

Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Adur and Worthing Councils – 11th September 2014

The Adur & Worthing Safer Communities Partnership – 2012 to 2013

1. Vision Statement

- 1.1 This report outlines both the achievements and challenges of the Adur & Worthing Safer Communities Partnership through 2013/14. The partnership vision statement continues to be ‘To reduce crime and disorder through effective multi-agency working, to make Adur & Worthing a safer place to live, work and visit.’
- 1.2 The SCP priorities for 2013/14 included:
- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** with particular regard to youth disorder;
 - **Alcohol & Drug Misuse** with particular regard for young people & the street drinking community;
 - **Harm Reduction** to tackle domestic abuse, serious sexual offences, hate crime and support vulnerable victims;
 - **Safer Roads** to reduce road traffic deaths, serious injuries & anti-social driving;
 - **Priority Crime** (includes Violent Crime, Theft Other, Burglary Other Than Dwelling, Arsons) to reduce the levels of crime & disorder.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Safer Communities Partnership, although set up by primary legislation as an independent body, now effectively operates as a sub-committee of the Adur and Worthing Local Strategic Partnership and is made up of representatives of ‘responsible authorities’ (including police, local authorities, fire and rescue authority, probation service, health and the Police and Crime Commissioner’s office).
- 2.2 Chair of the Adur and Worthing Safer Communities Partnership is Councillor David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Health and Well-Being, Adur District Council, who is also the Chair of the Safer West Sussex Partnership, having been elected to that position by other Cabinet Members across West Sussex.
- 2.3 The two responsibilities have to this point contributed to the development of the West Sussex Safer Community Strategy and the Police Commissioner’s Annual Policing Plan while enabling the Adur and Worthing districts to ensure local priorities are addressed within the wider plans for West Sussex.
- 2.4 This will undoubtedly impact on the provision of partnership funding as the Police Commissioner, through whom all grants now come, seeks to achieve her targets while supporting local partnerships. All partnerships will come under more scrutiny to assess outcomes and achievements from their work.

- 2.5 That being said, there have been a number of significant changes in West Sussex to both the provision of data, and the general structure around the arrangements for what is now known as the Safer West Sussex Partnership.
- 2.6 During 2012-13 Cabinet Members for Adur and Worthing along with our officers have contributed to the preparation of a county wide Safer Community Strategy, and continue to represent the needs of both districts in their roles as members of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP), holding the Police Commissioner to account.
- 2.7 Cabinet Member David Simmons also sits on two working groups with staff from the Police Commissioner's Office, addressing the victims services and the policing plans for Sussex on behalf of the PCP.

3. Challenges and Achievements

- 3.1 The Safer Communities' Partnership's Strategic Assessment gives a detailed description of what the Partnership delivered through 13/14 (Achievements shown on Appendix 1).

Generally, the document highlights:

- The overall picture for crime is good with reductions in total crime across Adur & Worthing;
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) continues to be a concern to our local communities;
- There is continued concern regarding young people and substance misuse (drug & alcohol) and the impact on anti-social behaviour and the safety of young people themselves;
- Street Drinkers continue to be a priority in Worthing for local partners and businesses;
- Concern that financial pressure on some of our most vulnerable families will add to the issue of domestic violence, ASB and general crime types;
- Emerging Crime including theft from vehicle, theft of cycle & acquisitive crime are all identified as increasing;
- Safer Roads, has been highlighted and continues to be a priority for the Neighbourhood Panels and was identified through the consultation process.

- 3.2 The Safer Communities Partnership's Spending Plan highlights the reliance on external funding. This affects the majority of the Partnership's projects and initiatives. The two main sources of funding are the Police and Crime Commissioner (contribution to the ASB Project) and Think Family (funding the FIP and Think Family Key Workers). Both these funds are provided on a short term basis which means short term contracts and uncertainty for staff. There is also the risk and perhaps some expectation that these funding sources will cease at some point resulting in the loss of services.

3.2.1 The Think Family team in West Sussex has been supported primarily by the secondment of Jacqui Cook on a part-time basis. This was reduced to 1 day a week, paid for by West Sussex to backfill her position. However, with Think Family Expansion now underway, West Sussex are seeking to extend her involvement to three days a week to provide consistency across the county. Final details need to be worked through if this request is to be agreed.

3.2.2 Although Katy Bourne, the Sussex Police Commissioner, has given an assurance that she sees the CSPs as a key part of the attack on crime and disorder, it is by no means certain that the same levels of funding will eventually be passed down for local support. Our CSP is already considering how it can work smarter, and reviewing spending to maximise the

outcomes possible within reducing resources. That being said, there is a level of staffing below which some areas of work will not be possible, and there may be a need for a trade-off to ensure that priority areas are not left unsupported.

- 3.3 One of the main challenges faced when considering the financial position of councils will be how to maintain key staff in post to enable progress to be made where essential posts are not currently mainstreamed.
- 3.4 One such post is that of the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, who performs a valuable and essential role in tackling key priorities around Think Family and family intervention across Adur and Worthing as well as achieving against national expectations and targets.
- 3.5 Any political decision as to how, and indeed whether to mainstream these posts will be influenced in future by the way in which the Police Commissioner decides to provide continuing support for the Community Safety Partnerships. Her emphasis will undoubtedly be on assessing progress against targets and value for money.
- 3.6 Perhaps inevitably, the team are now being expected to make financial cutbacks for next year, and while this may be seen as necessary to spread the reductions across all departments, there are two things to consider:
 - How do we continue to manage external funding that has been committed to support local action and who will do it if we lose staff?
 - What will be the impact on achievement against national objectives (which frequently pay by results) if the reductions take place and what the eventual outcome would be should we not succeed in meeting those obligations?
- 3.7 Perhaps community action will be one way of tackling future crime patterns, but members will be aware of how difficult it is to motivate concerned members of the public to get involved in a society that expects payment for their time and effort
- 3.8 Community involvement will also lead to other issues and barriers which will need policy decisions, such as the access to key data sets which to date are the province of statutory authorities (e.g. repeat and prolific offenders).
- 3.9 What is clear, is that as a council we do need to generate that sort of community support to enable us to achieve and maintain low levels of crime and disorder. Arguably, it will still be essential for professional staff to be there to provide co-ordination, training, support and back up; for experience tells us that unless that is provided, public support will melt away.
- 3.10 One of the historic problems in partnership working has been the lack of pooling of budgets and cross partnership support for financial contribution in order to achieve common (or sometimes not so common) goals.
- 3.11 The more successful the partnership is in saving money for member organisations the better, but there needs to be an understanding that reducing crime and keeping it low, comes at a cost, and such successes are recognised in financial terms by all partners, including the council(s). Political expediency must not be allowed to derail existing and successful partnerships.

- 3.12 Another factor in future development is the emergence of the new tools and powers under the ASB and Policing legislation which comes into force in October 2014. In anticipation of this, a new ASB policy and procedures document has been produced for Adur & Worthing, which includes things such as the 'Community Trigger'. The amount of additional work that might represent has yet to be worked through. This report is to go to JSC on 7th October.
4. **The Police and Crime Panel**
- 4.1 The panel is made up of elected members, mostly Cabinet Members holding the safer communities portfolio, from all of the District, Boroughs, the City of Brighton and Hove and County Councils across Sussex.
- 4.2 In addition, the two independent members, both from the Worthing area appointed in 2012, continue to be involved and were reappointed this year.
- 4.3 Adur and Worthing was represented by Councillors Tom Wye (Worthing) and Councillor David Simmons (Adur), supported by two nominated substitutes, Councillor Pat Beresford (Adur) and Councillor Paul Yallop (Worthing). However, Councillor Val Turner has now assumed the responsibility on behalf of Worthing.
- 4.4 As previously stated in this report, Councillor David Simmons has been appointed to two working groups looking at firstly the revised policing plan for the county of Sussex, and secondly at victim's services. Supporting that working group on victims is Graham Hill, one of the independent members who is in charge of victim's support for Worthing and Adur, who like Councillor Simmons, has a policing background as well as considerable experience in helping victims of crime.
- 4.5 The Police Commissioner in setting out her stall for funding 2015 onwards, is keen to ensure that successful community safety partnerships will continue to receive some funding. However, in order to understand what success looks like and to assist her decision, it is essential to set the baseline against which measurements of outcomes can be made.
- 4.6 The stance of West Sussex County Council, who, as previously reported in 2013, terminated their provision of crime data to the partnership continues to have an impact, although Sussex Police have been able to assist in part. As a consequence, it is arguable that there are gaps which exacerbate the problem of objective setting and outcome evaluation. In the light of current financial constraints, the position is unlikely to change.
- 4.7 One issue that will need to be resolved in future is the co-location of our community and partnership teams within police accommodation. There are currently two such arrangements:
- In Worthing the safer community's team and the manager for the team and the FIP are based in the town centre police office in Chatsworth Road
 - In Adur, the anti-social behaviour team and the FIP workers are based in Shoreham Police Station, Ham Road.
- 4.8 While this is not an immediate problem, the Commissioner has indicated her wish to sell Shoreham Police Station which means that an alternative arrangement will be necessary for our staff there if we wish to continue to reap the benefits of co-location. Currently it appears Worthing is not affected.

5. **Partnership Working**

- 5.1 In addition to the above, the landscape in respect of partnerships continues to change. External funding continues to be an important support locally, underpinning partnership working. These areas of work which impact of safer communities include:-
- The Strategic Health and Well-Being Board and changes to health
 - Better linkage between Health and Well-Being Hubs and Safer Communities
 - External funding for positive programmes around health
 - Local Action Plans being developed between Action in Rural Sussex and Parish Councils (Adur)
 - Positive activities across the two districts aimed at health and well-being and developing more acceptable behaviour strategies for young people particularly
 - The expansion of the Family Intervention Programme (the national Troubled Families Initiative known as 'Think Family' in West Sussex) and Think Family Neighbourhoods
 - Light touch support for 'BIG Local' following the grant to Sompting of £1 million over 10 years for community led developments around safer communities and other programmes currently being structured.
- 5.2 These developments provide an opportunity to work more closely with the community, and BIG Local is being supported by our community team to ensure that the community benefits from this not inconsiderable investment.
- 5.3 Community safety does not exist in a vacuum, and our planned Waves Ahead conference in September 2014 will once again bring together partners from across the community to provide that joined up momentum that is so important as the landscape changes to engage more effectively with community self-help and action.
- 5.4 Through the conference, once again we will seek to broaden the pot of people and organisations prepared to take on areas of responsibility within our priority areas, many of which will have a direct or indirect positive effect on crime and disorder. This is an important part of the future landscape.
- 5.5 As mentioned in the Appendix of achievements, strategic Joint Action Groups (JAGs) have also been set up under the wing of the partnership, leading to a third tier, that of Local Action Teams (LATs), where partners and the community come together to address local crime and disorder issues.
- 5.6 A good example is the LAT, Chaired by Councillor David Simmons, tackling the issues of car and vehicle crime across the Adur and Worthing Districts.

This campaign, which is just about to change to a wider focus has a number of strands which include:-

- Raising the profile of the problem
- Public education
- Intelligence gathering to identify those responsible
- Circulation of information to possible disposal areas (pubs and clubs)
- Tackling outlets and 'handlers' for stolen property
- Supporting police enforcement activity

A number of further Public education days are planned at strategic locations on the run up to Christmas, staffed mainly by volunteers, and supported by media and press releases. A Crimestoppers Campaign is in existence with the placing of street signs in areas of interest as well as publicising IMMOBILISE, an initiative supported by Sussex Police to ask people to record their valuable equipment, mobile phones and 'sat navs' to assist patrol officers stopping suspects in identification of stolen property.

- 5.7 The anti-social behaviour team have also linked to the FIP in as much as their efforts have provided an earlier intervention, trying to prevent the issue escalating to the FIP level. Frequently ASB officers have supported the housing department, working with up to 7 victims at a time, to try and resolve particular issues.

Working with the police as partners is key, but our ASB officers identified a need for better multi-agency co-ordination to repeat and vulnerable victims and the Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference as shown in the Appendix 1 is one such initiative to better provide a quality and joined up approach to victim need.

Firm links are established with FIP (Think Family expansion) and the Active Communities Team to develop diversionary approaches and a programme of activities targeted at the groups most at risk.

- 5.8 As referred to at 3.12, changes to legislation, in October 2014, will also change the ASB landscape and the role of our officers, who will have a pivotal role in monitoring local responses to ASB and nuisance as well as providing advice, guidance and training to those pursuing civil enforcement in Adur and Worthing.
- 5.9 The section 30 orders, used by Police in Worthing during the summer in respect of the street community will be superseded by the new legislation, but currently no information is available as to the differences which might accrue as a consequence. The current order ended after its 3 month period at the end of August 2014, and was seen as being particularly successful in minimising the problems historically caused by the street community.
- 5.10 Developments in the last 6 months include Think Family Neighbourhoods, where targeted work is being undertaken in two areas, one in Adur and one in Worthing, to bring the communities together and encourage greater community involvement in self-help and community development; Eastbrook in Adur and Northbrook in Worthing.
- 5.11 Other programmes either in train, proposed or in development include:
- Working with Looked After Children to give them a focus on their future development and the ability to support themselves when leaving care
 - A peer mentoring programme for young people
 - Volunteer counselling for young people
 - Young Persons Alcohol Outreach Workers and work to target street drinkers
 - Park Nights (Health and Well-Being Team) across Adur and Worthing
 - Break For Change Project addressing child to parent abuse
 - The "Better Place" Group addressing environmental issues, community cohesion and developing play spaces and community gardens as well as other community activities.
 - Area Road Safety Partnership (Fire District Commanders Fund)
 - Taxi Marshall Scheme (Funded by Licensed Premises)
 - Play streets

- Action Eastbrook and action Northbrook
- 5.12 Basically, it is no longer enough to consider just the Safer Communities Partnership in a bubble of isolation, but it needs to be seen as a continuum with other services and actions in the statutory, public and voluntary sectors.
- 5.13 It is clear that while there will always be new challenges and things to do, Adur & Worthing are approaching the future from a sound and effective base of professionalism and expertise, project work, service delivery and vibrant partnership activity, all of which will enable us to better ride out the difficulties anticipated in future.

6. **Drug and Alcohol Workers**

- 6.1 Members will remember the grant application that was submitted to the lottery to support work on alcohol across Worthing and Adur. Sadly, although the application was resubmitted, it didn't pass through the lottery process and was rejected.
- 6.2 Due to the fact that the Safer Communities Partnership had been judicious in its handling of previous government grants, there has been a small reserve of partnership funds (mentioned last year) available to support ongoing requirements in the short term. The same source of funding has been applied to the anti-social behaviour team until the allocations from the Police Commissioner are known for next year.
- 6.3 Had we not been able to do this, then we would have lost key experienced staff at a time when we need to maintain the downward pressure on crime and disorder, which would have in all likelihood led to a rise in crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 6.4 Clearly, as the BIG Lottery application was unsuccessful, if the settlement from the Police Commissioner through West Sussex County Council for 2014/15 is disappointing, then hard decisions will need to be made about the future shape of our services and how we might continue to achieve our outcomes in the changing landscape.

7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1 Even in these challenging times, it is clear that the Adur and Worthing Safer Communities and local Strategic Partnerships are performing well. We will however see a changing landscape over the next year, which will bring with it many new challenges, especially around sustainability and maintenance of key posts.
- 7.2 Many problems being addressed have common roots, such as alcohol (violent crime, ASB and DV) and drugs (acquisitive crime) and are tackled in partnership. Mental Health, as a new responsibility as a Champion Council, also is cross cutting and will form part of the Adur and Worthing strategic direction on health and well-being.
- 7.3 The drive to involve the community in self-help will undoubtedly continue, but brings with that policy a raft of fresh challenges, and their greater involvement will undoubtedly require support and co-ordination from professional and experienced officers.
- 7.4 That being said, working smarter will of course involve innovative ways of achieving the same objectives, and undoubtedly the voluntary sector and the community will all need to play their part.

- 7.5 Future national government spending reviews will probably lay down further restrictions on finance, so the future is not assured by any means. It remains to be seen whether our continued momentum can be sustained, and our best chance of doing so is based in our partnerships which thankfully are well founded in the Adur and Worthing area.
- 7.6 Adur and Worthing continue to punch above their weight in involvement with county wide objectives and outcomes, and support a wide range of issues around Safeguarding of Children, older vulnerable people and Domestic Violence. But in such an uncertain world, all matters will need to be kept under constant review to ensure as far as possible that we retain the skills necessary for future involvement while retaining both the commitment and ability to achieve success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DS' with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Councillor David Simmons
Chair, Adur & Worthing Safer Communities Partnership
3rd November 2013