

Environmental and Community Services Select Committee

30th November 2017

Community Intelligence

Report by Director of Communities

Summary

This report is presented in accordance with the Community Safety Annual Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder. The ability of partners to capture community intelligence efficiently and effectively is identified as essential to meet existing and future challenges for the Safer West Sussex Partnership in relation to identifying threat, harm, risk and vulnerability across West Sussex.

The focus for scrutiny

Developing a community intelligence methodology in order to obtain a more coherent and detailed picture of the threats, harms, risks and vulnerability that impact our communities and residents.

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- (1) Scrutinises the proposed community intelligence partnership approach, in the context of the risks and threats faced by West Sussex's communities, and identifies any areas of concern for the County Council and its partners.

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 Community intelligence may be defined as information acquired directly or indirectly from a variety of sources, including the community, a geographical area or a group of people with shared identity or common concerns and partner agencies. Information and intelligence is an important prerequisite in the delivery of community safety in West Sussex.
- 1.2 The Safer West Sussex Partnership's knowledge and understanding of crime and disorder issues affecting a community (including their views, needs, problems, priorities and expectations) is currently informed by the Strategic Intelligence Assessment reviewed annually based on changing crime trends, the impact of national agendas and evidence from the annual crime and community safety survey of West Sussex residents.

- 1.3 It is the analysis of this data and intelligence that enables the risks and threats to which our communities are exposed to be gauged, and enables the Safer West Sussex Partnership to reduce the level of uncertainty by providing forewarning of threats, harm, risks, vulnerability and tensions (including serious crime and disorder, and terrorism).
- 1.4 Whilst these methods provide information on public attitudes and perceptions on crime, they do not necessarily provide the opportunity for an open data capture, which could assist in building the community intelligence picture in relation to the key priorities and threats posed by PREVENT, Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery, Serious and Organised Crime and Cyber Crime.
- 1.5 The rationale for developing our methodology for capturing community intelligence as a partnership is based on robust academic evidence ((Lowe & Innes 2012), which contributes to the understanding of where the greatest areas of vulnerability lie across West Sussex, and facilitates the development of responses that seek to reduce demand on a range of over-stretched services.
- 1.6 Improving the way we gather community intelligence can have a number of benefits, which include:
 - Helping to identify underlying problems or tensions within communities
 - Increasing the quality of local intelligence through building relationships with communities
 - Identifying responses and strategies that may not have otherwise been considered
 - Fostering community involvement, responding to community concerns and improving public satisfaction, by designing and delivering services that meet public needs.
- 1.7 In its most recent PEEL inspection report on the effectiveness of the police, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC 2017) raised concerns that 'local policing' had continued to be eroded. It suggested that many forces needed to take urgent action to maintain a proactive and preventative approach to policing.
- 1.8 Areas of concern identified suggested that many forces in the context of reduced budgets and changing demand had taken decisions to preserve reactive policing over prevention. Also HMIC specifically noted that there was inconsistency in the way forces understood threat, risk and harm in communities.
- 1.9 With these considerations in mind it is suggested that improving the partnerships engagement with our communities will facilitate a greater willingness for the public to cooperate with the police and partners, thereby potentially enriching intelligence collection.
- 1.10 The risks of not working collaboratively to improve the way we capture community intelligence include:
 - A loss of public confidence in the police and other partners
 - A loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the public

- A negative impact on strategic policing as police and partners are unable to predict changes in community profile, needs and priorities
- Increased vulnerabilities around threat, risk and harm
- Withdrawal of the public from participation and problem-solving, leading to services that are less responsive to the needs of the public and require increased partnership resources
- Unrealistic public expectations of? policing services
- Lack of awareness of changes in the community and tensions not being identified

- 1.11 This gap in our ability to engage our community in gathering community intelligence is evident in examining key themes that have emerged from a recent West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Review.
- 1.12 In this case developing our ability to capture community intelligence could have provided an opportunity for earlier intervention in a case that was dependent on a school making a number of referrals in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, and a local address being frequented by young people.
- 1.13 In addition, the emerging threat of cuckooing whereby vulnerable residents are being targeted to accommodate drug dealing on behalf of the drug network through intimidation, incentive, or on the basis of a sexual relationship which is often exploitative, is a very real threat in West Sussex.
- 1.14 A number of areas across the county are currently experiencing an issue with drugs coming into Sussex from major cities, predominantly London. County lines is a term used for this threat, whereby urban gangs and organised crime groups are extending drug dealing activities beyond their urban area into suburban, market and/or coastal towns using dedicated phone or "deal" lines. Lines can also be run within a smaller geographical area.
- 1.15 County lines is a cross-cutting form of harm impacting on West Sussex, which can involve drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking and missing persons, often involving vulnerable children and young people. Seaside towns are seen as an attractive proposition for individuals and organised crime gangs due to the areas being geographically deprived areas which contain a number of drug rehabilitation centres. These locations also have easy transport links via trains and cars.
- 1.16 The partnership's knowledge and understanding of the impact of county lines on West Sussex is an emerging picture and this problem will not be solved through enforcement alone. Community intelligence gathered by professionals and directly from communities is required to tackle these issues effectively. The support of those involved in social care, social housing, health and drug services, including staff and volunteers who may come into contact with vulnerable individuals, is required.
- 1.17 Mistakenly, inference is often made that 'ordinary people' will not be aware of a range of suspicious behavioural and environmental cues. However, our residents know their local area well, know the "rhythm" of the street they live in, and so know when someone or something is out of place.

1.18 It is this information and intelligence that is cited by police and partner agencies as being most effective in tackling serious and organised crime, in preventing violent extremism and in keeping the most vulnerable members of our communities safe.

2. Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that the Safer West Sussex Partnership explores how it can improve the community intelligence picture for West Sussex in relation to the key priority areas of focus as outlined in the Safer West Sussex Partnership Community Safety Agreement 2017-20.

2.2 Through adopting the proposed approach partners can target campaigns and engagement with communities and professionals, to seek to gather specific intelligence on the key threats.

2.3 The Local Policing Model, directed by the Chief Constable sets out local policing in terms of prevention, response and investigation, operating seamlessly across Sussex. It removes silo working and improves consistency and partnership working.

2.4 The creation of prevention, response and investigation teams active within neighbourhoods across Sussex, providing a named person (rather than someone with a physical presence in every locality in Sussex) having an understanding of the needs of the local community, will support this proposed approach of facilitating a two-way exchange of information between policing partners and our communities.

2.5 This approach to engage our communities on the key threats will require all partners to embrace technology to communicate key messages and facilitate the reporting of information and community intelligence, by improving the ease and accessibility for such reporting.

2.6 The proposal is two-fold; improving the quality of community intelligence gathered and submitted by professionals and also directly from communities is required to tackle the key threats identified effectively. The support of those involved in social care, social housing, health and drug services, Fire & Rescue, including volunteers from neighbourhood watch, community forums, district and borough community wardens and parish council officers who may come into contact with vulnerable individuals is also required.

Elected members across all tiers have a role to play as community connectors in promoting the key messaging within their respective communities and understanding how to report intelligence.

2.7 The partnership proposes to work with its partners and communities in promoting and raising awareness of the digital and corporate communication tools at our disposal to educate our communities on the so-called hidden crimes that we seek community intelligence to disrupt.

- 2.8 One such tool is the "In the Know" community messaging system (www.intheknow.community/) utilised by Sussex Police. This is an accessible system for professionals and communities alike, and is used by the new Police Prevention Support and Engagement Officers to target specific audiences and to highlight key police operations. It also provides information to the public on the outcomes of operations or investigations and can be used to request specific intelligence, with the public able to reply directly to the Prevention Team Officers. The system enables communities to find out what is happening in their area and provides witness appeals, crime updates and crime prevention advice. Weekly bulletins are also provided for each district and borough council.
- 2.9 Other digital platforms include Facebook advertising, whereby specific postcode areas identified for having experienced specific crimes or threats can be targeted when seeking specific community intelligence, or to alleviate community fears and concerns.
- 2.10 This sharing of information with our communities via Facebook and Twitter could see proactive issuing of information to local media on the arrests and warrants of perpetrators of serious and organised crime and other so called 'hidden' crime to raise awareness that these threats are relevant to West Sussex, and that community intelligence is sought as to when and where these crimes are occurring.
- 2.11 As part of this approach the Partnership will also revise the way it conducts the annual crime and community safety survey. In order for the Partnership to develop the community intelligence picture on the key threats it is proposed that further surveys on the individual threats are conducted throughout the year., This would provide a span of a community at fixed points in time in order to establish a picture of local threats and risks, the community's understanding of those threats and risks and accessibility issues to report and gain support.
- 2.12 Further methods of gathering community intelligence are to be explored by the Safer West Sussex Partnership. In future this could involve the development of neighbourhood profiles, conducting community impact assessments, and developing the partnership's understanding of the ways in which people network, communicate and interact and how this influences the formation of communities in both geographic and virtual terms.
- 2.13 This proposed approach will actively encourage communities, professionals and partner services to submit and share intelligence to Sussex Police, either via 101, online through the Sussex Police website or directly through local policing team officers. Information can also be passed anonymously to the independent charity Crimestoppers. Intelligence and information reported to Crimestoppers is sanitised to make sure it cannot be traced before being sent to Sussex Police.
- 2.14 Working together with the community via Local Policing Teams and Prevention Support and Engagement Officers, and deploying the full range of communication and engagement activities identified in this report, will help us build on the community intelligence picture in relation to the key threats, harm, risks and vulnerability across West Sussex.

3. Resources

- 3.1 The Partnership Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (TTCG) provides a mechanism that enables partners to access resourcing and expertise. This group will provide the governance and oversight for the development of the proposed community intelligence approach, including identifying resources to develop this approach.

Factors taken into account

4. Issues for consideration by the Select Committee

- 4.1 The Committee's views are sought on the suitability of the proposed community intelligence approach in your capacity as community connectors.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 This is an information item, consultation was not required.

6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 This is an information item. There are no risk management implications.

7. Other Options Considered

- 7.1 This is a scrutiny paper and an information item therefore not relevant.

8. Equality Duty

- 8.1 No Impact.

9. Social Value

- 9.1 No implications.

10. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 10.1 No implications

11. Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 The proposal has no implications under the Human Rights Act 1998.

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References:

Lowe & Innes: Community Intelligence and Neighbourhood Policing 2012.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10439463.2012.671823?needAccess=true>