

**REPORT TO:** COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CRIME AND DISORDER) GWYNEDD LOCAL AUTHORITY

**DATE:** 13/01/2022

**REPORT BY:** COUNCILLOR DAFYDD MEURIG  
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**SUBJECT:** ANNUAL UPDATE BY THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP  
(GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY)

<b>1.00</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT</b>
1.01	To provide an overview to Members of the activities of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership (CSP) during the period 2020-21, and developments for 2021-22.
<b>2.00</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
2.01	<p>The Community Safety Partnership is required to formally report to this committee each year to present an overview. This ensures that the Partnership delivers its obligations in accordance with sections 19 and 20 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2006.</p> <p><b>The committee’s duty is to scrutinise the Partnership’s work, rather than the work of individual members (bodies).</b></p>
2.02	<p>There is a statutory duty on <b>Local Authorities</b> in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and subsequent amendments because of the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2002 and 2006, to work in partnership with the <b>Police, the Health service, the Probation Service and the Fire and Rescue Service</b>, to address the local community safety agenda. These are the main agencies that make up the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p><b>Community safety partnerships were originally called crime and disorder partnerships, and although the name has been changed, the areas or responsibility have not, and they remain –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crime and Disorder</li><li>• Substance Misuse</li><li>• Reducing reoffending</li><li>• Delivering a strategic assessment to identify priorities (work that is now undertaken on a regional basis)</li><li>• Putting plans in place to deal with these priorities (a plan now exists on a regional and local basis)</li></ul>

2.03

- The Community Safety Partnership has now been in place for 22 years, latterly, as a two-county partnership. The changes that the partnership has faced over the years are numerous. Indeed, it could be said that the landscape today looks nothing like that which existed in 1998, when CSP's became a statutory requirement.
- What has not changed however is the commitment and engagement of all partners. Quarterly meetings are always well attended, and not one meeting had been cancelled in over 20 years – up until the recent Covid 19 restrictions.
- Partners and local Members who attend the meetings contribute positively, and quarterly data on crime figures and plan delivery are shared at every meeting.
- Every responsible member of the partnership contributes financially to have in place a partnership analyst, so that regular data can be supplied in order that evidence-based decisions can be made.
- Working between partners is fundamental to community safety. The main reason for the introduction of CSP's back in 1998, was to ensure that crime and disorder was seen as 'everybody's problem' and not the realm of the Police alone. The joint working between key partners, both in the public sector and the third sector has never been as strong. There are endless examples of this Joint working together as organisations, which now happens on a daily basis as a matter of course. There is no complacency however, and existing plans still contain intentions to move to even more joint working.
- Some of the main changes the partnership has, and currently faces are listed below.
  - Loss of local grants – all of the grants, which the partnership once received have now either ended, or have moved to a regional grant position, managed on a North Wales basis. However, by ensuring we play our part in the regional structure, monies are still being secured, including additional funding in the past 18 months for both Domestic abuse/sexual violence and substance misuse, in Gwynedd and Anglesey.
  - Loss of local co-ordinators – some posts have been lost because of the withdrawal of funding, others became a regional resource. However, by maintaining close and purposeful membership of the regional groups, we are confident that local needs are embedded in all regional plans and activity.
  - The main challenges we all face of course, is the changing face of criminality in our communities today. **Even though Gwynedd and Anglesey remain amongst the safest places to live**, we face the same

	<p>issues as all other areas of the UK. Crime today is far reaching and complex, with the use of technology enabling a level of exploitative crime, arguably not seen before. Organised crime gangs exist across the UK, and most are involved with drug related crime. These gangs are known as county lines gangs and have been the subject of much responsive activity in North Wales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During 2019-20, North Wales police led on a regional needs assessment on county lines, bringing together organisations across the region (almost 200 people attended one meeting) from that, a regional response plan was developed, which is now evolving into local activity. In that same period <b>(and continuing)</b> North Wales police have conducted a number of county lines enforcement operations, which have impacted greatly on the criminal gangs' activity in the area.</li> <li>• Since the development of this statutory partnership under the 1998 Act, joint working between the various public and third sector organisations has changed dramatically. The fact that some of the responsible partners are devolved and some not, that some areas of work are led by Welsh Government, and others by the UK Government, has not hindered the progress of joint working, which as mentioned already, is now embedded into daily working practice.</li> </ul>
<b>3.00</b>	<b>THE PARTNERSHIP'S PRIORITIES/DOCUMENTS FOR SCRUTINY</b>
3.01	<p>The partnership works to an annual plan, which is based on a three-year regional plan.</p> <p>Attached are –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2020-21 annual partnership plan – showing end of year position on all actions.</li> <li>• The current annual plan for 2021-22 which has been in place since April of this year.</li> </ul>
3.02	<p>Seven priority areas directed the work of the partnership during 2021-22. These priorities were based on a strategic assessment. These were –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acquisitive Crime</li> <li>2. Anti-Social Behaviour</li> <li>3. Vulnerable Victims</li> <li>4. Domestic Violence</li> <li>5. Sexual Offences</li> <li>6. Substance Misuse</li> <li>7. Reduce Re-offending</li> </ol>

#### **4.00 OVERVIEW OF OFFENDING RATES OVER THE REPORTING PERIOD**

##### Background:

- When measuring levels of crime, it is important that we have a basis for recording, which allows comparison and perspective. The Home Office (HO) monitors crime levels across all Police forces in the UK. One of the parameters they use to maintain an overview is a comparison league of sorts, called *most similar groups* (MSG). The HO compile groups of Counties, where the demography is so similar, that crime levels would also be expected to be very similar.
- Both Counties fluctuate around the average for our MSG – with variations being further analysed, as and when they occur.
- The Police look at crime figures constantly, and review all changes on a regional and local basis. Any significant changes are subject to further analysis. Problem areas will then be reviewed, with Policing plans put in place to tackle the issues. Local policing methods include the daily tasking of resources to tackle issues as they emerge.
- The Partnership received data on crime levels on a quarterly basis, and the ‘softer’ or longer-term approaches of tackling crime trends will be the basis of the partnership plan. (During the lockdown period, data was received on a monthly basis.) The data we generally use, is that of a comparison between the period in the current year, and the same period in the former year.
- The Partnership has a statutory duty to respond to a strategic assessment of crime trends, and prepare a plan based on these assessments. Currently, the assessment is undertaken on a regional basis. The latest Assessment was received in March 2021, we are expecting an updated version early in 2022.

##### **2020-21:**

- During the early part of last year, because of the lockdown situation, all crime reported to the Police reduced in number. This of course, was the same across the Country. The most significant reduction was in acquisitive crimes of all types, and violent crimes. Following the lifting of Covid restrictions, crimes as a whole have slowly risen back to pre-lockdown numbers, but not all.
- Two areas where increased numbers were seen was stalking and harassment, and hate crime. Further analysis showed that the stalking and harassment increase was mainly due to the inclusion of coercive control offences being recorded within the harassment category and also the increase in reports of harassment happening on social media and via messaging apps. Similarly, an increase in hate crimes (although the numbers here were still very low) were largely related to tensions between individuals resulting in verbal abuse, which is unfortunately being seen across the Country as movement of people during Covid restrictions can cause friction.

The Police respond to all reports of hate crime and they are investigated fully. The national definition of hate crime, as used by the Police, included discrimination on a person's race including countries within the UK, i.e. Welsh/English, therefore this is how such incidents were recorded.

- All repeat domestic abuse cases are captured via MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference), to ensure that appropriate multi agency action is being taken. Gwynedd experienced spikes in case numbers over the summer of 2020, which coincides with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. The number of cases then decreased quite sharply in both areas in the autumn and winter months.

**2021-22:**

- North Wales Police's Onyx department manage the safeguarding of CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) victims, all of whom have safeguarding partnership plans. They did not see any changes in the number of CSE victims during quarter 1 of 2021/22 or throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with numbers remaining relatively stable.
- Domestic Abuse continues to be a force and local priority for Anglesey and Gwynedd, with increased focus on safeguarding, scrutiny around investigative standards, reducing timelines of investigations in conjunction with CPS and obtaining better outcomes for victims. Domestic Abuse accounts for around 20% of total crime in the Western area.
- Antisocial behaviour (ASB) in Gwynedd increased in the first half of 2021/22, in line with increases being seen across the force area. Nationally there has been a marked increase in youth related ASB since the end of lockdown and similar increases have been noted in the monthly ASB multi-agency tasking groups across North Wales.
- Late in the Summer, we received reports of issues with individuals drinking in public and causing ASB in Bangor, leading to concerns from businesses in the vicinity. As a response, a multi-agency task group was brought together to look at how we could improve the situation, including representatives from Housing, Police and Substance Misuse Services. The Police reported that regular patrols were made, and they had engaged with the individuals who were ready to dispose of the alcohol when challenged. We found that the number of complaints fell to zero once the Autumn and Winter months arrived. However, we are planning for the Spring, and this work will continue.
- During this year, attention has been drawn towards fraud crimes and scams. Nationally, these types of crimes rose significantly, but this remains an area which is vastly underreported due to a number of reasons. The Partnership received a presentation by the Police, in order to explain the reporting process and role of Action Fraud. It was also decided that training sessions would be available for staff working with vulnerable people in order to increase understanding and awareness more widely.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>WORK DURING 2020-21</b>
5.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of the 2019-20 financial year, the partnership held a workshop, to begin the work of planning for the coming year. This took place in February, and was the final physical meeting of partners locally, before the commencement of the lockdown in March 2020. Although much was different, in terms of working practices during March, and into April, we managed to formulate the activity of the workshop into an action plan by the beginning of the financial year.</li> <li>• The partnership cancelled the scheduled meeting for April, and instead a LOG was circulated – featuring the crime figures for the period, and all other papers and matters which required the members attention. Meetings of the partnership resumed in July, using virtual capabilities.</li> <li>• The 2020-21 plan, which is attached, collates most of the additional activity the partnership wanted to achieve during that financial year. Most of the activity was completed, and reported on a quarterly basis to the CSP, so that any remedial activity could be agreed if required. Crime figures were also shared on a quarterly basis, so that any additional activity needed could be discussed.</li> <li>• Unsurprisingly, some of the activities within the plan stalled because of the Covid 19 situation. This resulted in 5 out of 28 actions being incomplete at the end of the year due to competing priorities of the pandemic.</li> <li>• At a very early stage in the lockdown period, we saw, as expected, a reduction in the overall crime rates across the Counties, by the beginning of June - the rates of crime overall compared to the same period the previous year were down - by 24.6% in Gwynedd and 24.8% in Anglesey. The reductions varied across the crime types with acquisitive and violent crimes seeing the most reductions.</li> <li>• Since then, crime rates have been slowly creeping back towards expected levels. Domestic abuse (DA), which was an issue we kept a close overview of during the lockdown period, for obvious reasons - is again approaching more expected numbers in terms of reporting. Luckily, as previously mentioned, we have been able to take advantage of the additional monies from Welsh Government to put more provision in place for DA and sexual abuse needs.</li> <li>• During this time period we continued with virtual meetings and regular sharing of information, in order to keep the plan on track as far as is possible. We also learned from the ‘response’ to the lockdown period, which undoubtedly saw the emergence of good practice and innovation.</li> <li>• Sadly, throughout this reporting period, the partnership had two ongoing Domestic Homicide reviews (DHR’s).</li> </ul>

- The Prevent plan (a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism) was updated following the most recent local profile received in December from the Police. The plan has three parts, which are recommendations to address current threats, the fulfilment of Prevent's statutory and transactional elements, and a multiagency partnership.
- The North Wales Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy was launched in March 2020. Since then, the CSP have supported the delivery of the strategy in Gwynedd by attending the regional meetings and keeping up to date with priorities and relevant actions as they arise.

There is no doubt that the recent Covid 19 situation has, and continues to be a challenging time for all partners. Below are examples as to how some of these challenges were met.

- Unfortunately, in Gwynedd, a Domestic Homicide review (which is a CSP responsibility) was required following a death in December 2019. The Home Office gave partnerships leeway to 'hold' on the process during the lockdown period. However, partners were keen to make progress, and using virtual meetings both locally and with organisations from two Other Counties across the UK, we kept to the timescale that we would have regardless of the current obstacles.
- Early on in the Lockdown period, it was recognised that vigilance was required as regards Domestic Abuse (DA). High risk victims of DA are discussed in a multiagency meeting each month, as standard practice. Partners agreed that in addition, weekly virtual meetings would also be held, so that heightened risk factors could be dealt with quickly. These meetings continue.
- Meeting the needs of our homeless citizens became a priority during the lockdown period, not only providing housing for each one, but also meeting other needs they might present. Our Substance misuse services increased the 'outreach' provision available, working alongside the police and housing services on the ground, engaging with each individual. Providing for these needs ensured that they continued to engage with services and as a result referred and engaged within more structured treatment services. Added value was provided through provision of hot food and basic items, mobile phones where they did not have access to one, and travel vouchers to enable them to go to appointments and receive further support when required.
- Our housing and Social care services also increased the number of (virtual) meetings with partners in the third sector/substance misuse/and Probation to discuss the management of individuals in the community who were subject to Probation supervision. Addressing needs and managing risk being very much the aim, at a time where face to face contact was not always possible.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also, as face to face supervision meetings with clients in the community within office spaces became difficult for the probation service (as with all other providers) during the early days of lockdown, Probation and the police strengthen their joint working practices, increased use of Police premises and joint door stop visits, to ensure risk management was maintained during the period.</li> </ul>
<b>6.00</b>	<b>WORK DURING 2021-22</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the pandemic, the CSP was unable to prepare for the new plan through the usual mode of a workshop. It was decided that a questionnaire would lay the foundation for establishing the plan for this year, through asking partners for information about any upcoming activities or projects that linked with the priorities within the strategic assessment.</li> <li>• The 2021-22 plan, which is attached, collates most of the additional activity the partnership wanted to achieve during this financial year. The activity is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the CSP, so that any remedial activity can be agreed if required. Following discussions, the plan for this year also included additional information around the intended outcomes of each project.</li> <li>• Crime figures were also shared on a quarterly basis through a performance report prepared by the Police analyst, so that any trends and additional activity needed could be discussed.</li> <li>• Following discussions, the partnership identified the need to refresh the quarterly data prepared by the analyst in order to better inform the meetings, the new format was in place for the April meeting. This included additional narrative to explain any changes to data recording or the impact of historic cases on the data.</li> <li>• Sadly, during this year the partnership has now an additional two ongoing Domestic Homicide reviews (DHR's) following deaths that occurred early in the year, bringing the total to 4 DHRs in Gwynedd currently ongoing.</li> <li>• Despite the continuing difficulties brought around by Covid, the Partnership can report a number of positive developments for this financial year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the Summer, working with the Police and the OPCC, we submitted a Safer Streets Fund 2 bid for Hirael and Deiniol in Bangor. This was successful, meaning an additional 41 CCTV cameras, improved street lighting and crime prevention packs for the area. The project is progressing well (procurement process has begun/project board meeting monthly/publicity arrangements in place.)</li> <li>- In previous meetings, the partnership identified the need to refresh local operational groups. This work is being led by the police, and by now most</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

of the groups have now been established, including the monthly Gwynedd VARM (Vulnerability Assessment/Risk Management) which is a multi-agency partnership aiming to reduce repeat demand, vulnerability and risk through a co-ordinated, problem-solving approach.

- Fraud was identified by the partnership as a priority in terms of raising awareness for staff working with vulnerable individuals. As a result, training sessions by the Police have been arranged for January.
- Following the actions set out in the North Wales Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy 2021-24 in terms of improving access to information and help for VAWDASV (Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence), the Community Safety page on the council website includes a wealth of information about current local and national support resources for all types of victims. This includes a link to the Live Fear Free Helpline, which is also promoted regularly on Council social media and staff pages.
- The CSP have been made aware of and are preparing for new duties such as Protect and Serious Violence. This includes attending national webinars and sharing of information. The Police presented around the Serious Violence Duty to members earlier in the year, and a further presentation around the new Intelligence Hub which will hold North Wales data and is currently being developed is scheduled for January.
- The CSP has reflected on the current Prevent training that is available, and are awaiting to see what is possible with the new package from the Home Office. The new training platform is currently being tested before being rolled out.

Work ongoing:

- Continue to implement local projects identified within the plan for Q3 – through monitoring process.
- Respond to the Community Profile we have recently received from the Police. This includes the development of a multi-agency SOC (Serious & Organised Crime) group which is being led by the Police.
- Continue to support the progress of the Safer Streets 2 Fund in Bangor, working alongside the Highways department and the Police.
- Continue to support the implementation of the regional alcohol plan in both Authorities.
- The partnership is mindful, that when the time is right we should be looking to assess the changes that within our communities that have resulted from the pandemic, and the way organisations have needed to change in order to meet the communities need. Currently changes and flux are still very much the norm, therefore this work proper may need to start now, but is likely to take a longer period. Currently, services are still being reactive to changes.

**7.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.01	To note the contents of the report and attached documents, and state whether or not the Scrutiny Committee supports the priorities and future direction of the work.
8.00	<b>APPENDICES</b>
8.01	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 2020-21 Plan</li><li>2. 2021-22 Plan</li></ol>