



# **Review of the Epsom & Ewell Community Safety Partnership 2015**



## Purpose

This report explores:

- the current status of the Epsom & Ewell Community Safety Partnership (CSP),
- the requirements of the CSP now and in the future,
- the capacity and resources available to the CSP,
- options for meeting its requirements in the future.

## Background

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 set up the requirement for local authorities and police authorities to jointly conduct crime & disorder audits and, based upon those audits, develop strategies to deal with identified issues. This was managed under the banner of 'Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership' (CDRP).

Over the years this has evolved through legislation, such as the Police & Justice Act 2006, and operational necessity to include organisations such as Fire and Rescue, The Probation Service and Health. To reflect the wider partnership the name was changed to become 'Community Safety Partnership'. This 2006 Act also provided an opportunity for the work of the local CSP to be examined through the Local Authority scrutiny process.

The Policing & Social Responsibility Act 2011 removed the Police Authorities and replaced them with Police & Crime Commissioners (PCC). With regard to the PCCs engagement with their corresponding CSPs the 2011 Act has removed the mandatory requirement for the PCC to take over the previous role of the Police Authority and have left it to the PCC and CSP to decide the best way to work together.

Prior to the 2011 Act the CSP received funding directly from the Home Office to cover its operating costs and to finance the undertaking of the strategic work it had agreed in the action planning process. As a result of the 2011 Act this funding was removed from the CSP and given to the office of the corresponding Police & Crime Commissioner. The Surrey PCC (SPCC) does not currently fund the operating costs of the Borough CSPs. The CSP can bid for SPCC grants for specific projects that meet criteria set by the SPCC.



All statutory partners under the legislation have an equal role and responsibilities to maintain and deliver the CSP. The local authority in being the receiver of the Home Office grant between 1998 and 2011 and, to a lesser degree the Police who were a major recipient of that grant have assumed the roles of the organiser and logistical provider for the CSP and its sub groups. In the absence of external resourcing of the CSP the partners who have shouldered the burden of the logistics and administration would in all likelihood be required to continue this role if the CSP is expected to function in the future.

## Legal Implications

The four pieces of UK legislation that are concerned with Community Safety Partnerships are;

- Crime & Disorder Act 1998
- Police & Justice Act 2006
- Policing & Social Responsibility Act 2011
- ASB & Policing Act 2014

The wording of the acts pertaining to the establishment and maintenance of the CSP are open to interpretation and lack any guidance as to the intention of the requirements. This may explain why across the country there are so many variations to the composition, methods of delivery and terms of reference.

In attempting to determine what the minimum requirements are of a CSP the 1998 Act is not prescriptive as can be seen from the relevant section below.

### **Section 17 of the Act says:**

*“Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed upon it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which the section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.”*

The current Terms of Reference (ToR) of the CSP (Appendix 1) are based upon achieving the aims of the above. These were originally developed when the CSP was the CDRP. The structure of the CSP under its ToR was set up to deliver a range of programmes, activities targeting identified issues that were agreed as priorities on an annual basis. The wording of the ToR would infer that there would be an ongoing commitment to funding streams that would allow it to undertake activities and programmes designed to achieve the vision.

Legal advice taken would indicate that the minimum the partnership is obligated to do under the relevant legislation is;



- 1) To produce an annual strategy for reducing crime and ASB in the Borough. (See Surrey two tier CSP structure).
- 2) To maintain a partnership where statutory partners are provided with an opportunity to reduce crime and ASB in the Borough
- 3) To maintain a capability to react to actions that is a statutory requirement of the CSP e.g. Domestic Homicide Reviews, Community Triggers, Scrutiny representation.

## CSP Peer Findings

Community Safety managers in a number of Surrey and surrounding local authorities were interviewed to ask them questions on the future and sustainability of their own CSPs.

From those discussions it was deduced that;

- The lack of direct funding for community safety activities has limited the CSPs ability to act strategically.
- The reduced level of resourcing has meant that the service is more reactive than proactive.
- The current levels of activity by CSPs are unlikely to be maintained in the future as resources become more stretched amongst all the partners.
- Statutory partners have become increasingly difficult to engage with.
- The cycle of CSPs meetings, especially the sub groups of the CSP (CIAG and JAGs) are being used and convened only as and when required.
- The move to consider joining up of borough/district CSPs is a necessity to retain critical mass in order to be able to function as an effective service and act strategically
- There are concerns that whilst there are benefits of County and District/Borough group CSPs, the benefits of such arrangements should be weighed against the loss of focus upon local issues.
- Unitary authority models of CSP delivery cannot be easily transposed upon similar services being delivered in two tier systems. This is largely due to a critical mass of resources available to a single tier authority that has so far allowed them to maintain a service comparable to the one when it was directly Home Office funded.



## Surrey Two Tier CSP Structure

Surrey has developed a two tier CSP structure. Each District and Borough has historically created its own CSP serviced by officers employed via the individual CSPs and each resourced through Home Office grants. In addition to the County Community Safety Unit facilitated by the County Council there is a Community Safety Board that is similar to the CSPs but has representation from District & Boroughs. This County board is chaired at this time by the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

The County and District/ Borough CSPs (D&Bs) run alongside each other, the main link being the Single Surrey Strategic Assessment<sup>1</sup>. This assessment has been the basis by which local CSPs have constructed their ASB and crime reduction programmes of activities. The reduction of resources available to CSPs has limited local gathering of data, the County's ability to analyse that data and then the ability for the final data to be converted into programmes of activity.

In general it is felt there has not been duplication operationally through having the County and D&B CSPs running in parallel. The County, in addition to providing strategic analysis has been involved with programming and activities that benefit from a county wide approach such as the provision of domestic abuse sanctuary and outreach contracts.

It cannot be said if the reduction in local government resources will impact upon the County's CSP capabilities. Should they reduce what they currently provide in terms of strategic analysis and county wide programming, the services that are provided to this CSP by the County CSP are beyond the resources and capacity of the local CSP to fulfil.

## CSP Finances

When originally set up in 1998 the Partnership received an average of £78K<sup>2</sup> per annum in the form of a Home Office grant and a total average income of £169K. This covered the administration and operation of the partnership's governance in addition to crime reduction work carried out by the partnership's officers and the Police.

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<sup>1</sup> Created by the Surrey CC CSP Unit based upon information received from the Police, District & Boroughs and other organisations with links to Community safety.

<sup>2</sup> This is the average amount of figures obtained between 2004 and 2012 the highest amount being £164K the lowest in the final year of funding being £24K.



The Partnership continued to receive Home Office funding until 2011 when it was withdrawn from the Partnership and an amount for ASB and crime reduction was placed with the newly created office of the Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner.

In losing the Home Office income stream in 2011 the CSP has only received since that time a total of £4.75K per annum of combined Borough and County funding<sup>3</sup>.

The CSP at the time of writing this report holds £80K. This is mostly the residual funds external income and grants prior to 2011.

The CSP currently funds the equivalent of one day per week of officer time for its administration. This equates to an annual cost to the CSP of £7K.

Other costs of CSP work are absorbed by officers of the Epsom & Ewell Council's Policy & Partnership Division.

The CSP works to a budget set by a notional drawdown against areas of the work in the agreed action plan. Any monies not used are returned to the pot at the end of the year.

Since losing the capacity to run activities and programmes the drain on the monies held by the CSP has lessened dramatically. It now only finances occasional items that are agreed by the CSP on a one off basis.

## **CSP Staffing**

Prior to the removal of Home Office funding in 2011 the CSP was serviced by a full time Community Safety Officer and a full time Community Safety Administrator. Additional temporary specialist staff were employed dependent upon the implementation needs of the CSP's strategy.

On cessation of the Home Office funding the CSP agreed to fund CSP administration on the basis of one day a week. The Epsom & Ewell Borough Council agreed to fund the work of the current Community Safety Officer in a joint Community Safety and Projects role for four days per week for a two year fixed term period. Both the Community Safety Administration and the Community Safety Officer roles were combined into a fixed term full time post. This post comes to an end in May 2015.

## **CSP Sub Groups**

Two sub groups have developed from the CSP.

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<sup>3</sup> This excludes grant aiding specific to ring fenced projects where the funding cannot be used for general CSP spending.



- 1) Joints Action Groups (JAGs) that consider areas and places where ASB and crime have been identified. And
- 2) Community Incident Action Groups (CIAGs) that consider individuals and or families that have been identified as involved in crime and ASB.

The aim of these groups is to bring together the agencies that have been identified as either having a professional interest in the individual(s)/area or identified as being able to contribute to the resolving of the problems.

Prior to 2013 these groups were constituted to meet cyclically (monthly) and to have a rolling agenda with issues/individuals being added as they were identified and then removed when either the problem was dealt with or the group determined that it could no longer have a positive impact through this method resolution.

Since 2013 the JAG has become an issue specific group. That is, a JAG is convened to deal with a specific issue. The benefits of this arrangement is that it is possible to identify those parties who have an interest in the issue (and can have a positive impact) and then focus upon the issue until it resolved.

The CIAG continues at this time to be a cyclical meeting where with the individuals grouped into youth and adults on the same agenda. One of the major weaknesses of the meetings has been lack of agencies attending that are critical to the resolution process. This is particularly so when other agencies attending have had a wasted appearance due to the lack of others who would be needed to act or provide information.

Given the greater success of the JAG in changing from cyclical meting to issue specific meetings there is a strong case to use that methodology for future CIAG matters.

## **Risk**

The future role and funding of the CSP continues to be uncertain. The election of the PCC saw the Home Office funding transferred to the PCC. No direct funding, other than for specific project grants, has been forthcoming from the PCC to District & Borough CSPs and there is no indication that this position will change in 2014/15 or beyond. The CSP currently has a residual fund which has enabled work to continue, but it is likely that annual expenditure will exceed income which will gradually deplete this reserve. As such the CSP will need to either seek out other sources of funding if it wishes to continue to function at current or previous levels or consider modifying its operations to reflect its current ability to deliver.



A number of the partner organisations are going through structural and organisational change at this time which may in the short term affect their ability to engage with the CSP, and in the long term their revised objectives may place differing demands upon the work of the partnership thereby bring into question the benefits of their involvement for themselves and for the partnership per se. The CSP has benefitted in the first part of this year by the continued interest shown by Surrey Public Health and more recently by the interest shown by the Surrey Downs CCG which is now engaging with the CSP.

There are a number of activities that the CSP is required to undertake e.g. strategy formulation, scrutiny, Domestic Homicide Reviews and Community Triggers, which, should it completely lose its operational capabilities, it would not be able to fulfil. Should the local authority in its resourcing of the staff time or the Police (who play a major role in the organisation of the sub groups of the CSP) be unable to resource their current 'parent' roles, then there would be a risk that the partnership will not be able to fulfil these responsibilities.

## Conclusion

The original legislation that triggered the need to set up the CSP in 1998 came with an annual grant. That funding allowed it to meet its organisational costs and pay for work resulting from its strategic aims and objectives. The lack of prescription in the legislation and the availability of funding set the tone for how the CSP set itself up to operate and the scope of its work.

The removal of those funds in 2011 was not accompanied by any guidance on how the CSP should now fulfil its function. It would appear that in the interim the CSP has attempted to maintain its previous levels of service using residual funds remaining from its pre 2011 Home Office grant funding, small amounts of local grant aiding and funding in kind in the guise of officer time of the partners, mainly that of the Borough Council and the Neighbourhood Police.

The lack of funding for strategic work in the areas of intervention and education has understandably made it difficult for partners, particularly those outside of mainstream crime and ASB, to justify their engagement. This has been increasingly so since all public sector organisations have faced dwindling resources and with that constraints upon their time.

The opportunity to join with a neighbouring CSP has come about with the formation of the 'East Surrey CSP'. Enquiries into the potential of such an amalgamation would indicate the requirement for a successful partnership would require resources beyond those available to this CSP. Along with a potential loss of local focus it is felt that such a move would not be at this time in the best interests of the CSP.





With no indication of funding opportunities to match those of pre 2011 and with increased pressures upon the resources of the partners, statutory and non-statutory and the eventual depletion of its existing funds it is not expected that the CSP will be able to offer a service greater than the minimum which is required under the prevailing legislation and aimed at very localised targeting when resources can be accessed. That legislation in not being prescriptive allows the CSP to set its own level of service, Based upon the legal view of what the CSP must provide it is suggested that that level of service in future consist of;

1. A capability to draw together knowledge of the Community Safety landscape using readily available data and local knowledge of what the issues and drivers are in reducing crime and ASB.
2. Mechanisms and channels of communication by which partners can impart relevant information to the other partners and equally receive information that would be useful to their own organisations.
3. A capability to deal with local issues of crime and ASB involving individuals and places (CIAGs and JAGs).
4. A capability to respond to statutory requirements placed upon CSPs such as Domestic Homicide Reviews, Community Triggers and other mechanisms set up under the ASB and Policing Act 2014.
5. An ability to report to the relevant scrutiny body within the Borough Council on how it has responded to its crime and disorder functions.