

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021-22 and Summary Strategic Assessment 2020-21

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Introduction

The Strategic Assessment produced for the Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership (CSP) helps establish priority themes for the 2021/22 Partnership Plan.

Legislation

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave statutory responsibility to local authorities, the police, and key partners to reduce crime and disorder in their communities. Under this, and subsequent legislation, Community Safety Partnerships are required to carry out annual audits and to implement crime reduction strategies.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced scrutiny arrangements in the form of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, as well as introducing several amendments to the 1998 Act including the addition of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and substance misuse within the remit of the CSP strategies. Reducing reoffending was subsequently added by the Policing and Crime Act 2009. The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 set out further revisions to the 1998 Act.

The aim of the Strategic Assessment

The analysis of data provided by partners enables the partnership to set clear priorities for the coming year.

Part 1 provides a summary of findings from data covering the period January 2020 – December 2020 (July 2019 – June 2020 for road safety), draws some conclusions from the data and recommends the priorities for the partnership for the forthcoming financial year.

Part 2 offers a broad outline of how these priorities will be addressed as well as some specific projects that will be undertaken by the Council's community safety team and external partners.

It should be noted that some of the data provided in this document is provisional and may undergo further revision.

Part 1 – Analysis

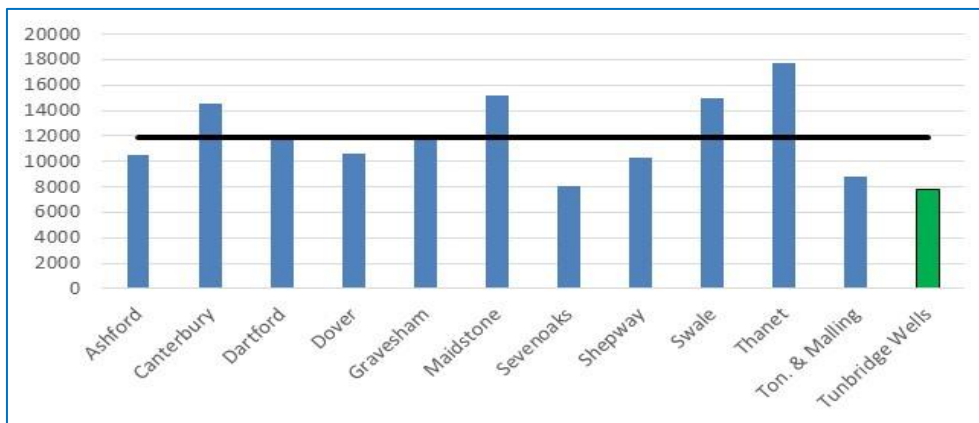
All recorded crime

Current figures for the 12-month period January 2020 – December 2020, unless stated.

Level of Crime: 7,830 (previous period 8,608)

Peer Comparison: Best out of 12 Kent areas by population and volume

Annual Change: A reduction of 778 crimes (-9%)

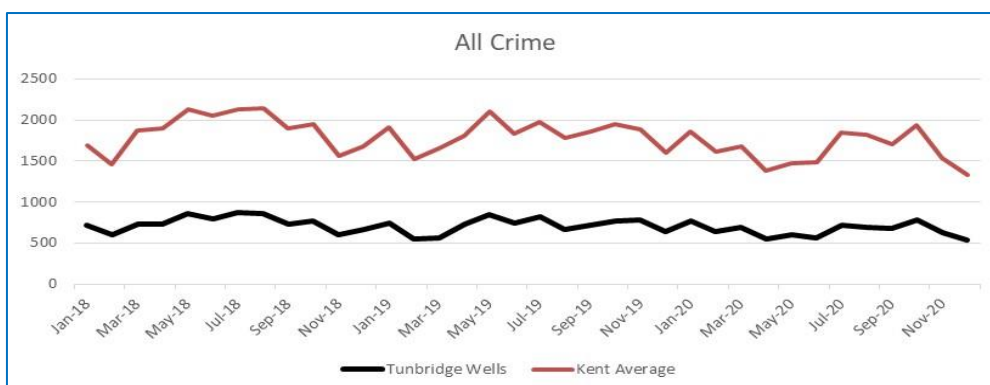


Kent comparison - per 1000 residents

Tunbridge Wells had the lowest overall crime rate in Kent for the given period, marginally ahead of our West Kent neighbours Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling.

A reduction of 778 crimes builds on the reduction of 345 crimes during the previous calendar year (2019).

From the metric of 'all crime' Tunbridge Wells is the safest local authority area in Kent.



Three-year trend - per 1000 residents

The table that follows shows a breakdown of reported incidents, the increase or decrease since the last reporting period, and our county position. Subsequent pages provide further details on key crime types and a ward breakdown.

Crime Type	This Year	Last Year	% Change	Number change	2019	2020
All crime	7,830	8,608	-9.0%	-778	1	1
Victim-based crime	6,652	7,466	-10.9%	-814	1	1
Violent Crime	3,662	3,571	2.5%	91	2	3
Sexual offences	272	284	-4.2%	-12	3	3
Hate Crime	191	185	3.2%	6	4	3
ASB Incidents	2,354	1,490	58.0%	864	1	2
Burglary Residential	281	361	-22.2%	-80	3	1
Criminal damage	948	1,055	-10.1%	-107	1	1
Domestic abuse incidents	2,391	2,296	4.1%	95	1	1
Drug offences	219	206	6.3%	13	4	3
(Drug Trafficking)	66	80	-17.5%	-14	--	--
(Drug Possession)	153	126	21.4%	27	--	--
Robbery	39	67	-41.8%	-28	1	1
Shoplifting	564	759	-25.7%	-195	6	4
Theft from a motor vehicle	229	301	-23.9%	-72	3	1
Theft of motor vehicle	123	138	-10.9%	-15	3	4

Noticeable in this data:

- A small increase in violent crime
- A smaller than expected increase in reports of domestic abuse
- A sizeable increase in anti-social behaviour

Clearly, data for this period will have been influenced by the changes we have had to make to our daily lives as a result of the pandemic and the various lockdown and post-lockdown situations our residents have endured.

While anti-social behaviour increased by 58% a great many of these reports were related to perceived breaches of COVID-19 regulations. Violent crime increased by 91 incidents (2.5%) over the preceding period following a reduction of 7.5% in 2019. Domestic abuse reports increased by 4.1%. That's half the increase we experienced in 2019 and lower than many domestic abuse professionals expected.

Conclusion

This strategic assessment sets out the priorities that the Community Safety Partnership should focus on in 2021/22 and helps us to determine what services should be funded.

Crime figures are, as always, presented with a number of caveats, particularly with respect to long-term trends. This year especially we need to be mindful of the effects the events of 2020 had on some crime and anti-social behaviour data, as well as expected seasonal trends. However, we are fortunate to live in a low crime area and we're pleased the data shows Tunbridge Wells to be the safest place in Kent; albeit by small margins over our West Kent neighbours.

The year ahead will also present some challenges. High need domestic abuse cases are likely to continue to feature for some time, putting extra strain on support workers and service providers. Financial, academic and mental health difficulties will make matters worse, particularly for families with school-aged or younger children.

Poor mental health will also play a part in how some of our younger generation are able to return to normal behaviour, and this may have a negative effect within the household, school, college or within the public realm.

Our public spaces are likely to be 'flooded' with young people as soon as conditions allow, as we saw in late summer 2020. It's important for us to prepare for this with support from partners such as Kenward Trust, St Giles Trust, Project Salus, KCC Early Help, the Community Alcohol Partnership team, and of course Kent Police in terms of reassurance and enforcement.

Our one and only nightclub, in Newton Road, has closed its doors for good, which is unfortunate, but may enable a smoother reopening of the NTE – and is likely to be replaced in time. We still have several venues with late night / early morning licences so we can be hopeful that Tunbridge Wells will again become a late night focus in the West of the county.

In terms of the seriously negative effects on our residents from outside the borough, Organised Criminal Groups and County Line issues have been somewhat muted over the past twelve months. As of February 2021 there are no notable OCGs operating in the borough, or at least none that we are aware of, it should be added, as the Serious Crime Directorate expects such a vacuum is not a true representation.

Of the three OCGs that were being worked on most recently, two have seen a combined total of five members of their groups receiving substantial prison sentences while other members are no longer active in Tunbridge Wells. The third group, a South London drug-supply OCG are believed to have targeted areas other than Tunbridge Wells.

This is testament to a very pro-active and highly effective Community Policing Team. As recently as 12 February 2021 five members of an Albanian OCG aged between 23 and 35 received sentences ranging from three to seven years for conspiracy to supply cocaine.

More broadly, people struggling with substance or alcohol addiction before the pandemic are likely to have found new habits or new ways of coping which again will change as we come out of lockdown – change for some people who will have found new coping mechanisms will not be welcomed.

By way of example, one morning in early February 2021 all the events or incidents (four) that were collated for the morning briefing were mental health related. In one incident a person was en route to the train station to "throw [themselves] under a train". They were located by

patrols and went voluntarily with the crisis team to Priority House. Another person claimed to have taken a dozen paracetamol and was walking near Cranbrook wanting to end their life. Another person claimed money had been stolen from their property while in hospital and believed police were involved in the break in. The final call was from a person who had self-harmed and had called a friend rather than wake up their partner and three-year-old child.

The CSU Sergeant has worked hard to form links with the Community Mental Health Team at Highlands House to ensure regular attendance at monthly Vulnerability Board meetings. This will be vital if we are to bring relief to victims suffering from episodic or worsening mental health issues and for others who will be affected by this, such as neighbours and residents using our public spaces.

In respect of homelessness, or more specifically, rough sleeping, our Housing Team have done an incredible job engaging with very hard-to-reach individuals who were determined to maintain their lifestyles during pre-pandemic times. Managing such individuals in temporary accommodation, including local hotels etc., has taken a Herculean effort from a multitude of agencies to good effect. However, it would not be a surprise if, as COVID-19 related provisions and restrictions are reduced, we see some hardy individuals return to rough sleeping and begging in the town centre.

This year we must renew our Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) which expire in September. Orders last for a maximum of three years before they are either extended for a further three years or varied or discharged. We will begin this process early and with the benefit of a previous implementation.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse calls to Kent Police were initially expected to rise significantly. While this did not happen calls to the DAVSS helpline, which often were complex and 'high need', did increase by just under 400 across the calendar year. A moderate increase in caseloads were also graded as high need and was replicated in Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling, where DAVSS also provide a point-of-crisis service.

While calls to police did not increase significantly, a study in a London borough by the Centre for Economic Performance published in November 2020 showed abuse by current partners and family members *did* increase by 8% and 17%, respectively. Within the same timeframe ex-partner abuse *declined* by 11%, suggesting the average change in domestic abuse reporting during lockdown is likely misleading.

The report goes on to show that almost all the increase in domestic abuse calls to the police was driven by third party reporting, with the lockdown likely to have trapped many victims with their abuser not giving them the opportunity to report abuse.

If such metrics can be applied elsewhere then we may expect a further increase in reports of domestic abuse during 2021/22 as the country returns to some form of normal. It is perhaps timely, then, that the new DA Bill will place a greater emphasis on support for victims of domestic abuse in refuges and applications for temporary accommodation.

We recommend Domestic Abuse is retained as a priority for 2021/22.

Drug Offences

As often mentioned in these assessments our position within Kent for drug offences has never looked very impressive on paper, but it is important to note that our Community Policing Team retains a strong focus on tackling drug use and local production, as well as those wishing to traffic class A drugs into the borough from other locations, the so-called County Lines or “going country”.

We will continue to deploy outreach workers to engage with young people in open spaces and key locations in Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and elsewhere. While partner agencies CGL and We Are With You (formerly Addaction) are commissioned to address drug addiction with referred adults and young people. Kenward Trust also work on our behalf in schools in respect of drug use and underage drinking.

While the risk of being a victim of violence or knife crime in this borough is very low, incidents of violence are closely linked to drug supply and alcohol abuse. We’ve included violence-related issues and knife crime in the substance abuse priority as there may be opportunities this year to put in place some actions and activities to raise awareness within schools, the night-time economy and the general public.

A 2020 report for the Home Office (‘Review of Drugs’, Professor Dame Carol Black) provides a detailed analysis of the challenges posed by drug supply and demand, including the ways in which drugs fuel serious violence.

The report highlights a series of complex issues including the long-recognised strong associations between young people being drawn into county lines and increases in child poverty, family breakdown, the numbers of children in care, school exclusions and mental health needs. Funding cuts to treatment, youth work and frontline policing over the past decade have also played a key role.

This phase one report was commissioned to inform the government’s thinking on what more can be done to tackle the harm that drugs cause. It will be interesting to see how the policy phase develops, particularly in light of funding challenges brought about by the pandemic (the report was published in February 2020).

We recommend Substance and Alcohol Abuse is retained as a priority for 2021/22.

Anti-social Behaviour

Tunbridge Wells experienced a 58% increase in anti-social behaviour over the calendar year. A breakdown of the data showed that a large proportion of the reports relate to residents reporting perceived (or real) breaches of COVID-19 regulations. For example, rowdy or nuisance gathering in public is a sub-category of anti-social behaviour and calls to police

increased by 429 (110%) in 2020. However, 377 of these were given a COVID-19 tag by the call taker.

Anti-social behaviour in town centre areas is often linked to excess alcohol intake or drug use in parks, car parks and other open spaces. Coupled with sensible use of deployable CCTV, visible outreach resources such as Early Help, Salus and St Giles Trust play a key role in maintaining Tunbridge Wells as a safe place to live, work and visit.

We have included violence-related issues in this priority to ensure we are sighted on the risks to the public, and young people themselves, of anti-social behaviour escalating to more serious public disorder, particularly with the high number of teenagers and young adults who frequent town centre open spaces. The potential for violent episodes to emerge from innocent gatherings must be considered in all our plans to tackle low-level disorder or when sending outreach workers to engage with young people and young adults wherever they choose to congregate.

We recommend Anti-social Behaviour is retained as a priority for 2021/22.

Road Safety

All areas of Kent experienced a reduction in casualties over the preceding period (July-June) as perhaps expected due to the restrictions placed upon travel to and from work as well as recreational travel.

The Community Safety Partnership works to educate young people, pedestrians and other road users through school engagements, theatre and social media. We engage with Community Speed Watch who attempt, with varying degrees of success, to encourage drivers to stay within speed limits in known 'hotspot' areas and to enforce compliance, where possible, with police assistance.

Opportunities to engage with older residents and for partnership work with KFRS may return this year, and perhaps by Road Safety Week in November we can make use of the theatre for a session of performance Captain Safety for our younger residents.

Although the data does not necessarily support Road Safety as a particular priority for Tunbridge Wells, it is a concern for residents and there may be actions we can take to try to influence people's behaviour. It is also possible that the soon-to-be introduced near-miss register will generate opportunities for localised awareness-raising campaigns.

We recommend Road Safety is retained as a priority for 2021/22.

Recommended priorities for 2021/22

1. Domestic Abuse
2. Substance Misuse and Supply, and Alcohol Abuse (inc. violence-related issues and knife crime)

3. Anti-social and High-risk Behaviour (including violence-related issues)
4. Road Safety

Part 2 –Action Plan 2021/22

Priority 1: Domestic Abuse

Action	Primary agency/agencies	Measure	Outcome
Provide DA support services to men and women at all levels of risk. Prioritise high-risk cases to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Run (or refer women to) the Freedom programme for DA awareness and support.	DAVSS	No. of helplines calls, referrals managed, number of programmes run (quarterly reporting).	
Provide support to perpetrators of domestic abuse to change their behaviour through the Community Domestic Abuse Programme (CDAP).	Kent CDAP	Number of men supported through CDAP (quarterly reporting).	
Implement the requirements of the new domestic abuse bill currently working its way through the House.	DA Forum, DAVSS, Look Ahead	Engagement with DA commissioners, KCC leads and service providers.	
Continue to work with shared services and other local authorities to ensure joined up working, value for money and positive outcomes.	WK DA Forum, DAVSS and KCC commissioned services	Joint West Kent action plan outcomes (quarterly meeting).	
Provide the sanctuary scheme to victims of DA, securing properties to allow them to remain in their own home.	TWBC Housing, Look Ahead	Number of properties secured.	
Update Kent Police OSARA plan (Objective, Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assess) for DA	Kent Police, TWBC CSU	Implementation of actions intended to reduce repeat victimisation.	

to drive actions through a TW DA Forum to address repeat victims and offenders.			
Implement Tunbridge Wells One Stop Shop (virtual or otherwise).	Look Ahead, Kent Police	Service availability and accessed by residents.	
Collaborate with the soon-to-be launched Mediation and Domestic Abuse Network organised by DAVSS and SATEDA.	TWBC Community Safety Team	Attend workshops and ensure the resource is promoted to TW residents and relevant professionals.	
Run a suite of survivor programmes for female and male survivors, including: "Own My Life" and "Hope 2 Recovery"	Look Ahead	Number of programmes run and number of attendees from Tunbridge Wells.	
Provide emergency funding for items such as furniture, white goods, food and travel to high-risk victims in the community.	Look Ahead	Tunbridge Wells hi-risk victims accessing the funding as necessary.	
Obtain funding to ensure the availability of the cyber-stalking clinic is maintained	Look Ahead	Funding secured and continued provision of the clinic.	
Commission PAS (Protection Against Stalking) to deliver a stalking workshop.	Look Ahead	Workshop delivered and attended by Tunbridge Wells based clients.	
Ensure DA services identify stalking and refer/signpost to PAS where appropriate.	DA service providers / PAS	DA services on board. PAS receiving referrals or confident that they will receive them as necessary.	
Training and awareness raising sessions for partners and local businesses (to include resources such as bar-coded lip balms and posters for staff rooms etc.	Look Ahead	Sessions delivered and good partner and business attendance.	

Priority 2: Substance Misuse and Supply, and Alcohol Abuse (inc. violence-related issues and knife crime)

Action	Primary agency/agencies	Measure	Outcomes
To deploy substance misuse workers to hotspots within the borough to be a presence and carry out one-to-one and group work with young people.	Kenward Trust	Number of individuals engaged with and locations visited. Quarterly reporting.	
Implement the Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) action plan to address issues around underage drinking in Tunbridge Wells.	Trading Standards, CAP, TWBC (CSU), Kent Police	Action plan developed and programmes in place to address concerns. Bi-monthly meetings.	
Provide a positive presence in the night-time economy (or daytime to provide COVID reassurance or to address youth issues.	Street Pastors	Number of people engaged, service provided and hours on duty.	
Carry out targeted work for those identified with substance-related offending/ASB.	CGL	Individuals engaged thru group and 1:1 work.	
Provide drug and alcohol misuse services for 10-17-year olds including 1:1 and group work.	Addaction	Number of young people worked with.	
Assess the need for a further CAP 'zone' in Paddock Wood.	TWBC (CSU), Kent Police	Level of concern and availability of evidence.	
Exclude individuals convicted of violence offences from Pubwatch members' licensed premises.	Safe Town Partnership (STP), CCTV, Kent Police	Number of exclusions in force.	
Ensure links between local regular shoplifters and substance/alcohol abuse are identified and appropriately addressed.	Kent Police, STP	Links identified and referrals made or signposting offered.	

Use Safe Town radios to prevent and detect violent crime, by sharing intelligence between licensees/retailers, CCTV Ops and police.	STP, TWBC CCTV, Kent Police	Pubwatch instigated incidents monitored by CCTV.	
Use CCTV (static and deployable) to assist with preventing and detecting violent crime.	TWBC, CCTV, Kent Police	Violent offences monitored.	
Tackle Organised Criminal Gangs (OCGs) that target Tunbridge Wells residents.	Kent Police	Gangs identified and perpetrators arrested. Monitored at the monthly OCG meeting.	
Provide training to licensed premises around responsibilities when serving/refusing alcohol and dealing with aggressive customers.	Kent Police, STP, CAP	Number of training sessions offered.	
Distribute Emergency Trauma Packs (ETPs), and metal-detecting wands to ensure knives are not brought to pubs and clubs.	CSU, Safe Town Partnership	Deployment of ETPs and availability of wands in NTE.	

Priority 3: Anti-social and High-risk Behaviour (including violence-related issues)

Action	Primary agency/agencies	Measure	Outcome
Liaise with partners to share knowledge and awareness of young people and the open spaces they use. Deploy outreach to areas where risk is identified.	TWBC Community Safety Team (CST), KCC Early Help, Kent Police and outreach partners	Actions identified at monthly District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings (DCSM), Vulnerability Board meetings, and morning briefings.	
Organise summer and autumn 'all out' events for Tunbridge Wells and surrounding towns using DCSM intelligence to focus resources.	CST, KCC Early Help, Kent Police	Events run, YP's engaged with and outcomes evaluated.	
Implement a 3-year Public Spaces Protection Order with conditions that address anti-social behaviour.	TWBC and partners	PSPO implemented with appropriate conditions. Current orders expire Sept 2021.	
Identify graffiti-taggers through improved overt CCTV surveillance (fixed and deployable) and GIS mapping.	TWBC CST, KCC Early Help, Kent Police, CCTV Ops	Strategic camera deployments and TWBC CCTV Operations support. Number of persons detected.	
Encourage speedier removal of graffiti on public and private property.	CST, Street Scene, developers, property owners	Tags in high profile locations identified and landowners encouraged to remove them quickly.	
Provide graffiti cleaning kits to businesses and residents (as appropriate).	CST	Taken up by those in need.	
Targeted engagement with schools and Pupil Referral Units and other educators on risky behaviour and similar themes.	CST, CAP, KCC Early Help, Kent	Number of schools engaged on topics such as alcohol, drugs, gangs, CSE, and	

	Police, Kenward Trust	associated anti-social behaviour.	
Use deployable CCTV to assist with the prevention/detection of crime and ASB.	TWBC, Kent Police	Locations identified and supported.	
Engage the new Family Matters ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) with individuals raised at relevant meetings	CST, Family Matters	Attendance at relevant Safeguarding and Org. Crime Group meetings and referrals made.	
Work with partners to address disorder at popular NTE venues that are frequent sources of disorder, but which may not breach licensing conditions.	CST, Kent Police, Safe Town Partnership, TWBC Licensing	A reduction in the no. of reports or an improved perception of 'problem' venues.	
Target specific individuals causing ASB in Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook and Paddock Wood.	TWBC Community Safety Officer, Kent Police ASB Officers	Appropriate warnings and 'Behaviour Agreements' served and complied with.	
Organise knife amnesty events at key locations across the borough.	Kent Police (Community Policing Team), TWBC CST	Number of events organised.	
Develop action plans for TW town centre (north and south) for youth engagement during Spring and Summer months with a focus on early evenings, and Thursday evenings in particular.	CSU Officers (TWBC, KCC, Kent Police, STP and other partners	Agency attendance and engagement. Reduction in reports.	
PAS (Protection Against Stalking) to offer awareness training to housing providers to ensure stalking is considered when investigating neighbour disputes and ASB.	PAS, RSLs	Training delivered. Referrals made or advice sought.	

Consider partnership ops to address shoplifting and town centre anti-social behaviour thru PCC funding	Safe Town Partnership (STP), TWBC (CSU)	Number of ops run and significant outcomes achieved	
Ensure Crimestoppers contact details are widely promoted as a safe reporting mechanism.	All relevant agencies	Crimestoppers logo and contact details included in relevant engagement materials.	
Work with Assembly Hall Theatre to create a programme of engagement for young people to tie in with Early Help and CSU.	AHT, EH and CSU	Programme created and relevant young people taking up the opportunity.	

Priority 4: Road Safety

Action	Primary agency/agencies	Measure	Outcomes
Education in schools and community groups to include various KFRS-led programs.	KFRS, KCC Wardens	Projects completed and feedback provided.	
Engage KFRS to support CAP priorities when delivering RS messages to schools	KFRS, CSU	Number of schools visited where underage drinking formed part of the delivery.	
Work with KCC and KFRS to promote messages locally and link in with national and local campaigns including Road Safety Week.	TWBC Comms and Community Safety Team (CST)	Number of campaigns supported.	
Encourage Tunbridge Wells students to visit the Road Safety Experience at Rochester.	KFRS, TWBC CST	Number of schools attending and feedback received.	
During Road Safety Week: Provide safety message to primary school children. Organise a public engagement activity with partners to address all road users.	CST, KRFS	Number of presentations/activities.	
Direct KCC Warden public engagement opportunities on road safety topics, particularly around schools.	CSU, KCC Wardens	Number and type of engagements, attendee numbers.	
Run Captain Safety event during Road Safety Week for KS1 and KS2 students, regulations permitting.	CSU, Dave Allen	Number of schools/students attends. Student/school feedback.	
Contribute funding for Safety in Action event for Yr 6 students transitioning to high school, regulations permitting.	CSU, Project Salus	Number of Tunbridge Wells students attending.	

Engage KCC Warden service to raise road safety awareness with over-65s at appropriate clubs and coffee mornings etc.	KCC Wardens and other partners	Attendance at suitable gatherings.	
Use Highways resources and publicly available crash data to identify accident hot spots (as required).	CSU and partners	Better identification of repeat or vulnerable locations.	
Direct TWBC Parking Enforcement team to attend schools when parking-related complaints are received.	CSU and TWBC parking staff	Attendance at key locations.	
Push out regular and creative messages around the “fatal four”: Speed, Alcohol, Mobiles, Seatbelts.	TWBC CST and Comms	Messages delivered in various formats	
Follow through the implementation of a local near-miss register.	TWBC CST, Digital and Comms teams	Implementation and collation/sharing of data.	
Engage with the Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator and active/inactive local Speed Watch Groups.	Kent Police, TWBC CST	To gain a fuller picture of this road safety provision and their concerns for further joint working.	
Build an intelligence picture around off-road motorcycle nuisance for local attention and for bidding into the County Road Safety Team for specific and targeted operations.	Kent Police	Gather data re nuisance calls from the public and local councillor concerns raised with the Community Safety Team.	
‘On spec’ enforcement operations by local Community Policing Team or CSU Constables	Kent Police	Number and location of operations undertaken.	
Bid into the Central (County) Road Safety team for operations in the borough of Tunbridge Wells re nuisance and speeding vehicles (i.e. North Farm)	Kent Police	Number of bids made and operations taking place in the borough.	