorder, ASB and community safety, the work of the Council and partners reflects the need for consideration of vulnerabilities and protective characteristics in case management, reduction of crime and working with victims and offenders. This also includes work with communities that have protected characteristics to build trust and confidence in services e.g. Hate Crime Awareness and dealing with community tensions.
39. The Council and partner agencies have specific safeguarding responsibilities, and a significant investment is made by all parties to take a holistic approach and consider equality and diversity in all work and initiatives. The Council also participates fully in both local and East Sussex wide safeguarding work including complex cases, modern slavery, domestic homicide, ASB and hate crime casework and offender management.

Legal Implications

40. See section under Community Safety for duties and powers and Data and Governance connected to the new Public Facing CCTV contract if not adopted by Battle Town Council by 1 April 2024.

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

Chief Executive:	Lorna Ford
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Appendices:	A – JAG Work Programme 2023-24 B – Public Facing CCTV Cameras
Relevant previous Minutes:	-
Background Papers:	-
Reference Documents:	-

JAG WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24		
Date of Meeting	Subject – (Part A) Main Item in Bold	Chair
18 April 2023 (10:30-12:30)	a) Northeye proposal and community tensions b) ASB occurrences and new guidelines	Carol Studley
13 June 2023 (10:30-12:30)	a) Northeye proposal and community tension b) ASB new guidelines action plan and ECINS c) CCTV and Sussex Police proposal d) Attendance by ESFRS (operational managers)	Grant Virgo
11 July 2023 (10:30-12:30)	Update on priorities – Northeye proposal and community tensions Update on White Ribbon 2023 Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning of projects & use of JAG funds. 	Carol Studley
5 September 2023 (14:30-16:30)	Update on priorities – DISC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on vehicles at Hebrand Walk Update on JAG applications 	Carol Studley
3 October 2023 (14:30-16:30)	Update on Priorities – Actions and key themes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northeye proposal and community tensions Update on White Ribbon 2023 Plus 	Carol Studley
14 November 2023 (10:30-12:30)	Update on Priorities – Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Ribbon updates Hate Crime week feedback Update on Civil Parking Enforcement and the benefits compared to previous year. Feedback on Op Radcott, Herbrand Walk and Summer season 	Grant Virgo/ Richard Breeze
12 December 2023 (10:30-12:30)	Update on Rural Crime Team Presentation Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging issues and interventions for Christmas and New Year 	Richard Parker-Harding
9 January 2024 (14.30-16.30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northeye update -protests, community tensions and Home Office DISC Business Crime scheme 	Carol Studley
13 February 2024 (10.30-12.30)	Update on Priorities - Drug Related Harm and Rural Crime Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northeye update -protests, community tensions and Home Office 	Carol Studley
12 March 2024	Priority setting for 2024-25	TBC

(10.30-12.30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority areas of work for 2024/25 • Review of funded projects and outcomes achieved. 	
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Items for Consideration

- Commissioning of Projects 2023-24
- Communications Strategy
- Report from SHARP Road Safety Group to the JAG
- Violence Against Women and Girls in Rother
- Changes to ASB Guidance and Practice

Priorities for the year 2023-24 Agreed at the JAG meeting 7 February 2023

The Safer Rother Partnership focus for 2023-24 would be:

- **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.
- **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
- **Rural Crime**, including specific types of crime e.g., theft of farm and large plant machinery and cross border crime.

It was agreed that **Domestic Abuse, Business Crime, Cost of Living Crises** and **Road Safety** would be included, but not as priorities.

Emerging issues identified in January meeting for 2023 – list of issues:

- Asylum dispersal – agreed regular Agenda item.
- End of Covid funding and impact on homelessness
- Cost of living crisis
- Licenced Taxi driver CCTV consultation
- Child Crime & Sexual Exploitation training.
- Warm Spaces and safeguarding.

PUBLIC FACING CCTV LOCATIONS

Cantelupe Road / Sea Road, Bexhill

Channel View Road West, Bexhill

Devonshire Square, Bexhill

Sackville Road, Bexhill

Town Hall Square, Bexhill

Ravenside Retail Park, A259

Brett Drive, Bexhill

Ninfield Road, Sidley

Ninfield Road / Smith and Humphreys, Sidley

South roundabout A2100 and Marley Lane, Battle

Previously the 1066 Public House near the Square, Battle

North roundabout A2100 and A271, Battle