

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF RESIDENTIAL AND WELLBEING SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT

SUBJECT: Safer Arun Partnership Annual Review 2020-21

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DATE: 6 August 2021

EXTN: 37834

AREA: Community Wellbeing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out progress of the Safer Arun Partnership (SAP) during the period April 2020 to March 2021 in delivering the strategic priorities as contained in its Partnership Plan. It provides information to enable Members to understand performance during the year allowing scrutiny of the partnership and provides a summary assessment of the future challenges and opportunities for SAP.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Residential and Wellbeing Services Committee review and scrutinise the work of the Safer Arun Partnership as outlined in this report and:

1. Endorse the work of the Safer Arun Partnership and the importance of partnership working in contributing to reducing anti-social behaviour and addressing crime and disorder in Arun.
2. Recognition is given to the work of the Safer Arun Partnership in contributing to the delivery of the Council's strategic priority "supporting you if you need help".

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1. The Scrutiny Function

1.1.1. Legislation requires that the performance of local community safety partnerships is scrutinised at least annually, and that this is led by the relevant local authority via its Crime and Disorder Committee. The Council has designated the Residential and Wellbeing Services Committee to serve as the Crime and Disorder Committee in undertaking this scrutiny function.

1.1.2. The intention of scrutinising the Community Safety Partnership, known locally as the Safer Arun Partnership (SAP), is to provide open, objective, and constructive feedback to enhance working relationships between agencies.

- 1.1.3. Scrutiny should seek to add value to the joint work and responses that SAP provides to the public.
- 1.1.4. Scrutiny must be of the work of SAP as a whole rather than focusing on the performance of individual organisations.
- 1.1.5. Where the scrutiny function makes recommendations to SAP, consideration must be given to the availability of resources to the partnership and that all member organisations are collectively responsible for undertaking any additional work.
- 1.1.6. **Appendix A** provides guidance as to the scrutiny function in relation to Community Safety Partnerships and reference to associated legislation.

1.2. Community Safety Partnership overview

- 1.2.1. The Safer Arun Partnership works jointly to address and reduce anti-social behaviour and crime across the district. Membership comprises representatives from:

Sussex Police

Arun District Council

West Sussex County Council

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner

West Sussex Fire and Rescue

Probation services

NHS Trust

- 1.2.2. For 2019-20, SAP retained the five key strategic priorities from the previous year. These were:

- Serious Violence
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Community Resilience
- Improving Public Confidence
- Tackling Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

When reviewing the most prevalent areas of concern, locally, all partners felt that these priorities remained appropriate and where focused work needed to continue.

- 1.2.3. These strategic priorities were agreed by the partnership as being concerns that greatly affected the local area and where SAP could achieve the vision of:

“working in partnership to achieve the vision of proactively and reactively reducing the risk of harm and vulnerability associated with crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour for identified individuals, communities and neighbourhoods.”

1.3. Performance

- 1.3.1. Principal key findings of the 2021 Strategic Intelligence Assessment are summarised in **Appendix B**.
- 1.3.2. A copy of the Partnership Plan for 2020-21 is attached as **Appendix C**. This sets out the scope of the work of the Safer Arun Partnership and illustrates the working streams involved.
- 1.3.3. **Appendix D** illustrates some of the key highlights of the partnership during 2020-2021 when assessed against the Partnership Plan of the same period.
- 1.3.4. To help understand the complex work undertaken by the Council's ASB team, three case studies are provided in **Appendix E**. These highlight the challenging nature of some interventions and the partnership working that is involved to achieve successful outcomes.
- 1.3.5. Tackling ASB during 2020-21 proved particularly challenging for the Council and Sussex Police due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Breaches of lockdown restrictions were recorded as ASB, coupled with people spending long periods of time at home when previously they would have been out, saw an increase in reports received by agencies. Restrictions also significantly altered the way in which the Arun ASB team were able to operate, working remotely and having to engage in telephone and virtual meetings as opposed to their usual approach of face to face intervention work.
- 1.3.6. The data contained within this report is taken from records for the period April 2020 to March 2021 as required for this annual review. The Strategic Intelligence Assessment referred to at Appendix A (a link to the full SIA is provided in the background papers section) sets out data for January to December 2020.

1.4. Joint working with neighbouring Community Safety Partnerships

- 1.4.1. The Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) of Chichester and Arun continue to align themselves to work jointly in addressing common priority areas of concern. This recognises the benefit of sharing intelligence and affords the CSPs to mirror the local Sussex Police hub which formally identifies itself as Arun & Chichester.
- 1.4.2. Additionally, during 2020-21 SAP forged close working links with the CSP across Adur & Worthing to devise strategies to address the deleterious effects of young people exposed to and participating in acts of serious violence. This was a product of the partnership identifying the mobility of young people and the 'cross border' nature of the activities they were engaged in. By sharing knowledge and resources, the early identification of issues, individuals and incident 'hotspots' has been paramount in taking proactive action.
- 1.4.3. SAP supports and fully engages with the work of the West Sussex Community Safety Partnership which brings together all the localised CSPs to share intelligence and identify trends across the county.

1.5. Crime¹

1.5.1. Across Arun, the total incidents of crime decreased by 11.4% during the period from April 2020 to March 2021 when compared to the same period the previous year. This compares to a decrease of 15.9% across the Sussex force for the same period.

No. of crimes recorded		
2020-21	2019-20	Change (+/-)
10,083	11,377	-1,294 (-11.4%)

1.5.2. When analysing crime figures, it is helpful to do so by the occurrence per 1,000 population. This gives greater accuracy in interpreting the risk and likelihood of being a victim of crime within the district.

No. of crimes recorded per 1,000 population in Arun		
2020-21 ²	2019-20 ³	Change (+/-)
63	76	-13

1.5.3. Overall Violent Crime accounted for 50.6% of all crime recorded in Arun during 2020-21. This compares to 46% of recorded crime in 2019-2020. However, this crime category did see a decrease of 220 recorded incidents from the previous year. In addition to physical assault, crimes categorised as violent crime include a range of offences such as stalking, harassment, dogs dangerously out of control, and some offences of the road traffic act.

1.5.4. The category of violent crime provides the emphasis for some of the more robust partnership work, pathing the way for strategic planning and operational activity to disrupt and reduce violence in Arun across all age groups. This work is illustrated in the Partnership Plan (Appendix C).

1.5.5. Domestic Abuse Crime (recorded as any crime with a domestic abuse marker) saw 1,894 crimes recorded during 2020-21. There was a decrease of 1% (-20 offences) between 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The Safer Arun Partnership acknowledged the significance of domestic abuse at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic as people were confined to their homes as a result of lockdown restrictions. Whilst the crime data indicates a negligible fall in recorded crime in this category, this could be because people felt unable to leave their homes to report incidents safely. SAP is aware that this is one of the most under reported criminal categories and, therefore, domestic abuse remains a priority area of focus for the partnership.

1.5.6. The fear of crime is a person's perception of how likely they are to experience crime. Fortunately, in Arun the likelihood of being a victim of crime is low. However, the perceived risk is a big factor that causes people to feel that they may become a victim of crime. This can have a negative impact on how people live their lives and how our towns, villages and neighbourhoods regarded. The

¹ Sussex Police CSP data

² Based on ONS mid-year prediction for 2020-April 2021 population data of 161,123

³ As per Annual Review 2019-20 based on 2011 Census population data of 149,515

accessibility of social media and online news outlets often heightens tensions and people's worries about an area when negative posts are shared, often due to isolated incidents or without reporting the full details.

1.5.7. For this reason, it was an aim in 2020-21 for the SAP partners to utilise social media and online presence to counter negative comments and help address the public perception of crime and the work agencies carry out. Although agencies have increased their online presence, there remains work to be done to become more visible in this way and provide reassurance to the general public.

1.6. Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

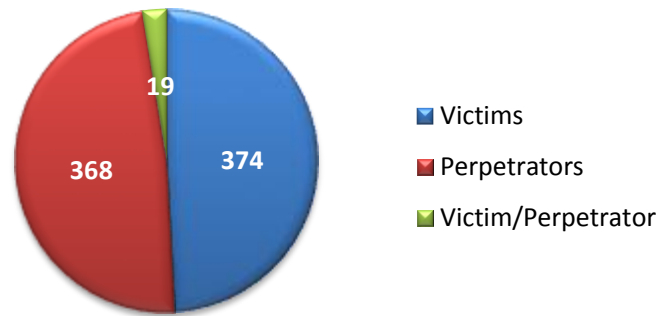
1.6.1. Tackling anti-social behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic has thrown up many challenges for the Council's ASB team. Pre-Covid, the three ASB Caseworkers were co-located between the Civic Centre and Bognor police station. The onset of the working from home directive meant that the team had to overcome a number of issues including how to access police information in a timely manner, how to maintain the close working relationship and rapport with the Arun Neighbourhood Policing teams, and how to continue providing a proactive service to residents. Despite these challenges, the ASB team continued to deliver early intervention work and provide a cohesive service for the benefit of members of the public as well as assisting partners in tackling nuisance behaviour.

1.6.1.1. ASB team performance data 2020-21:-



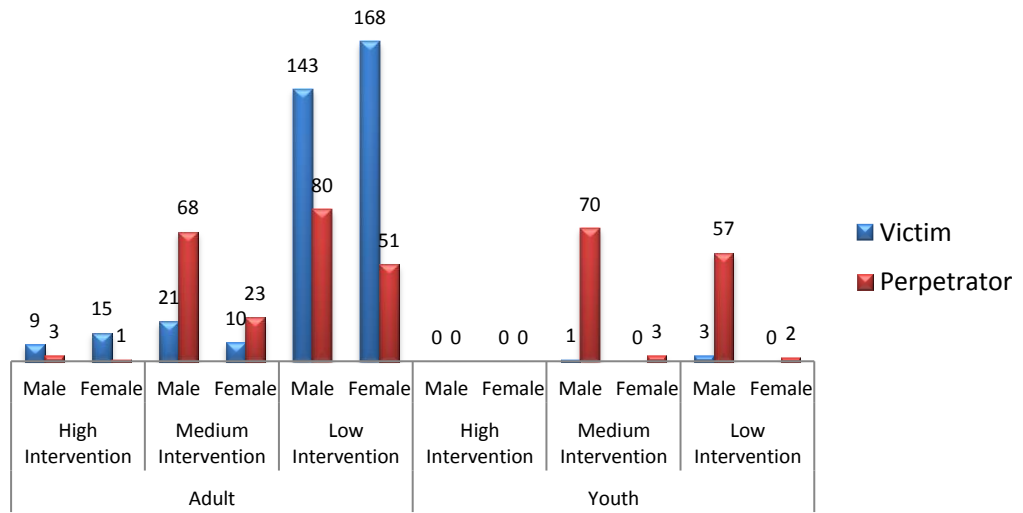
Breakdown of ASB Victims and Perpetrators Interventions

1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

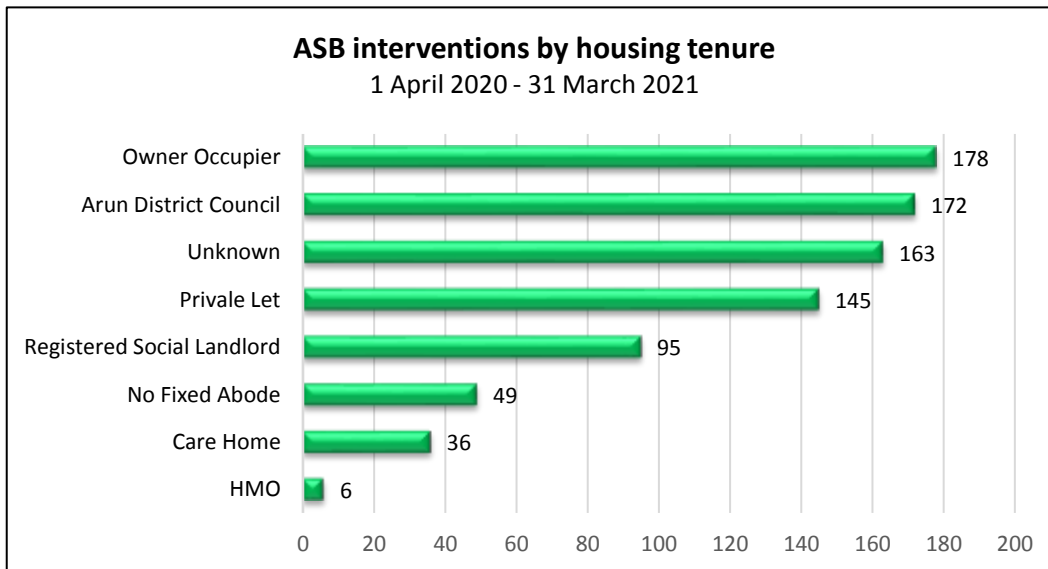


ASB Interventions by age, gender and level

1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

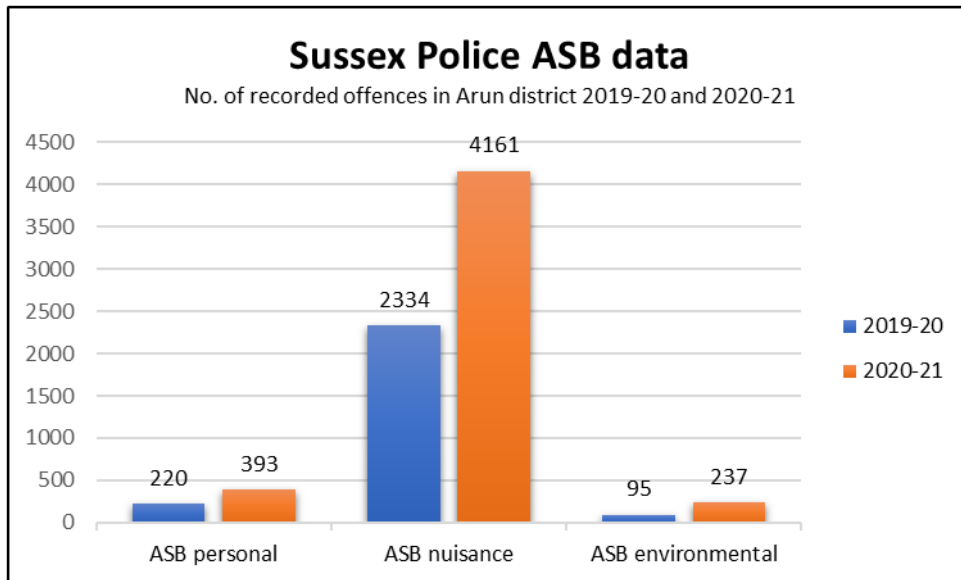


The ASB team carried out interventions, and gave support to housing providers and across a range of housing tenure types from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 as set out below:-



1.6.2. The SAP Partnership Plan set the ASB team a target of achieving 5% or less reoffending rate for perpetrators of ASB during 2020-21. During this period, the re-offending rate was 7%. This equates to 159 individual perpetrators, of which 11 re-offended (assessed against compliance with Acceptable Behaviour Contracts or higher enforcement).

1.6.3. Sussex Police record anti-social behaviour incidents under three headings: personal, nuisance, and environmental. Each of these categories saw a significant rise in recorded offences during 2020-21 compared to 2019-20.



It must be noted that breaches of Covid-19 restrictions are recorded as anti-social behaviour incidents by Sussex Police, and this is a clear factor in the large rises across these categories throughout the twelve months from April 2020 to March 2021.

1.7. Public Confidence

1.7.1. SAP is conscious that the public need to feel safe, and that the work of the

partnership has a significant part to play in how the local area is perceived with regards to crime and nuisance behaviour. For this reason, taking steps to improve public confidence was seen as a strategic priority for 2020-21.

- 1.7.2. Partners engaged in improved and proactive use of social media to reach the public and to illustrate some of the work being done to keep communities safe. Messages posted by one agency were often shared by others in an effort to reach as wide an audience as possible.
- 1.7.3. However, the partnership recognises that some of the most vulnerable members of our community may not have access to social media. There continues to be a need to reach out across the district and highlight the continued joint working of the partnership via all available channels of communication.
- 1.7.4. Providing visibility of officers and engaging with people face to face is also an important element in providing reassurance to the public. Partners have identified a need to carry out joint patrols across locations where ASB is identified as a problem. This approach will create a sense of community engagement and build trust in the work of relevant agencies.
- 1.7.5. As mentioned at 1.4.6. the use of social media by the public to highlight incidents of crime and nuisance behaviour, and to make comment on issues within neighbourhoods, can also create a lack of public confidence in the authorities. Therefore, it is an aim of SAP to counter this by transparently promoting its joint approach to tackling these issues and what actions are being taken. The Partnership Plan is published on the Council's website alongside the strategic priorities. This will be added to and updated when appropriate, to include a 'RAG' rating of actions within the Partnership Plan.

1.8. Future challenges

- 1.8.1. The main challenge for SAP is sustaining effective partnership interaction and commitment from all agencies to the shared responsibility for problem solving and taking action to reduce crime and disorder. National best practice guidance is compelling in outlining the need for CSP partners to work together in order to successfully tackle the key strategic priorities. However, the continuing pressure on public services does result in different levels of participation and ownership of tasks. This is not isolated to SAP but is reflected across all of the CSPs in West Sussex.
- 1.8.2. It remains the case that SAP continues to be adversely affected by the reduction in capacity of agencies to commit and direct resources to the partnership. The detailed partnership working involved in running a CSP requires considerable resources to ensure that the identified priorities are given suitable support and visibility within agency plans. Varying in-house priorities can result in resources being allocated to what is regarded as the most important to each organisation. It is crucial therefore that partners recognise the importance of the SAP and their obligation to contribute to the safety of residents, businesses, and visitors of Arun.
- 1.8.3. A full review of how the Safer Arun Partnership functions is planned during 2021. This aims to refocus the partner organisations, remind them that their participation in the CSP is a statutory function, and to ensure the right officers

with decision making authority attend meetings. This will provide greater emphasis on partners taking responsibility for achieving the aims of SAP so there is a cohesive local response.

- 1.8.4. The funding structure and allocation of resources to SAP remain uncertain. The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has historically been allocated grants from HM Government and passported these to CSPs. These funds are vital to allowing local partnerships to resource responses to local community safety issues. For 2020-21 SAP received £48,171 in grant funding from the PCC. Without this funding the partnership would need to look externally for funding to respond to specific issues and would need to increase its capacity to do this.
- 1.8.5. The funding provided to the CSP is used to commission and support initiatives with the remit of improving the safety of local communities. During 2020-21 partnership funding was allocated to several schemes, including providing radios for the Littlehampton Shopwatch scheme, contributing to youth outreach work, the Littlehampton Community Warden project, and a contribution to the role of a partnership data analyst across West Sussex.

1.9. Future opportunities

- 1.9.1. The opportunity to achieve greater participation from all agencies, partnership work can accomplish far more directed work in addressing community safety issues. Positive engagement will bring about greater shared local intelligence, improved resources, and renewed emphasis on tackling local issues.
- 1.9.2. SAP must remain fully committed to tackling the issues affecting residents, businesses and visitors to Arun and must demonstrate that it is willing to lead, build, support, and sustain a close partnership and working relationship to achieve its vision and aims. SAP must be transparent in its commitment to 'think outside the box' in seeking ways to engage with local communities and find opportunities to improve ways of working co-operatively. This approach will allow SAP to give consistent and encouraging messages of support to the people of Arun and confirm its aim of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.9.3. SAP has identified the need to develop two-way channels of communication between agencies and individuals/key community groups, including business partnerships and Councillors at parish and district level. This can assist SAP by affording local representatives the opportunity to affect the work of the partnership and being able to identify high level concerns of our communities.
- 1.9.4. Cllrs. Mrs Cooper and Rhodes, of the Residential and Wellbeing Services Committee, have been appointed as representatives to attend SAP meetings, with Cllr. Mrs Cooper having been elected chair. This will allow regular opportunity to feedback to this committee. It will also afford an opportunity to report directly to the partnership the high level concerns of members in regard to the partnership.

1.10. Conclusion

- 1.10.1. Arun District Council's core Community Safety team provides a key contribution to SAP and helps drive the partnership to achieve its priorities and

vision. The formation of strong and effective working links with partners has resulted in Arun's Community Safety team achieving positive outcomes in line with SAPs strategic priorities. This work is under constant review to ensure that the Council's contribution to the partnership is relevant and that it strives to respond effectively to local concerns within the confines of the available resources.

1.10.2. The Safer Arun Partnership is committed to ensuring that all responsible authorities participate and contribute to the aims of the partnership. At the partnership's July 2021 meeting, it was agreed to commence a review to ensure that all organisations are represented by decision making officers who can commit resources where a need is identified. It is recognised that improving engagement across the board can only enhance the effectiveness of the Safer Arun Partnership by providing greater intelligence and resources. There is also a need to ensure that other relevant organisations are invited to participate where their knowledge and expertise can assist the partnership.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

None.

3. OPTIONS:

1. For the Working Group to approve the recommendations to Cabinet as outlined in the report.
2. For the Working Group not to approve the recommendations outlined in this report.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		x
Relevant District Ward Councillors		x
Other groups/persons (please specify)		x
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		x
Legal		x
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		x
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act	✓	
Sustainability		x
Asset Management/Property/Land		x
Technology		x
Other (please explain)		x

6. IMPLICATIONS:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, as amended by the Police and Justice Act

2006, provides for a statutory duty of all local authorities to participate in Community Safety Partnerships and do all it reasonably can to prevent

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment) and,
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area.'

In addition, The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations requires the local authority to undertake scrutiny of the partnership at least once a year.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To support the work of the Safer Arun Partnership and recognise the importance of its statutory function in addressing community safety concerns across the district.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix A – CSP scrutiny guidance

Appendix B – Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2021 key findings

Appendix C – Safer Arun Partnership Plan 2020-21

Appendix D – Key highlights of partnership outcomes 2020-21

Appendix E – Arun District Council's Anti-Social Behaviour team case studies

Safer Arun Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment 2021 - [Safer Arun Partnership | Arun District Council](#)