

Agenda Item: 5
Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of Meeting: 14 November 2023

Report Title: **Ashford Community Safety Partnership: an interim update on community safety activity in the borough 2023/2024**

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Portfolio Holder for: Safety and Wellbeing

Summary: This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an interim update on community safety. The Council has a duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider the impact of all their functions and decisions on crime and disorder in their local area. The report outlines how we work in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime and disorder, this work being progressed through the Ashford Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The report details crime statistics for the borough and its positioning against other districts within the county. Ashford is shown as being a safe borough as the level of recorded crime remains low, and there has been a reduction in many crime types, including serious violence offences. The report nevertheless highlights a slight increase in reports of anti-social behaviour to Kent Police.

The report, which is highly positive, demonstrates the value of multi-agency working and the encouraging results that can be achieved through effective information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated activity. It shows how the partners use a wide range of interventions endorsed by the College of Policing using their crime reduction toolkit to reduce crime and disorder and to tackle issues that matter to the local community.

Information is provided on current community safety priorities, actions that have been taken to meet those priorities and raises awareness of emerging issues.

The activity presented also supports delivery of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan (Making Kent Safer 2022 to 2025).

Key Decision:	NO
Significantly Affected Wards:	All
Recommendations:	<p>The committee is recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. to note the information contained in this report. ii. to support the formation of a cross party member working group to review the Council's strategic plans for its community safety obligations. iii. to agree that the annual Community Safety Partnership report is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee each November.
Policy Overview:	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is designated as the committee responsible for Crime and Disorder under the Police Justice Act 2006.
Financial Implications:	Ashford Community Safety Partnership receives a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner and this is used to fund small community projects within the borough.
Legal Implications:	Not applicable
Equalities Impact Assessment:	Not required
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	None
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Introduction and Background

1. It remains a statutory requirement for local authorities to work in partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). We achieve this through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), where 'responsible partners', namely the local authority (district and county), Fire and Rescue Service, Integrated Care Board, Probation and Police, work collaboratively to make communities safer, reduce crime and the fear of crime, reduce ASB and work with businesses and residents on the issues of most concern. In addition to the statutory partners the CSP is also supported by representation from several other relevant organisations, for example, the chair of the Head Teachers Forum, Ashford College, the Department of Works & Pensions and chairs of the CSP subgroups such as the Ashford Domestic Abuse Forum.
2. To set the current priorities, the CSP used police, district and county data and the local crime profile. A stakeholder engagement event assisted in the development of priorities for 2023/24 which are set out below:
 - Tackling anti-social and concerning behaviours
 - Tackling violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse and sexual offences
 - Reducing serious violence, including youth violence, county lines, organised crime and violent extremism
 - Restoring public confidence and supporting communities

These are explored in more detail in the next section of this report.

3. CSPs are responsible for convening a strategy group of all responsible authorities (other organisations are also invited who are not statutory bodies), preparing a strategic assessment of local crime and community safety priorities using information provided by partner agencies and the community, and produce an action plan to meet those priorities. Due to the nature of this requirement, the council's Community Safety Unit (CSU) takes responsibility for coordinating our activities and events.
4. Under the Crime and Disorder Regulations 2007, district and borough CSPs are required to:
 - Produce an annual strategic assessment
 - Produce a rolling partnership plan setting out priorities, with actions to deliver these priorities
 - Have a dialogue with communities to inform these processes and explain outcomes
5. Ashford's actions throughout 2023/24 flow from the annual strategic assessment undertaken in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The action plan utilises the four Ps approach (Prepare, Protect, Prevent, Pursue). The actions are informed by the Kent Community Safety Partnership Plan and Safer Kent 2022 – 2025, the plan of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

6. Overall, the CSP is responsible for ensuring that the identified priorities, actions and targets will be delivered through a multi-agency approach by having:
 - Strong strategic management
 - Tasking joint resources through well-established partnership operational structures, including identifying, managing and reducing risk
 - Strong performance management

Our approach

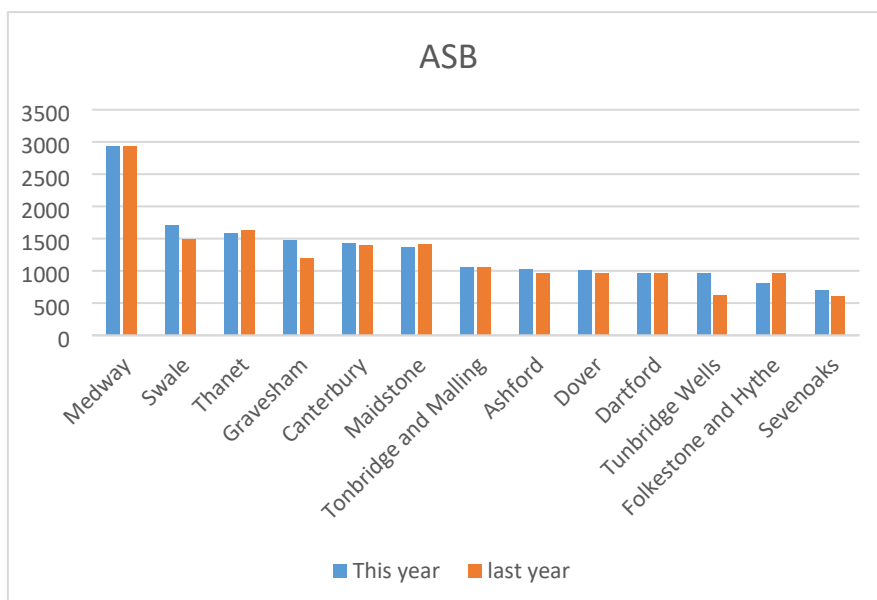
7. The CSP uses a whole system approach to tackling crime and ASB. Experience identifies that more than one type of intervention is needed to resolve the problem. For example, enforcement is most effective if local communities support it and other activity is taking place to change behaviours.
8. A variety of interventions are applied when looking at any type of crime or anti-social behaviour issue that requires the engagement of a range of services, voluntary and community groups to find long-term solutions. The College of Policing crime reduction toolkit is utilised as part of our problem-solving process to assess the impact of the intervention and how to implement the intervention and potential costings.
9. ABC's Environmental Enforcement Team moved services in March 2023 and have now joined the Community Safety and Resilience Team. These members of staff will enhance the current offering and allow even more joined up working with regards to various enforcement opportunities.
10. All data within this report refers to 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023. All comparisons are based on data from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

Tackling anti-social and concerning behaviours

11. All residents have the right to feel safe and secure where they live and the right to enjoy peace and quiet in their homes and communities. The CSP is committed to effectively tackling anti-social and concerning behaviour which can have a serious impact on wellbeing.
12. The ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines ASB as: "Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person, or conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person".
13. A range of enforcement options are used against those responsible for ASB. Working closely with the Police and other enforcement bodies ensures enforcement action is appropriate, proportionate and can be escalated swiftly where the need arises. The approach adopted is to intervene early and undertake positive interventions to change behaviours before matters lead to a criminal offence being committed.
14. The Council's ASB policy and supporting documentation has been reviewed this year and the ASB policy was agreed at Cabinet in September 2023.

ASB - Kent Police data

15. The data provided by Kent Police indicates the number of incidents of ASB reported to Kent Police for the Borough of Ashford.
16. As can be seen in the graph below there has been a slight increase of 55 reports in this year compared to the previous year. It should be noted that only three districts across the county saw a reduction in reported ASB.



17. Appendix A provides the ASB figures for all districts, this can be used to benchmark Ashford against other Kent districts. It shows that we have the 8th lowest recorded ASB in the county.
18. Data provided by Kent Police as shown below highlights the three wards within Ashford borough with the highest recorded ASB:

Ward	1 April 2023 to 30 Sept 2023	1 April 2022 to 30 Sept 2022	Difference (numbers)	Difference (percent)
Victoria	263	298	-11.7%	-35
Stanhope	112	31	261.3%	81
Aylesford and East Stour	70	61	14.8%	9

19. This illustrates a decrease in Victoria ward, but this still has the highest levels of reported ASB within the borough. This is expected due to the nature of the ward (town centre and Victoria Park). There has been a significant increase in Stanhope and a minor increase in Aylesford and East Stour ward.

ASB - Borough Council data

20. In addition to the police data, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) recorded 103 incidents between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023, a decrease of 20.8% compared to the previous year. As shown in the table below.

	1 April 2023 to 30 Sept 2023	1 April 2022 to 30 Sept 2022	Difference (Numbers)	Difference (percent)
Ashford	103	130	- 27	-20.8%

21. Reports of ASB into Ashford Borough Council are received via several methods. The most common mechanism is via the council's website where there is an option to 'Report ASB'. This allows the reporter to complete an online form with details of issues they are experiencing. The online form is automatically sent to the relevant email inbox for the officer to investigate.
22. To encourage reporting and meet the needs of residents, the 'Report It' app has been widely promoted as another platform available to use and is managed in the same way as the web link.
23. The reports received cover a number of forms of ASB but the highest types in 2023 were Gathering of Nuisance Youths, Drug Misuse, Harassment, Vandalism and requests for General advice all score the same and were joint third.
24. Ashford Monitoring Centre have provided data in relation to the ASB and criminal incidents that they deal with on a day-to-day basis. This can be found in Appendix C. An individual incident may cover more than one category hence the variance in figures.

Use of ASB legislation (Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014)

25. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) are designed to reduce and address ASB being committed in a public place. All of the live orders within the borough are available on the council's website. If the order is breached, police and council officers can issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to the value of £100. There are currently six PSPOs within the borough (three are gating orders, and three are linked to specified locations and particular behaviours). In this reporting period, a total of one FPN was issued by Kent Police. This was in relation to a breach of the PSPO for the consumption of alcohol.
26. All PSPOs must be reviewed on a three yearly basis and subject to public consultation. The council has recently carried out a consultation for the renewal of the Churchyard Gate which took place in August 2023. No objections or recommendations for change were received and it was therefore renewed for another three years. Details of this PSPO and others in the Ashford borough can be found here: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/community-safety/anti-social-behaviour-asb/public-spaces-protection-order>.
27. Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) were issued to two individuals from the same household in August 2023 by Ashford Borough with the support of Kent Police. This was a complex case concerning an ongoing neighbour dispute and impacts on the wider community such as noise and offensive language. There were also significant safeguarding concerns for the children living at the property. Due to a breach of the CPW one of the individuals was issued a Community Protection Notice (CPN). The same household was also under investigation with the Environmental Enforcement Team following reports received in relation to waste build up at the property. This led to the issuing of a CPW, which was breached leading to the issuing

of a CPN and finally ended with a Fixed penalty notice (FPN) due to noncompliance which will be due in court sometime in the future due to non-payment.

28. Due to the complexities of the case mentioned above there was a requirement for multi-agency working involving ABC, Kent Police and KCC Social Services. In September, Social Services progressed the matter to Court following evidence from all three organisations and the children were placed into the care of social services. This has had a positive impact on the surrounding community and residents as the levels of ASB have reduced. All three agencies will continue to work together to support the community and the household involved.
29. Over the year, Kent Police have utilised their powers under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to positively respond to incidents and concerns. Dispersal areas have been implemented under Section 34 of the act on five occasions. Four of these related to preventing ASB in and around the town centre to enable them to move on groups of youths. The other was used in the area of Stanhope in June following a large disturbance. A CPW was issued to a frequent caller to highlight the importance of the 999 service and not to abuse the resource. Officers have proactively utilised the PSPO conditions to manage alcohol-related ASB within the town centre and two FPNs have been issued in relation to street drinking.
30. An ASB case review occurs when an individual is unsatisfied with how their ASB concern has been addressed. There has been one ASB case review this year, colloquially known as a Community Trigger.
31. From 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023, Ashford Borough Council housing officers have not secured any closure orders linked to ASB. The housing service still continues to work in close partnership with Kent Police and CSU to reduce ASB and safeguard vulnerable residents in our communities.
32. From 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023, our housing service has used Community Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices to tackle anti-social behaviour in the community and traditional housing tools concerning the tenancy. In total 32 Community Protection Warnings, 7 Community Protection Notices and 1 Fixed Penalty Notice were issued. These were issued for behaviour concerning residents not keeping their dogs supervised and under control, refuse and fly-tipping, unkempt gardens and noise.

ASB action plan

33. The ASB working group with the support of the CSP have completed the following work:
34. A working group has been setup as a subsidiary of the Housing STAR's meeting and part of the Town Centre ASB Strategy. This will include regular multi-agency patrols in and around the town centre to engage with any homeless individuals or street drinking community they may come across. This will hopefully go some way to understanding the needs of these individuals with a view to assisting them and thus preventing some of the ASB noted in certain areas of the town centre. Rough Sleeper Initiative Grants are also received by ABC and members of the Housing Service regularly interact with this cohort of people to try to help them find accommodation.

35. Another working group has been set up to look at the possibilities surrounding a safe space location for the street drinkers and rough sleepers within the town centre. This will involve a multi-agency approach from the CSU, Kent Police, the Rough Sleeper team, Town Centre team and faith group leaders.
36. There have been a number of incidents where excellent communication between Police and the Ashford Monitoring Centre have resulted in successful outcomes. One incident displayed a really great piece of collective work between the retail community, ABC CCTV and Police to identify, locate and convict an individual committing numerous offences in Ashford town centre.
37. On Thursday 1 June B&M staff called up on the radio stating that they had deterred a male suspected of shoplifting and provided his description. CSU officers recognised the description given as a wanted male and the CCTV operator assisted in guiding the officers to the male's location and he was stopped and arrested. He was found to be in possession of a significant quantity of goods stolen from stores within the town, which they were able to recover. Following further investigation, they managed to secure charges for four offences including a burglary and the individual was remanded to court and pleaded guilty and sentenced to a year in custody.
38. Another incident showed excellent work by the CCTV operators and led to the arrest of a suspect for a burglary at the pharmacy in Tenterden. The quick thinking of the operator to identify and track the suspect from the scene to an address led directly to the arrest.
39. The District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting (DCSM) continues to be well attended by community safety agencies. The purpose of this meeting is to explore the identified risks and safety young people experience within a specific context, reduce risks and increase protection and agree an intervention plan accordingly. Through the DCSM targeted intervention pathways are identified to support that young person and prevent them becoming criminally exploited or involved in high harm activity such as serious youth violence.
40. Two key sites within the town centre have caused significant ASB over the summer months. One being Kent Woolgrowers which is now owned by ABC. A site visit was undertaken to establish the access points, this has now resulted in 24/7 security onsite to help with the reduction of ASB and safeguarding of individuals. The other site was the Flour Mills. The licencing team has worked closely with the owners of this building to ensure they put in adequate measures to stop people gaining entry into the building and causing a significant incident like a major fire or personal injury.
41. During the summer months, we received reports of nuisance behaviour at Conningbrook and Singleton Lakes. This was in relation to youths playing within the water and causing ASB. We worked closely with Kent Police to provide a visible presence in these locations to deter the behaviour.
42. Our Environmental Enforcement Team dealt with fly tipped oil drums in the vicinity of County Square. This follows a spate of thefts of cooking oil drums last year in the town centre and neighbouring districts. It is suspected this crime might be on the rise again, after some investigation the vehicle was linked to London, which was the same as last time. CSU has provided the details to the Police and it will be raised at the next Serious and Organised Crime panel meeting.

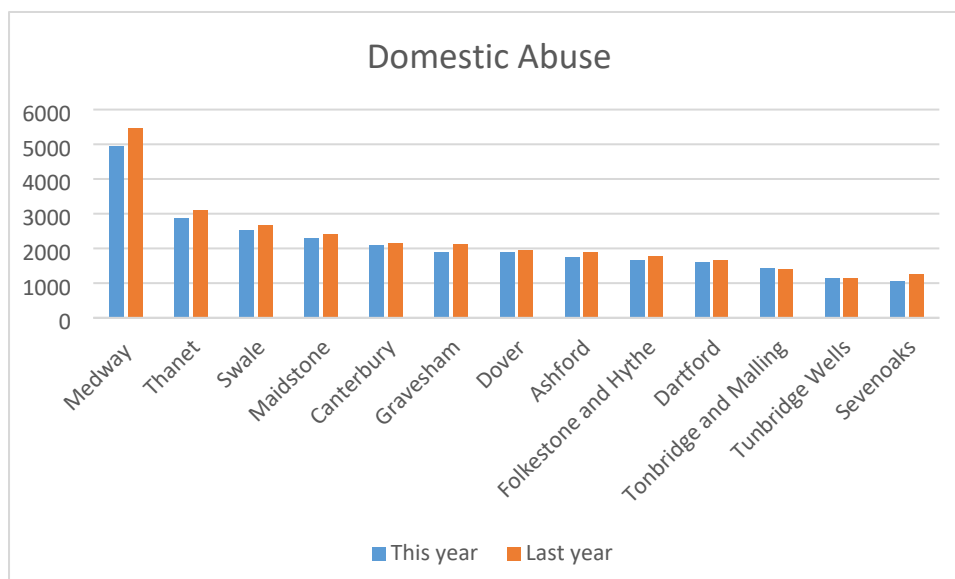
43. Mirrors have been replaced in Taylors Passage and St Johns Passage within the town centre. As well as new ones being placed at the Zig Zag path just behind the cinema on the Eureka complex.
44. A deployable camera was installed in Goat Lees, Kennington due to ongoing ASB in the area. Improvements were also made to the lighting in the Goat Lees playpark. The AMC have been carrying out regular camera patrols of the area on a 2 hourly rolling basis for a 3 month period. There haven't been any significant incidents reported.

Tackling Violence against Women and Girls, including Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences

45. It is recognised that domestic abuse is a serious and life-threatening crime that affects victims and their families, and the priority is that victims and any children are safeguarded from further abuse.
46. The Borough Council's domestic abuse service is managed by the Housing Options team but remains a vital part of our community safety work and requires the same level of multi-agency engagement alongside the other community safety priorities.
47. The Borough Council employs a full-time Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator post (currently vacant) within the housing service and also provides funds annually in support of the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service for Ashford via the KCC commissioned Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service.
48. In Ashford, Clarion hold the contract for delivering the IDVA service and already operates the women's refuge in the town.
49. Clarion is contracted as part of the commissioning contract "To facilitate and deliver coordinated, multi-agency access points in local communities across Kent to enable access to information and support". This is known as the One Stop Shop, which Ashford Borough Council supports.
50. The contract also states that Clarion is responsible for "Working with local partnerships, delivery and facilitation of therapeutic and supportive activities to promote independence and future healthy relationships". ABC previously coordinated this group work, such as the Freedom Programme and the Phoenix Programme, but Clarion has taken over delivery this year.

Domestic Abuse Kent Police Data

51. The data provided by Kent Police indicates the number of incidents of Domestic Abuse reported to Kent Police for the Borough of Ashford.
52. As can be seen in the graph below there has been a reduction of 138 reports in this year compared to the previous year. It should be noted that only one district across the county saw an increase in reported Domestic Abuse.



Domestic Abuse Coordinator

53. The post of Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator was introduced to the Borough Council seven years ago. Since then KCC has developed the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS), which covers Kent and Medway and provides advice and information on services for victims, friends and family, and perpetrators of domestic violence. All local authorities in the county contribute towards this cost.
54. The coordinator's focus is to ensure that we are delivering the new duties under the Domestic Abuse Act, as well as to take forward relevant campaigns. This post is more customer focused than in previous years, having had a full review in 2022. In essence, the key aspects of the role includes:-
- To provide leadership with regard to the provision of services for those experiencing or escaping domestic abuse within the Borough of Ashford
 - To undertake any necessary client risk assessments and, where necessary, develop and implement safety plans as identified in the risk assessment
 - To coordinate all referrals for the Sanctuary Scheme, which is designed to help support those at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own home and avoid the upheaval of homelessness
 - To coordinate and manage the Safe House in Ashford and ensure clients are offered the full wrap around support
 - To participate in and support the work of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
 - To initiate and maintain effective communication with partnership agencies across all sectors at regional and national levels, including participating in the newly formed Local Partnership Board
 - To take the lead in the Make a Stand campaign.

Working with Male Perpetrators

55. In October 2021, funds from the Police & Crime Commissioner made it possible for men from Ashford to participate in the Community Domestic Abuse Programme. This is a 27-week 'roll on/roll off' programme for men who wish to amend their previously

abusive behaviour and make more positive relationships. This was reviewed and is being funded by Ashford Domestic Abuse Forum (ADAF).

56. Kent Police are operating a further programme to address stalking behaviour. The Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Interventions (COBI) is an intensive 1:1 programme of 12 sessions, each lasting up to 2.5 hours. This is delivered by staff with a psychology or counselling background or by a qualified Probation Officer. The programme is based on the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) treatment model and is a talking therapy. It focuses on building an individuals' skills to cope with challenging situations, overwhelming feelings, and difficult emotions. The programme is also suitable for harder to treatment groups including those with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) / Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder.

Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop (OSS)

57. The Ashford OSS is a drop-in service for anyone affected, in any way, by domestic abuse where support, help and advice is given.
58. It is a free and confidential service provided weekly and no appointment is necessary. It continues to be an area for professionals to work together to provide a coordinated response to domestic abuse.
59. During this reporting period 90 people contacted the OSS face-to-face for assistance.

Support for Men suffering from Domestic Abuse

60. The OSS is a service men can utilise just as much as women and offers a place for them to get support and advice.
61. Dads Unlimited is an organisation that supports the emotional safety of men and those they care about through three key areas; supporting male victims of domestic abuse, supporting men with family separation; and supporting men's mental health. All of the services use an evidence-based, trauma-informed, person-centred approach. It is achieved through the provision of a family separation helpline, one-to-one mentoring advice, mental health support, peer-led support groups, education and social services liaison support, pastoral support, court support, and adult and child community activities.
62. Clarion (KIDAS provider) provides additional support for male victims and has launched a training package for professionals to be able to utilise.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

63. Several Violence Against Women and Girls 'Walk and Talk' events have been held since 1 April 2023. They were delivered in conjunction with Kent Police and provided an excellent opportunity to engage with members of the public. The public were able to raise concerns in relation to specific locations where they felt unsafe and were able to access personal safety equipment provided by the Community Safety Unit.
64. Kent Police and Ashford Borough Council staff attended the Ashford College Freshers fair and provided advice to new students and supplied them with personal safety equipment. Safety equipment and details of the Safer Streets app are also

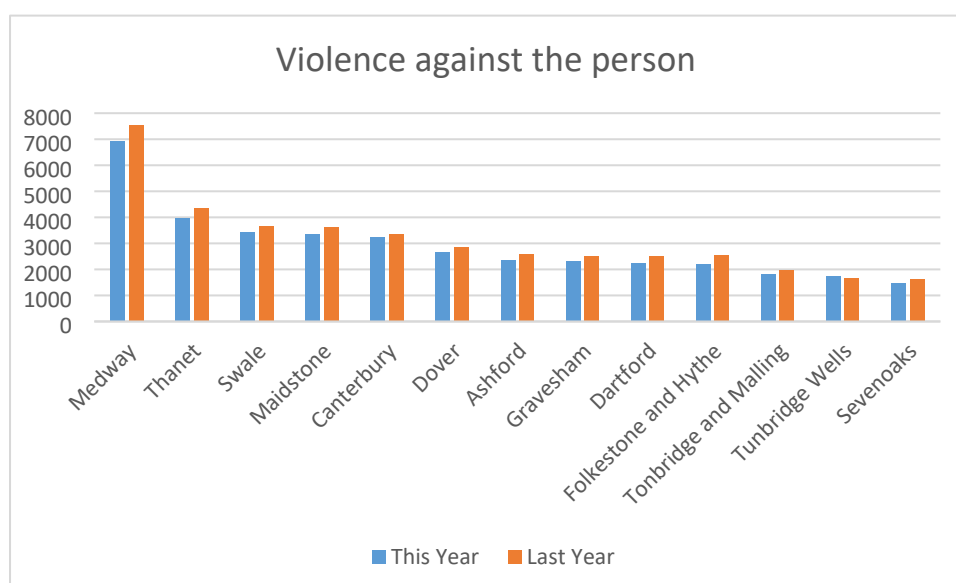
taken along to the Eat Well, Spend Less Roadshows, which are available to the public.

65. The Borough Council’s Licensing team has been working with the Night-Time Economy businesses to promote the “Ask Angela”¹ campaign and there have been dedicated Police patrols working in conjunction with partners including the Street Pastors to increase visibility in the Night-Time Economy. The Street Pastors have been successful in recruiting more volunteers to support their work and Safer Streets funding was able to assist in the purchase of a vehicle to become the district’s first ‘mobile safe space’. This has expanded the ability and scope of the Street Pastors to act as visible guardians in the night-time economy protecting vulnerable people from being exposed to harmful situations.
66. The collective work and focus of agencies has been successful in gaining the support of businesses to promote the Safe Spaces campaign, and has also seen proactive responses from both businesses and their staff in identifying and intervening in situations where vulnerable females were at risk.
67. A VAWG action plan is being drawn up by Kent Police, ABC and the Clarion to identify key actions and will be an area of focus for the CSP for the remainder of this financial year.

Reducing serious violence, including youth violence, county lines, organised crime and violent extremism

Violence related Kent Police Data

68. The data provided by Kent Police indicates the number of incidents of violence reported to Kent Police for the Borough of Ashford.
69. As can be seen in the graph below there has been a decrease of reports, namely 229 less in this year compared to the previous year. It should be noted that all districts excluding one saw a decrease of reported violent offences.



¹ The ‘Ask for Angela’ campaign provided a secret code for women to find help if they were feeling unsafe on a night out. [‘ASK FOR ANGELA’ IF YOU ARE FEELING UNSAFE - National Pubwatch](#)

Serious violence including youth violence

70. Safer season operations have had a continued focus on the night-time economy with dedicated foot patrols during peak times. Interventions with offenders have included the imposition of bail conditions to prevent re-offending.
71. Close working with Ashford Partnership Against Crime (APAC) has led to several exclusions being issued to perpetrators of violence within the night-time economy; a powerful tool for businesses to send a message to those intent on violence that it is not acceptable and has consequences.
72. Kent Police Safer Summer plan focused on reducing NTE related violence by providing dedicated foot patrols on Friday and Saturday evenings.
73. The Ashford Street Pastors provide additional visibility and assist Police and Ashford Monitoring Centre (CCTV) in identifying situations that can escalate into violence. The number of Street Pastors has increased significantly this year, and training has been provided to local officers to improve working relationships.
74. The Best Bar None scheme, which recognises quality operating standards within the licensing community, was formally launched in November 2022, with six venues being the first to be presented with the award by the Mayor of Ashford. Ashford CSP is one of the first in the county to successfully roll out the scheme, with one of the key aims being to deliver a drive to increase the quality of standards across the industry. The successful recipients were:
 - Ashford Club – also recognised as the highest scoring venue
 - Cameo – also recognised for excellence in promoting public safety
 - Tap Room
 - The County Hotel
 - Truckstop
 - Valerie's

County Lines and Organised Crime

75. The Ashford Serious Organised Crime (SOC) Panel meets monthly and is well attended by partners. This is an effective problem solving forum and as a result of these meetings they have led to the continued success has been maintained disrupting Organised Crime Group's (OCGs) based in or operating within our borough.
76. Intensification activity has involved weapon sweeps and multi-agency visits to vulnerable residents at risk of cuckooing and exploitation. There are also planned joint operations at Ashford International Station with British Transport Police in the remaining months of the financial year.
77. The Police Cadet programme is available to young people aged 13 to 17 who live in Kent, irrespective of background or financial circumstances, including those vulnerable to crime or social exclusion. The cadets undergo training and participate in voluntary work with the police in their local community. They develop essential life skills and enhance opportunities for further education, training and employment – whether within the police service or another profession. The Ashford Cadets have continued to expand significantly over this year. They have been working in the

community with the CSU on several projects, including weapon sweeps and bike marking.

78. The Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) has been funded until March 2025 and has worked with 11 high risk individuals during this time period which has seen a reduction in ASB and crime, alongside improved school attendance and relationships with peers and parents. They have continued to run ball court sessions in Stanhope and Victoria Park.
79. Ashford Borough Council secured funding from the Serious Violence Duty Grant for £7692. The funding can be used for the resourcing costs associated with the development of a serious violence needs assessment and associated serious violence strategy which must be in place by 31st January 2024

Violent Extremism (Prevent)

80. The KCC Prevent Team delivered a Prevent Awareness Training event on Friday 21 July. The session covered many topics including Prevent, Radicalisation, Extremist Identities and Incels, all within a local context and information on referral pathways. Several councillors attended the session as well as the CSU staff.
81. This is standing agenda item on the Ashford CSP meeting and a representative from the KCC Prevent team provides a quarterly update. They also provided the yearly counter-terrorism local profile (CTLTP) briefing at the last CSP meeting.
82. ABC's Prevent Lead attends the Channel Panel when an Ashford case is on the agenda; Ashford has had two cases in this reporting period. ABC's Prevent lead feedbacks any actions to relevant officers.
83. ABC is involved in the county Prevent Duty Delivery Board and the newly established Prevent Advisory Group (which encourage communities to engage in this subject).

Restoring public confidence and supporting communities

84. It is known that often communities are best placed to tackle their own issues and key to the work of the CSP is building sustainable community capacity to enable this.
85. It is also vital to the work of the Partnership to ensure the services meet the needs of all communities, particularly the most vulnerable such as victims of hate crime.
86. There is also a need to ensure that the perception of crime within the borough reflects the reality of crime and it is known that this requires sustained community leadership and ongoing conversations and effective communications.
87. We have continued to fund Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) until March 2025 to provide diversionary activities, one-to-one mentoring and crime reduction workshops.
88. The re-energised Ashford Partnership Against Crime (APAC) has increased membership in the "Pubwatch" and "Shopwatch" schemes. APAC supports the flow of information between premises and partners, ensuring key individuals are refused entry and public safety is maintained.

89. Kent Police Beat officers have been holding a host of community engagement events across the district. These have been branded initially as 'meet your new beat officer' events as part of the roll out of the new Neighbourhood Policing Model. Some of these events have been supported by Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) and ABC CSU.
90. The Police and CSU were also recently been invited to a bespoke meeting to discuss community safety issues with residents of Beaver Ward. This was a productive meeting with actions taken from it to address concerns raised.
91. Ashford Independent Advisory Group has recently re-launched with the appointment of a new chairperson. The IAG met on the 21 September where attendees met to discuss the future direction of the IAG for Ashford. This is a positive development with new members now joining the IAG as well. The next meeting is scheduled for December.
92. Kent Police has launched monthly newsletters to complement messaging through My Community Voice and social media where the local beat officers provide a piece on what activity they have been doing in the ward areas, which includes feedback from community engagements and through stakeholder/ agency forums.

Police and Crime Commissioner grant to the CSP

93. The 2023/2024 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) grant to Ashford CSP totalled £31,744. The funding is allocated in two parts. The first aspect is for two thirds of the grant which has been allocated as detailed below:
94. Home Start, Family support worker - £2700: A trained Family Support Worker will visit families in their home (where safe to do so) or in secure community settings to provide practical and emotional assistance such as attending professionals' meetings, accessing childcare and healthcare, attending toddler sessions and support groups, filling out paperwork, shopping, nursery and school access etc. The Family Support Worker for this project has a specific focus on supporting families where Domestic Abuse has or is occurring. The worker may help to re-settle the family in safer accommodation, engage them in the Freedom Programme and/or signpost them to other services such as Rising Sun for targeted support. The worker usually offers 12 visits per family.
95. KCC community wardens, bike marking kits - £360: To support crime reduction initiatives within the borough.
96. Ashford Rural Primary Care Network, ADHD/ASC support group - £1350: The ADHD/ASC support group is a project being run by Children's Health and Wellbeing Navigators. It is a safe space for families to raise issues and provide appropriate interventions safeguarding in a space with multidisciplinary professionals who can help advise and support. The target audience are families from four GP practices with children on the waiting list or already with a diagnosis of ADHD or Autism and their parents. A significant number of these young people are known to support services and have referred to the team due to challenges they are facing. Since they are a rural set of practices, access to support for families in the area is difficult to achieve. Current waiting times for an assessment mean that children are waiting for four years for one and a diagnosis of their ADHD/ASC. The Ashford Rural PCN looks to support families to continue to work with education and support if the decision is made to home-educate. Statistics from the ADHD foundation show that one in four people in prison have an ADHD diagnosis. The aim of the project would be to provide

education, coping strategies and peer support to families by targeting the parents/carers. This would mean that more families are able manage behaviours that challenge and there is less likelihood of their children becoming part of the Criminal Justice System.

97. The Bloomers Trust - £3200: Part of the project will aim to reach out to schools to deliver presentations at assemblies or education weeks in Ashford, and the secondary part of the project is reaching out to organisations in Ashford that support vulnerable service users that may be victims of sexual exploitation/assault or domestic violence to educate them of the signs to spot and the support the trust and other organisations can offer (for example Rising Sun, Police, NHS, etc.). The trust would also like to educate on sexual exploitation and the prevalence of it in society, and the support offered if you either recognise yourself as a victim or if you think someone you know might be a victim. They would love to be able to educate people around these topics and spread awareness, as well as share information known to ensure Survivors receive the support they are entitled to. There are currently 13 Secondary Schools in Kent. All 13 schools will be approached at the start of the funding to book to present at each secondary school throughout the year. Regarding organisations, all 15 organisations/public sectors teams will be approached every three months or more necessary.
98. Mid Kent Mind, Taming my temper - £8118.50: The Taming My Temper Course is a six-week course enabling young people to better understand the underlying connections between emotions and violent behaviour, whilst also exploring how young people can communicate through healthier alternatives. Sessions are delivered by trauma informed ambassadors – supporting young people whose behavior is affected by trauma. Sessions are suitable for all secondary school-aged young people within the Ashford district. Mid Kent Mind will work with schools, parents/carers and other agencies (i.e. Early Help, Community Support Officers, etc.) to identify young people who will benefit positively from these interventions.
99. Willow and Green Funeral Directors, Creative Art Workshop - £1800. To run workshops during the October half term of 2023 with a group or groups of young people who have been identified as being at high risk of becoming involved with anti-social behaviour. These workshops will be facilitated by a registered drama and creative arts therapist with local volunteers, musicians and artists to support and inspire the young people in the workshops. The workshops, their content and the adults involved in the project aim to support the young people to express themselves, their thoughts and feelings through poetry, drama and art. This project will add to the current movement in Ashford to create a safer space that young people can take pride and that helps strengthen ties in the community.
100. Ashford Street Pastors – purchase of two body work video cameras - £841: Purchase of two Body Worn Cameras for the team leaders on each patrol for use during the night time economy in and around Ashford town and within the welfare cabin of the Safe Space Vehicle.
101. Strength2strength – DA related course - £2739.50: This project is to be designed to support people who have suffered domestic abuse in the area, to dictate their own course in life to regain control of themselves and the direction of their life travels and support their own wellbeing to give them confidence and self-worth. This will be covered in a brand-new empowerment programme as well as supporting the Phoenix waiting list. Classroom based or via zoom /teams. The ever-increasing levels of

Domestic abuse suffered in personal or family situations. The courses offered will help people become aware of the support that is available, understand the early signs of controlling behaviour, therefore being able to protect themselves and their children, as well as improving their understanding of the reporting procedures. The programme itself is designed to be adapted to support people from all different backgrounds and needs and is easily modified to help support organisations in the local area.

102. The remaining third is allocated to a tactical pot and can be utilised throughout the remainder of the year for emerging issues. The remaining fund is £10,581.

Emerging themes

103. The Government continues to consider ASB as a key priority with their recent high-profile launch of the ASB action plan. This action plan has yet to be reviewed by the Ashford CSP and date to undertake this has been set for the next meeting on 14 November 2023. The action plan focuses on a number of key areas such as “making communities safer”, “reducing rough sleeping and begging” and “building local pride”. This will require a continued multi-agency approach to be used.
104. The impending formal introduction of The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill sets out the requirements that under Martyn’s Law, venues and other organisations will have to meet to ensure public safety. “Martyn’s law” is a tribute to Martyn Hett who was killed alongside 21 others in the Manchester Arena terrorist attack in 2017. The bill will place additional responsibilities on all agencies when dealing with public accessible locations.
105. The Home Office has recently commissioned a review of CSPs. The Community Safety Partnership review seeks to clarify the role of Community Safety Partnerships, and improve their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, making it easier for them to serve the needs of their communities in tackling crime, disorder, and antisocial behaviour. Phase 1 comprised of a targeted consultation, exploring the relationship between Community Safety Partnerships and Police and Crime Commissioners, with the aim of improving the way they work together, and strengthening the accountability of Community Safety Partnerships. The consultation closed in May 2023 and has now been analysed, with a government response to be published in due course. Ashford CSP submitted a responds to the consultation.
106. Violence Against Women and Girls will continue to be a focus for agencies that work within community safety but emerging themes of misogynist behaviour and Incels are being seen in Prevent referrals and being reported within educational establishments.
107. There is very strong evidence to show the connections between young people drugs and crime and anti-social behaviour. It is hoped that the CSP will be able to find funding and engage with the school community to run programs building young people’s life skills and resilience to prevent them becoming susceptible those selling drugs or peer pressure. Early investigations have show there to be a number of organisations working in the area.

Next steps

108. This report evidences the strength of the partnership but also details the emerging themes and potential changes to the community safety agenda. Therefore, it seems timely and healthy to review what we are doing as a partnership and how we can

continue to deliver to meet our requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 alongside the wider non-statutory aspects of the work.

109. All agencies are facing budgetary pressures which will impact on their ability to provide resources to continue the delivery of this work or provide funding for the commissioning of projects. Therefore, the establishment of a working group will allow the examination of this and set the focus moving forward, including clear strategic objectives.

Conclusion

110. Ashford's Community Safety Partnership relies upon the continued significant support given by its individual partners and by those from a whole range of organisations who are dedicated every day and night to protecting our community. The work of the partnership continues to have a positive impact on crime reduction and also inspiring confidence within our communities to report crime or ASB.
111. There have been several changes in the community safety arena over recent years with more to come. Therefore, the recommendations sited in this report will enable officers, members and the community to come together to review how we deliver community safety and build on the strong foundations that we have in the borough.
112. It is important that the Council and our partners use the most effective methods available to them to tackle ASB. This includes investing wisely in activities that are known to work based on empirical evidence. The College of Policing Toolkit is therefore an essential source of information that should be used to form our future plans.

Portfolio Holder's Views

113. We are committed to improving the quality of life for those living and working within our communities and in providing a safe and secure environment to enable all our people to live together. We work closely with Kent Police towards our communities becoming free from the negative impact of crime and ASB. The council continues to play an important role in coordinating the Community Safety Partnership and its priorities by enabling strong multi-agency work. This interim report demonstrates the work that can be achieved, and I would like to thank all those involved for their hard work and dedication.
114. There are always new and emerging themes within the community safety agenda and I very much in support of the formation of a cross party working group to review our response to community safety and how this can be developed to support our communities and provide positive outcomes for all.

Cllr Liz Wright
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing

Contact and Email

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Appendix A

Kent wide ASB figures

	1 April 2023 to 30 Sept 2023	1 April 2022 to 30 Sept 2022	% change	No change	Position in County Highest to Lowest
Medway	2929	2929	0.00%	0	1
Swale	1711	1498	12.45%	213	2
Thanet	1589	1632	-2.71%	-43	3
Gravesham	1483	1194	19.49%	289	4
Canterbury	1430	1403	1.89%	27	5
Maidstone	1374	1416	-3.06%	-42	6
Tonbridge and Malling	1057	1053	0.38%	4	7
Ashford	1020	965	5.39%	55	8
Dover	1006	969	3.68%	37	9
Dartford	966	962	0.41%	4	10
Tunbridge Wells	957	618	35.42%	339	11
Folkestone and Hythe	810	966	-19.26%	-156	12
Sevenoaks	699	613	12.30%	86	13

Appendix B

Kent Wide all crime figures

	1 April 2023 to 30 Sept 2023	1 April 2022 to 30 Sept 2022	% change	No change	Position in County Highest to Lowest
Medway	15323	16122	-5.8	-375	1
Thanet	8534	9239	-6.8	-395	2
Swale	8077	7799	-5	-799	3
Canterbury	7871	7848	3.6	278	4
Maidstone	7814	8037	-2.8	-223	5
Dartford	6083	6458	-6.6	-275	6
Dover	5674	5828	-1.1	-54	7
Ashford	5644	5872	2.1	84	8
Gravesham	5407	5802	-3.9	-228	9
Folkestone and Hythe	4773	5592	0.3	23	10
Tonbridge and Malling	4666	4720	-2.6	-154	11
Tunbridge Wells	4137	4053	-14.6	-819	12
Sevenoaks	3883	4158	-7.6	-705	13

Appendix C

AMC statistics

	April	May	June	July	August	September		
Total Incidents per month (incidents can involve multiple incident types)	195	262	207	270	301	223		
Break down of incident type - Ashford								Total
APAC Nominal	2	1	1	0	5	3		12
APAC Pubwatch	35	44	41	41	60	53		274
APAC Shopwatch	36	42	38	65	77	45		303
Arson/Fire	2	2	0	2	1	1		8
Assault Emergency Worker	1	2	2	1	1	1		8
Attempted Theft	1	4	4	5	10	1		25
Burglary Dwelling	0	1	0	0	1	0		2
Burglary Other	1	1	0	0	1	0		3
Concern For Welfare	34	44	30	51	44	31		234
CPN/CPW Breach	0	2	1	0	0	0		3
Criminal Damage	5	7	3	9	9	7		40
Disturbance	0	11	11	13	31	8		74
Domestic Incident	8	5	8	6	3	10		40
Drink Driving	2	2	3	9	10	5		31
Driving Offences	7	7	6	7	15	8		50
Drug Offences	5	8	9	10	9	5		46
Drunk and Disorderly	12	15	21	20	18	17		103
Fraud and Forgery	0	1	4	2	1	2		10
Handling Stolen Goods	0	0	2	0	0	1		3
Harassments	0	0	0	3	0	1		4
Immigration Offence	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
Licensed Premises Involved	11	22	16	27	39	28		143
Licensing	8	9	5	4	2	1		29
Major Incident/Emergency Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Medical Emergency	3	9	3	3	4	9		31
Missing Person	18	28	25	42	42	24		179
Nuisance Behaviour	55	74	48	64	52	38		331
Obstruction	0	3	1	0	0	2		6
Possession Of A Weapon	13	10	3	5	5	7		43
Public Order	8	4	4	1	3	5		25
Robbery	1	2	1	0	0	2		6
RTC	1	1	0	1	1	2		6
Safe Space used	2	0	0	0	0	0		2
Section 34	0	0	0	2	0	0		2
Sexual Offences	1	1	2	6	3	4		17
Shoplifting	19	15	20	38	38	22		152
Suspicious Behaviour	15	18	5	20	26	12		96
Suspicious Package	1	0	1	0	0	2		4
Terrorist Related Offences	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Theft from a motor vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Theft of a motor vehicle	2	0	2	1	0	1		6
Theft of a pedal cycle	0	2	1	0	4	3		10
Theft Other	4	3	3	1	2	2		15
Threatening Behavior	0	0	0	0	6	8		14
Traveler Encampment	3	1	0	0	0	0		4
Vehicle Interference	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Verbal Abuse	0	0	0	0	8	12		20
Violence against a person	16	22	17	23	24	17		119
Wanted Person	8	18	9	10	10	10		65
Overall Total	340	441	351	492	565	410		2599