

# Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot: Interim Evaluation Report

April 2023



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## List of Acronyms

AGS	An Garda Síochána
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
CES	Centre for Effective Services
CoFPI	Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland
CSIF	Community Safety Innovation Fund
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committee
DoJ	Department of Justice
DATF	Drug and Alcohol Task Force
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HSE	Health Service Executive
IT	Information Technology
JPC	Joint Policing Committee
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCSP	Local Community Safety Partnership
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPN	Public Participation Network
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
ToR	Terms of Reference
UL	University of Limerick

## Acknowledgements

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We extend our gratitude to the following people who generously contributed their wisdom and experience of working, over many years, with partnership models and interagency working: Colma Nic Lughadha (National Coordinator for Children and Young People's Services Committees), Dr John Topping (Senior Lecturer in Criminology, Queen's University Belfast), Lorraine Gillies (Chief Officer, Scottish Community Safety Network), Professor James J. Nolan (West Virginia University, USA), Dermot Harrigan (Manager, Derry Strabane, Policing and Community Safety Partnership) and Stephen Cargin (Strategic Policing Advisor, Community Policing, Leadership, Procedural Justice and Professional Standards).

CES/UL Evaluation Team

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# 1. Introduction

The Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) is a whole of government initiative that commenced in early 2021 led by the Department of Justice. The LCSP is currently being piloted in three locations in Ireland over a two-year period. The pilot is a key action under Goal 3 of the Department of Justice strategy for *A Safe, Fair and Inclusive Ireland, 2021-2023* (Department of Justice, 2021a).

The policy intention is that the LCSPs meet one of the key recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing (CoFPI) in Ireland's report, namely that community safety is not solely the responsibility of An Garda Síochána (AGS) or the Department of Justice (Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, 2018). This fits with the vision for community safety as a whole of Government responsibility. The partnership approach to community safety aims to reduce the level of crime, to target resources more effectively in preventing crime and finding solutions, and to enhance feelings and experiences of community safety, locally and nationally.

The LCSPs will replace and build upon the existing Joint Policing Committees (JPCs). They will provide a forum for state agencies and local community representatives to work together to act on community concerns (Department of Justice, 2021b). The LCSPs seek to build on the good work of the JPCs, through the evolution and expansion of that structure. The intention is that LCSPs will bring a broader focus to community safety issues, of which policing is but one factor, to enable communities to be safe and feel safe.

The LCSP pilot is designed to run until the end of 2023. The pilot is being accompanied by an independent formative evaluation purposefully designed to capture the learning arising from the pilot. This learning will inform the rollout of LCSPs in local authority areas across Ireland and further develop the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill, (2022). This Bill, currently in draft form, states that a national strategy for community safety will be prepared, and a national community safety steering group and a national office for community safety will be established. The proposed legislation will place an obligation on relevant departments, state agencies and local authorities to cooperate with AGS in delivering community safety. Once finalised the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill will place the LCSPs on a statutory footing.

## 1.1. Context

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This interim report is the second in a series of three reports that track the evaluation of the three LCSP pilot sites:

- **Dublin North Inner City LCSP** was set up early in 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in February 2021, and the inaugural meeting of the partnership was held on 29th July 2021.
- **Longford LCSP** was set up in summer 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in June 2021, and the inaugural meeting of the partnership was held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- **Waterford LCSP** was set up in summer 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in June 2021. There was a premeeting of the LCSP on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and the first official meeting of the partnership was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

The first evaluation report, the [Baseline Report](#), was published in June 2022. The third and final evaluation report will be prepared later in 2023, coinciding with the end of the pilot phase of the LCSP.



The purpose of this Interim Report is to present the findings from an analysis of data gathered -- and learning arising from the evaluation process -- midway through the pilot lifecycle. This is to inform decision making for the planned implementation of the LCSP nationwide.

Since the baseline report in June 2022, there have been further developments within the policy context of community safety. These include an updated draft of the *Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill (November 2022)*, the introduction of the Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF) and the publishing of the *Rural Safety Plan 2022-2024*, as well as the *Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership (2022)*.

## (Draft) Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill

In November 2022, the Department of Justice published an updated draft of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill. The Bill provides, inter alia, a new framework for policing and community safety aimed at improving the performance and accountability of our police service to benefit the safety of communities and new national security arrangements.

The Bill outlines the preparation of a *National Strategy for Improving Community Safety*, which will contain a policy framework and programme of actions to support public service bodies and communities working together in a coordinated manner to improve community safety. The Bill proposes the introduction of a National Community Safety Steering Committee, the National Office of Community Safety and the appointment of a Director for the National Office of Community Safety to promote, support, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of the national strategy as well as local community safety plans. The Bill provides for the merging of the current Policing Authority and Garda Síochána Inspectorate and the establishment of a Policing and Community Safety Authority.

The Bill sets out the regulations, functions and staffing of local community safety partnerships and the duties of public service bodies in relation to collaboration with the partnerships. When finalised the Bill will place these structures and arrangements on a statutory footing.

## Community Safety Innovation Fund

The Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF) 2022 allocated €2 million to support the development of community safety through innovative and local community-based initiatives. This is part of the broader objective to drive community participation in a new approach to make communities safer and to work across government and with state agencies to support this goal.

The development of the Community Safety Innovation Fund is a commitment under the Justice Plan 2022 and was announced in April 2021 by the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee, and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath.

The open call for Community Safety Innovation Funding ran from 6 April 2022 to 8 June 2022, and 124 applications were received. A total of 22 community projects across the country are set to benefit from grants ranging from €5,000 to €150,000, which will support the delivery of innovative projects to improve community safety in their local areas (see Appendix for a breakdown of allocated funding). A total of €353,903 of the CSIF 2022 was allocated to initiatives under the LCSP pilot sites for the following projects: Longford LCSP Cornerstone Initiatives, Dublin North Inner City Community Safety Warden Scheme, Dungarvan Community Project, Waterford Northwest Suburbs Community Action Plan.

Applications for the CSIF will open in 2023 and the fund will be increased to €3 million.

## Rural Safety Plan 2022-2024

The *Rural Safety Plan* (Department of Justice, 2022) was published in September 2022 by the Department of Justice. The vision of the Plan is for people and communities in rural Ireland to feel safe and be safe in their homes, their places of work, and their local environments. The Plan aims to achieve this by bringing together and strengthening all the various strands of work on rural safety.

In demonstrating and highlighting the collaborative efforts made by An Garda Síochána, other state bodies, the Rural Safety Forum, community groups, and supported by the Government, the Plan seeks to enhance security in rural areas and confirms the importance that is rightfully placed on the welfare of rural Irish communities.

Community safety is one of the five main priorities of the Rural Safety Plan. The Plan names the local community safety partnerships as a way to reach the goal of detecting and preventing anti-social behaviour.

## Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership (2022)

In October 2022, the Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien, launched an agreed set of [values and principles for collaboration and partnership with the Community and Voluntary Sector](#) (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2022).

These values and principles derive from the five-year strategy to support communities and the voluntary sector in Ireland (2019-2024) which outlined a vision to create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered, and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2019, 2022). The values and principles dovetail with the values and thrust of community safety policy, further affirming the cross governmental imperative to draw on the power and agency of people as active citizens within their community.

**Table 1: Values and principles for collaboration and partnership with the Community and Voluntary sector**

Values	
<b>Social Justice</b>	A commitment to the concept of social justice which believes that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities and can be seen as a commitment to comprehensive engagement to ensure the promotion of cultural, environmental, economic and socially sustainable policies and practices.
<b>Empowering Communities</b>	A commitment to empowering communities, increasing their knowledge, skills, consciousness, and confidence to become critical, creative and active participants. Supporting people and communities to be resilient, organised, included and influential.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
<b>Active Participation</b>	A commitment to active participation of all stakeholders, including citizens and non-citizens.
<b>Human Rights, Equality and Anti-Discrimination</b>	A commitment to human rights, equality and anti-discrimination, involving promoting human rights and equality in society and committing to addressing the multiple forms of discrimination.

<b>Social Inclusion</b>	Commitment to prioritising the needs of communities experiencing social or economic exclusion.
<b>Principles</b>	
<b>Respect</b>	Respect for the diversity of knowledge, skills, views and lived experience being brought to a process by all stakeholders.
<b>Harmonisation</b>	Ensure consistency with existing strategies and implement agreed objectives and actions relevant to local and community development.
<b>Implementation</b>	Make every effort to leverage the structures already in place locally and nationally seeking to maximise the potential of these structures.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and communities to support sustainable approaches to policy and programme development and implementation.
<b>Subsidiarity</b>	Recognise and facilitate the ability of communities. Take decisions and actions, promoting power sharing and the exercise of power as close to communities as possible.
<b>Value for Money</b>	Promote and facilitate value for money approaches underpinned by a collaborative, partnership and whole-of-government ethos that prioritises societal value and community need.

## 1.2. Community Safety

Community safety, as a concept, addresses criminal behaviour, anti-social behaviour and other factors that affect people's perceptions and experiences of safety. The term community safety was introduced to encourage community participation, involving all sections of the community working together to bring about greater feelings of safety in the community in which they live.

Community safety is about people being and feeling safe in their community (Department of Justice, 2021b). It involves creating structures and oversight to support and enable state and civic society to work effectively within their respective remits to create safe communities. It is about devising clear oversight arrangements that align strategically and functionally with the statutory remits of agencies.

According to the OSCE,<sup>1</sup> community safety arises out of community-oriented policing which involves proactive problem solving and the active participation and cooperation of all the different segments of communities and other government agencies in the problem-solving process.

The partnership approach to community safety intends to reduce crime, target resources more effectively in preventing crime and in finding solutions to enhance feelings and experiences of community safety locally and nationally. The causes of crime and criminality are usually a complex mix of social and economic deprivation and the breakdown of local communities. Effective community safety outcomes require multi-faceted, cooperative, and coordinated responses. They also fit alongside other community development approaches and partnership-based initiatives, such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the Place-Based Leadership Development Programme, and the Empowering Communities Programme. These initiatives focus on capacity building within the community and are funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The emphasis on, and interest in, community involvement and community safety has been evolving for many years, beginning with community policing which was introduced in 1987 as a proactive, solution-based and community-driven form of policing in Ireland. An Garda Síochána has a long-established tradition of fostering and developing close relationships within the

<sup>1</sup> Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). 2008. *Good Practices, in Building Policy-Public Partnerships*. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/4/32547.pdf>

communities it serves (An Garda Síochána, 2009). The intention of the Garda Síochána Community Policing Model (2009) was that community policing would become embedded as an ethos throughout the entire Garda service.

The LCSP model is one component of the Government's commitment to building stronger and more integrated responses to the local area and community development. This arises from a determination to know what is working well and where, the extent of investment in and impact of initiatives, and a drive to encourage more coherent and integrated interventions and targeting of resources to where they are most needed within communities. It also progresses the vision of the future of policing in Ireland, as set out by the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.

### 1.3. Learning Emphasis and Enablers

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There are recurring themes of partnership working and collaboration in the academic and policy literature relevant to community policing and community safety. This report has a deliberate pragmatic emphasis drawing on the learning from the LCSP pilot, and elsewhere. The purpose is to inform understanding of community safety in practice and decision-making for the rollout from the pilot phase of the LCSP. This fits with the intention of the LCSP pilot, which is designed to inform the rollout of the LCSP model to every Local Authority area on the enactment of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill, 2022 (Department of Justice 2022).

### 1.4. Content

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This introduction is followed by a reminder of the terms of reference for the evaluation of the LCSP pilot. Section three sets out the findings from the analysis of data gathered across the three pilot sites. Section four offers insights and learning from elsewhere based on interviews with experts with experience of partnership approaches to policy imperatives. Section five draws out the learning to inform deliberations and decision making in relation to the next phase of the LCSP. Finally, section six presents the next steps for the final phase of the evaluation of the pilot which will culminate in the Final Evaluation Report of the LCSP pilot. The appendices contain reference and resource materials.

## 2. Evaluation methodology

This section sets out the terms of reference for the evaluation of the LCSP pilot and the methodology.

### 2.1. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the LCSP pilots on the community in which they operate and suggest any changes required to inform the national roll out of the programme.

The evaluation is designed to answer three high-level questions and a series of associated sub-questions over the lifecycle of the pilot (see Appendix A):

1. How well did the Local Community Safety Partnerships identify priorities?
2. How did the Local Community Safety Partnerships conduct their work?
3. What was the engagement with, relationship with, and impact on the local community?

### 2.2. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology integrates a blend of quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods to generate a comprehensive set of data. This mixed method approach draws on existing and available secondary data as well as primary quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

The data gathering methods are set out below in Table 2.

**Table 2: Overview of the data collection methods to inform the Interim Report**

Data Type and Method		Description, Purpose, and Responses
Qualitative	<i>Focus groups</i>	Facilitated focus groups with members of the LCSP
		The purpose of the focus groups is to explore and understand how the LCSP conducts its work.
Qualitative	<i>Interviews with local and national stakeholders</i>	Focus groups (6) involving LCSP members (27).
		One-to-one interviews with local stakeholders. The purpose of the interviews is to understand how the LCSP pilot is unfolding and how LCSPs are conducting their work.
Qualitative	<i>Observations of LCSP events</i>	Interviews with LCSP Chairpersons, coordinators, administrator, An Garda Síochána and local authority representatives across the three pilot sites (14).
		Observation of LCSP public engagement events and LCSP members events.
		The purpose is to observe and witness the process of the work of the LCSPs. Observation of LCSP events (8).

Qualitative	<i>Stories of Change</i>	Qualitative indicators as part of the Activity Tracker. They are short, structured descriptions of how activities and outputs of LCSPs contributed to change.
		The purpose of stories of change is to supplement the quantitative indicators of the Activity Tracker, with qualitative data to show if and how a project or programme may have contributed to change.
		Stories of change are created quarterly by the pilot sites from June 2022 onwards (4).
Qualitative	<i>Learning from elsewhere</i>	The purpose of the analysis of learning from elsewhere is to examine and learn from partnership approaches to community safety and other policy initiatives currently underway in Ireland and elsewhere.
		Draw from a selection of documents (7) to glean contemporary learning from elsewhere.
		Consultations with a selection of people (8) with experience of implementing partnership relating to community safety, and other policy imperatives, in Ireland and elsewhere.
Qualitative	<i>Document Analysis</i>	Review of documents relevant to the LCSP including national documents. This includes terms of reference, meeting minutes, and findings from public consultations.
		The purpose is to gain insight into the pilot and supplement the other methodologies.
		Midpoint analysis of documents (38).
Quantitative	<i>Survey of members of LCSP structure(s)</i>	An online, self-completion survey for all members of the LCSP, who consented to take part in the evaluation issued at baseline, interim and final points.
		The purpose is to gather information on the operation and implementation of the LCSP.
		Surveys administered at mid-point with thirty-one respondents.
		The purpose is to gather the views and experience of members of their local LCSP.
Quantitative	<i>Activity Tracker</i>	The purpose of the Activity Tracker is to support the LCSPs to track and monitor activity related to specified indicators in a systematic way in line with best practice. This is part of the greater commitment to systematic monitoring of the pilot initiative which will carry through to the national roll-out.
		The Activity Tracker data collection began in June 2022 and will run on a quarterly basis across the duration of the pilot phase.

The evaluation team, with input from the pilot sites, has developed an activity tracker to collect real-time administrative data in a consistent and continuous way on selected activities, outputs, and outcomes in each of the three pilots. The quantitative data includes statistics capturing attendance at LCSP meetings, participation in training events, participation in the design and delivery of community safety interventions.

The activity tracker was tested across the pilot sites during 2022. This is part of the development of a monitoring system which is a vital component of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process and to inform the LCSP model into the future.

Stories of change were gathered, on a trial basis. The purpose of these stories is to offer deeper insight into the work and progress of the partnerships. The evaluation team will continue to work

with and support the pilot sites to gather data through these methods at the endpoint of the evaluation process. The intention is to inform the monitoring system for roll-out of the LCSP.

The data that informs this Interim Report was collected between July 2022 and November 2022. It was initially planned that the main window for mid-point data collection would be June through to September 2022. However, as the planning and scheduling of the pilot and data collection progressed, it became clear that the summer period was too tight, and the timeline was extended to facilitate each LCSP site to contribute to the evaluation at mid-point.

The final data collection time point for the evaluation is planned for May - June 2023, coinciding with the endpoint of the LCSP pilot initiative.

## 2.3. Ethical Considerations

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The evaluation design and all instruments, consent forms, and information materials were approved by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences ethics committee at the University of Limerick. Participation in the evaluation is by informed consent. All participants are provided with an information leaflet, research privacy notice, and consent form. Confidentiality is safeguarded using anonymisation techniques, password-protected data storage and encryption.

## 2.4. Response Rates

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Table 3 sets out the response rates for each of the component parts of the methodology. This includes the stakeholder interviews, focus groups, LCSP members survey, document analysis and observations.

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Table 3: Midpoint data collection and responses

	Pilot-Sites			Total
	Pilot A	Pilot B	Pilot C	
<b>Consent Forms (LCSP Members)</b>				53
<b>Interviews</b>				
<b>LCSP Stakeholders</b>	4	6	4	14
LCSP Chairpersons	1	1	1	3
LCSP Coordinators	1	2	1	4
LCSP Local Authority Representatives	1	1	1	3
LCSP An Garda Síochána Representatives	1	1	1	3
LCSP Researcher	-	1	-	1
<b>National &amp; International Stakeholders</b>		8		8
Republic of Ireland		2		2
Northern Ireland		3		3
Scotland		1		1
USA		1		1
<b>Focus Groups</b>				
LCSP Members	9 (1)	9 (3)	9 (2)	27 (6)
<b>Surveys</b>				
LCSP Members Survey	11	11	9	31
Community 'Voice'	-	10	7	17
<b>Observations</b>				
LCSP Public Engagement Event	-	2	-	2
LCSP Meetings	2	1	2	5
LCSP Office & Coordinator at work	1	-	-	1
<b>Documents</b>				
LCSP Documents	32	27	21	80
<b>Activity Tracker</b>				
Quantitative Indicators	0 (6)	0 (6)	2 (6)	2 (18)
Qualitative Indicators (Stories of Change)	-	2	4	6

**Consent Forms:** Total consent forms is for LCSP members only (including Chairpersons). Excludes LCSP staff (e.g., Coordinators).

**Focus Groups:** Figures outside brackets are the number of focus group participants. Numbers in brackets are the number of focus groups.

**Surveys:** Community 'Voice' was not carried out in Longford at midpoint as there is no Community Based Researcher currently in Longford.

**Activity Tracker:** Figures for quantitative data refer to how many indicators the evaluation team have up-to-date data for (up to 09/12/2022). Figures inside brackets refer to the total number of indicators. Figures outside brackets refer to the number of indicators for which there is up-to-date data. The quantitative data includes attendance at LCSP meetings, participation in training events, participation in design and delivery of community safety interventions and community safety interventions delivered.



## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Introduction

#### Points of note

This section sets out the findings arising from the triangulated analysis of all data gathered across the LCSP pilot sites between July and November 2022. This includes the LCSP members survey, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, observations, community voice, and document analysis.

Points to note at this interim stage.

**Firstly**, the data was gathered at a point in time when the pilot sites were in an intense phase of experiencing the reality of partnership work. Each site had moved beyond set-up stage and was in the process of building the partnership and preparing its community safety plan. This is reflected in the findings of this Interim Report.

**Secondly**, the triangulated analysis shows the strong, recurring, and consistent themes emerging from the pilot. It also highlights some variation in what the data is saying at this point. These are among the areas that warrant further exploration at end-point data gathering. This will be reflected in the Final Evaluation Report.

**Thirdly**, this analysis is situated pragmatically alongside the seven enablers known to facilitate effective partnership working. These enablers include conducive context, vision, resourcing, data sharing, solution and evidence focus, structures and processes, relationships and communication, capacity, and experience. They are the characteristics and conditions that facilitate effective community safety partnerships to be created and sustained (Berry et al., 2011; Morgan et al., 2012; Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012).

The seven enablers are set out in Table 4 below and serve as a checklist to assess and ascertain both the extent to which favourable conditions exist and the work required for partnership to work. These enablers have informed the theory of change and are being tracked through the evaluation over the lifecycle of the LCSP pilot. There are further details of this in the Baseline Report (CES/UL Evaluation Team, 2022).

Table 4: Enablers of effective community safety partnership

Enablers of effective community safety partnership	
1. Context	A supportive start-up environment with adequate funding, resources, and a history of collaborative partnerships
	Similar organisational perspectives, objectives, performance indicators and cultures among partners
2. Vision, Leadership and Champions	Clear vision, mission, and aims that unify and are agreed upon by all participating stakeholders
	Full integration of project aims into the overall aims of partner organisations
	Good leadership and strategic direction, with leaders at senior levels focused on getting buy-in and improving coordination, and local level champions advocating for the partnership

	Leader(s) that are respected by the other partners, can champion the goals of the partnership, stimulate problem-solving, resolve conflicts, and maintain group cohesiveness
3. Resourcing and Data-Sharing	Adequate resourcing, including ensuring representatives have enough time away from their core work to provide input to the partnership
	Capacity of agency representatives to commit resources
	Data sharing policies and protocols, and regular exchange of relevant information
4. Problem, Solution and Evidence-Focus	Clarity regarding the problem(s) being tackled through focused analysis
	Having targeted interventions in relevant areas
	Including researchers within the partnership and being committed to evidence-informed practice and solutions
	Continual evaluation to review and inform activities of partnership
5. Relations and Communications	Regular face-to-face contact and good communication between partners
	Partners who work well together, respect and trust one another, and are committed to ensuring the partnership succeeds
	Co-location of agencies, partners, and staff
	Presence of partners at local level
6. Structures and Processes	Division between strategic management and the management of operational and implementation issues, with clear lines of communication and accountability supported by monitoring and accountability mechanisms
	Partnership structures that are relatively small, flexible, solution-focused, and have a clear process for making decisions
	Documentation of processes and decision making
	Involvement of most appropriate agencies and continuity in partner representation and participation
	A formalised structure, including a steering committee, with appropriate community representation, that can develop strategies, make decisions, and leverage resources for implementation, and working groups that can fully execute plans and strategies
	Shared understanding of one another's roles, responsibilities, and motivation for being involved in the partnership
7. Experience and Capacity-Building	Prior experience in working together in partnership (i.e., established relationships)
	Careful selection of appropriate partners
	Secondment of skilled staff into partnership
	Access to joint training for partners and technical assistance to build competency at the individual, organisational, programmatic, and relational levels.

**Fourthly**, to ensure the findings are anonymised, the names of the three pilot sites are not used. Instead, letters are assigned to the pilot sites (e.g., 'pilot X, pilot Y and pilot Z'). The letters assigned change in different parts of the report to honour the anonymity of the pilots (e.g., in some areas, 'pilots A, B, C' is used, in other areas 'pilots X, Y, Z', and different letters are used in other parts of the report).

**Fifthly**, elected representatives are a major stakeholder group within the membership of LCSPs and yet they are under-represented in the data to date. This is due to less than expected engagement with the evaluation. Greater engagement on the part of elected representatives will be sought during the end phase of the evaluation.

## How the findings are organised

The findings are organised and discussed under the following themes:

- Theme 1 -- Setting the scene
- Theme 2 -- Partnership-working in practice 1: Goals, roles and structures
- Theme 3 -- Partnership-working in practice 2: Engaging, relating and working together
- Theme 4 -- Partnership-working in practice 3: Supporting and resourcing LCSPs
- Theme 5 -- Community engagement and community safety
- Theme 6 -- Perceptions of outcomes and impact at the midpoint phase
- Theme 7 -- Suggestions made by participants for improving LCSPs.

The results include a selection of anonymised quotes from those who participated in the evaluation. The purpose of the quotes is to include the voice of participants to bolster the findings under each theme.

### 3.2. Theme 1 - Setting the scene

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This theme sets the scene for the rest of the Findings chapter by providing the reader with brief overviews of the context and implementation progress across the three pilot sites.

The theme is split into two sub-themes:

- Overview of key contextual factors influencing LCSPs
- Overview of the implementation progress across the three pilot sites.

### Overview of the contextual factors influencing LCSPs

Eight contextual factors appeared to be particularly important, between the baseline and midpoint evaluation points, in influencing how the partnerships worked and were experienced by participants. These contextual factors were present to varying degrees across the three pilots. They are described briefly below to give the reader an overview of the implementation context. They are returned to in more detail throughout this report.

In no particular order, these factors were:

- (1) The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and public health restrictions
- (2) The legacy and experiences of previous JPC structures
- (3) The growing number of partnership structures, some of which overlap
- (4) The absence of a clear statutory obligation compelling engagement by state agencies
- (5) The resourcing of organisations and capacity of LCSP members
- (6) The unique history, culture, demography and geography of each pilot site
- (7) The role and influence of news media
- (8) High-level political and government support and coordination.

The progress and early implementation challenges reported at baseline took place within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and significant public health restrictions, which were in place until at least mid-January 2022 (Mathieu et al., 2022). The impact of Covid-19 continued to be felt for many months after the Baseline period and was described as a major barrier to progress in some pilots, impacting especially their ability and desire to meet in-person and build relationships.

JPCs were stood down in each of the three pilot sites when the implementation of LCSPs began<sup>2</sup>. The composition and balance of representation on JPCs differed from LCSPs. This, combined with positive or negative perceptions of how well the previous JPC worked, appears to be influencing the initial level of buy-in to LCSPs and the dynamics between different members.

LCSPs are also operating in a busy partnership landscape whereby several other pre-existing partnership-structures are working to address community issues (e.g., LCDCs, CYPSCs, DATFs).<sup>3</sup> This creates the potential for duplication, and competition for resources and members' time.

“We have a couple of other similar initiatives [operating in the local area]. I just think they need to... coordinate better up at central [national-level] because there are lots of similar things being funded but they're not coordinated well” [T2, int-796].

For the pilot phase of LCSPs, there is no legislative requirement for state agencies to engage with LCSPs. When combined with the limited time and resources many members report, these factors can have a significant impact on the capacity and motivation for members, both their own and others, to fully commit to, and engage with, LCSPs.

While the absence of legislation impacts all three pilot sites, each area is ultimately unique with -- for example -- different population diversities and densities; types and intensities of community safety issues; geographical sizes; and collaborative histories between organisations. All these features can influence how a partnership works.

“I think that history that we have of the work that's been done here in [pilot site] over time, it's amazing that there is a small amount of people that have stayed in the forefront of trying to push the issue of safety in [pilot site] and I think that that background work has really enabled us to be able to take this new initiative and push it on as quickly as we have” [T2, fg-868].

In some pilot sites, local news media are seen as playing a particularly influential role in the shaping of public perceptions about LCSPs and community safety and as a potential accountability mechanism for partnerships. Similarly, demonstrations of high-level political and governmental support and a whole-of-government approach can also shape the perceptions of local stakeholders in ways that encourage local-level commitment.

## Overview of the implementation progress across the three pilot sites

### Implementation timings, progress and patterns vary across the three pilot sites.

In the baseline report, it was reported that by the end of the baseline data collection period (early March 2022), all three LCSP pilots had:

- Appointed Chairs and Coordinators
- Held LCSP member meetings and public engagement events

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<sup>2</sup> The JPC model continues to be operational in areas of Dublin not covered under the Dublin North Inner-City LCSP Pilot.

<sup>3</sup> Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs). Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs), Drug and Alcohol Task Forces (DATFs).

- Set up sub-groups (e.g., steering groups and/or working groups) to progress various activities
- Held workshops with members to build a shared understanding of their purpose and goals.

In addition, some of the early implementation challenges reported at baseline included:

- Delays in setting up two of the pilot sites
- Some early turnovers in LCSP staff or members
- The time and energy required to recruit a full, diverse and representative membership.

By the end of midpoint data collection (early November 2022), after roughly 12-18 months of LCSP implementation, the pace and patterns of progress varied across the three pilot sites, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Timing, progress, and patterns of LCSP features and milestones**

Milestones	Pilot D		Pilot E		Pilot F	
	Baseline	Midpoint	Baseline	Midpoint	Baseline	Midpoint
<b>Inputs</b>						
Chairperson recruited	✓		✓		✓	
Turnover of Chairperson						
Coordinator recruited	✓✓		✓	✓	✓	
Turnover of Coordinator	✓			✓		
30-person membership reached			✓		✓	
51% community representation reached			✓	✓	✓	
LCSP office opens	✓			✓	✓	
<b>Outputs</b>						
LCSP Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• First in-person/hybrid meeting	✓			✓	✓	
Sub-Groups in operation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Steering Group			✓	✓	✓	✓
• Working Groups	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Community engagement begins	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Large-scale public consultation conducted to inform the community safety plan				✓		✓
Community safety plan published						✓
Community safety interventions delivered	✓	✓		✓		✓
• Community safety innovation funding awarded		✓		✓		✓

**Notes:** ‘Baseline’ refers to milestones reached by early March 2022. ‘Midpoint’ refers to milestones reached by early November 2022. The list of milestones has been selected by the evaluation team and may not necessarily align with what the pilot sites perceive for themselves to be milestones. For some milestones, the available data was incomplete at the time of analysis.

Table 5 demonstrates the continued progress in implementation across the three pilot sites. It also demonstrates variation in the timing of implementation between the three pilot sites for most milestones. For example, by the end of midpoint, one partnership had published its community safety plan, while the others were working towards their plan. Similarly, two partnerships had completed large-scale public consultations to inform their community safety plan, while the other was working towards this. One partnership started delivering community safety interventions during the baseline phase, while the others started delivering closer to midpoint.

The variation in the timings of implementation is important because the speed and order in which milestones are reached appear to influence buy-in to LCSPs.

## Implementation speed and sequencing can influence buy-in

The speed at which key milestones are achieved can affect members perceptions of progress and momentum of their partnership, which in turn appears to influence their level of buy-in and satisfaction over time. The quicker milestones are achieved, the greater the perception of progress, the more members buy-in to LCSPs. The opposite, however, can also be true.

“It [drafting of a community safety plan] has given people a sense that we’re moving forward” [T2, int-301].

On the other hand, there was caution that some participants could become lost or disorientated if their LCSP moves too quickly and they are unable to familiarise themselves with the purpose, processes or content of discussion in LCSPs. Balancing these considerations can be a challenge for partnerships.

“One of the other things that I'd say was a bit of a challenge was trying to find the balance between being action and delivery focused and allowing enough time for people to get used to the process... there are some people on the committee feeling we're only a talking shop and we're not making the progress we should and there are other people on the committee saying “you're moving too fast”. So it's really hard to find the right balance there” [T2, int-301].

A common perception amongst participants in some pilots was that “the whole process was moving way too slow, you know, we weren't driving things on fast enough”.

However, as well as speed, the sequencing of implementation appears to have important implications for perceptions of progress and momentum. Figure 1 shows the pace and sequence of implementation in the pilot sites.

**Figure 1: Pace and sequencing of selected LCSP milestones**

Pilot G	Pilot H	Pilot I
Community engagement starts	Community engagement starts	LCSP meetings
↓	↓	↓
LCSP meetings held	LCSP meetings held	Community engagement starts
↓	↓	↓
Working groups established	Steering group established	Steering group established
↓	↓	↓
Community safety interventions	Large-scale public consultation (conducted)	Working groups established
↓	↓	↓
Large-scale public consultations (planned)	Community safety interventions	Large-scale public consultation (conducted)
↓	↓	↓
Community safety plan (in progress)	Working groups established	Community safety interventions
	↓	↓
	Community safety plan (in progress)	Community safety plan (published)
<b>Roughly 2 years</b>	<b>Roughly 18-21 months</b>	<b>Roughly 12-15 months</b>

*Notes: Although each milestone above is presented as separate and distinct, in practice, their implementation often overlaps.*

As a key objective for LCSPs, it is perhaps unsurprising that producing a community safety plan relatively quickly can contribute to feelings of progress and momentum. However, collaboratively producing a high-quality plan with an extensive public consultation process was also described as a time-consuming process which can take anywhere from 12 months to 2 years. During this

time, there is potential for participants buy-in and interest to wane as there was a caution from many participants that success depends on action.

“because we don’t have a plan [from the beginning] it has felt like a really dragged-out process of trying to make a plan but not making a plan and talking about plans that don’t exist... It’s just a lot of bureaucracy... and we haven’t even had the opportunity to really discuss community issues at the table, like the solution to them, in a real in-depth way” [T2, fg-251].

The findings indicate that -- before or during the development of a community safety plan -- establishing working groups to tackle an interim set of community safety priorities collaboratively identified by members, plus opportunities for meaningful problem-solving and feeling a sense of progress, can help improve and/or maintain members buy-in and interest.

“I think that progress is slow and with such a large range of participants I wonder if the focus is sometimes lost or displaced. Should more sub-groups have been set up earlier in the process perhaps?” [T2, sur-654].

### 3.3. Theme 2 - Partnership-Working in Practice 1: Goals, roles, and structures

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This is the first of three themes on ‘Partnership-Working in Practice’. These themes are intended to give the reader a feel for what partnership-working is like in practice and the realities of bringing together large diverse groups of people into an LCSP.

‘Partnership-Working in Practice 1’ focuses on the ‘goals, roles and structures’ of LCSPs, and how participants experience and understand these.

The theme is split into two sub-themes:

- LCSP goals and the need for community safety partnerships
- LCSP roles and structures.

#### LCSP goals and the need for community safety partnerships: Understanding of the LCSP aims improve, and yet remains a challenge

The survey of LCSP members asked respondents -- at both baseline and midpoint -- to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that there is a need for LCSPs to improve community safety in their area. Similar to baseline, there was unanimous agreement that there is a need for LCSPs to improve community safety. 100% of respondents at midpoint either ‘*agreed*’ or ‘*strongly agreed*’ that LCSPs are needed, up from 97% at baseline.

The aims and objectives of LCSPs are laid out in the Department of Justice’s *Community Safety Policy Paper* (Department of Justice, 2021b) and in the *Terms of Reference* of each LCSP (see Box 1). Nevertheless, ‘community safety’ is seen as a broad concept that is open to interpretation and challenging to define precisely. At baseline, this appeared to contribute to variation in how the aims, principles and concepts underpinning LCSPs were understood. This was despite each of the LCSPs holding a workshop with their respective members early on to develop a shared vision, mission, and objectives.

**Box 1: Principles, aims and objectives of the LCSPs**

Collectively, the *Community Safety Policy Paper* and *Terms of Reference* of each LCSP state that the aim of LCSP sites is “to develop proper strategic partnership approaches to a range of local issues” (terms of reference, pg.1) and: “to foster sustained community involvement in identifying needs and co-designing solutions, and sustained commitment from services in working together to address those needs” (Department of Justice, 2021, p. 6).

Building on this, the objectives that the LCSPs are working towards are to:

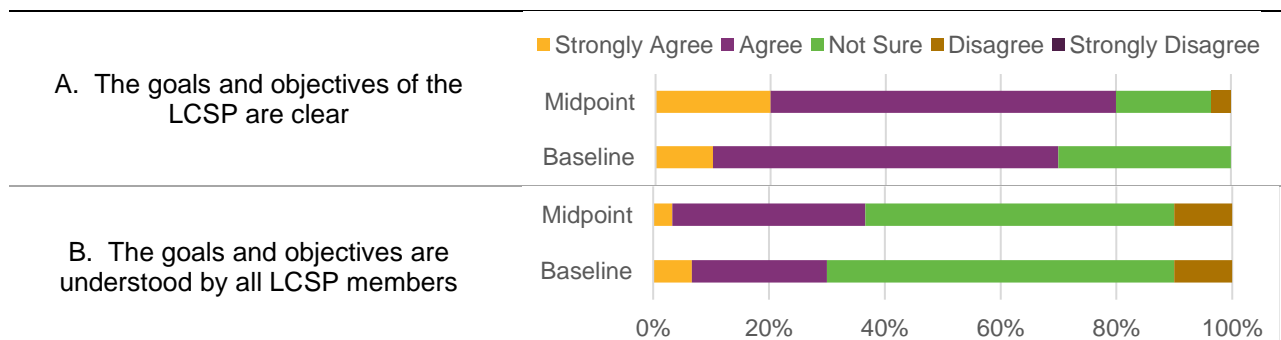
- Prioritise issues identified by the community as community safety concerns.
- Improve multi-agency collaboration in the pilot area.
- Increase community confidence in service providers.
- Identify elements to improve the delivery of a national programme on community safety.

Underpinning the aims and objectives of the LCSPs is an understanding that “the concept of community safety is about people being safe and feeling safe in their own community” (Department of Justice, 2021, p. 3) and the principle that community safety is not the responsibility of the police alone.

The data suggests that, over time, understanding of what the LCSPs are working to achieve improved slightly amongst members. For instance, in the survey of LCSP members, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed that:

- A. The goals and objectives of the LCSP are clear
- B. The goals and objectives are understood by all LCSP members.

**Figure 2: Perceptions of the LCSP goals and objectives amongst LCSP members**



The findings at baseline and midpoint are largely similar, although small increases in the proportion of respondents that ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ can be seen for both items (70% at baseline vs. 80% at midpoint for item A; 30% at baseline vs 36% at midpoint for item B).

Overall, the results from Figure 2 suggest that most respondents believe themselves to understand the LCSP goals and objectives, and yet are unsure if their colleagues understand them. Data from interviews and focus groups lend some additional support to these results.

“There may be a little bit of work that might need to be done about clarifying what do we mean by ‘crime’, which crimes are we talking about in relation to this safety partnership... I still think that everybody in the room of this group maybe has different views of what safety we're talking about” [T2, fg-868].

When the survey results for whether ‘the goals and objectives are understood by all LCSP members’ are broken down by pilot site, differences emerge (see Appendix C, item 2.3.). In pilot sites X and Z, for instance, participants either ‘agreed’ with or were ‘not sure’ about the statement, but none ‘disagreed’. In pilot Y, the results are almost equal for each option, with 30%



'agreeing', 40% 'unsure' and 30% 'disagreeing'.<sup>4</sup> Open-text responses shed additional light on this, with several respondents from pilot Y believing the role of the community in LCSPs is not understood or respected by all:

"Some [members]... make it very well known to community reps that they don't believe community reps should have such a role in safety partnership... [they] have [their] own agenda re: how [they] perceive what safety is... and is not listening to community reps around holistic approaches to safety as per the mandate of the pilot" [T2, sur-654].

Interview and focus group participants noted challenges that may be indicative of differences in understanding of LCSP aims and objectives. These include continued variation in understandings of community safety and perceptions of an overemphasis on policing responses to community safety issues.

"When I initially started attending the [LCSP] meetings I could see that there was maybe a cohort of people that were used to sort of one way of dealing with community issues, that was quite kind of garda focused... and it took quite a while I think for that sort of shift to start taking place" [T2, fg-084].

Participants identified barriers and enablers to generating a shared understanding of goals and objectives amongst LCSP members. Enablers included establishing boundaries, setting up thematic sub-groups and developing the community safety plan:

- "Establishing the boundaries around what we can and can't do". To this extent:
  - The establishment of sub-groups for particular community safety issues or themes collaboratively identified and agreed upon by members was considered helpful for putting boundaries on where LCSPs could focus their early efforts.
  - The development of a community safety plan was considered helpful in clearly defining -- at a more local level -- the goals, objectives, areas of work, and specific actions to be taken by members, including the boundaries of the work.

On the other hand, barriers included challenges in generating a shared understanding of community safety and under-investing time and resources into developing a shared understanding amongst members:

"we're still trying to define what community safety is -- being safe? It's very vague, means different things to different people" [T2, int-796].

The LCSP members survey also asked respondents to what extent they agreed that:

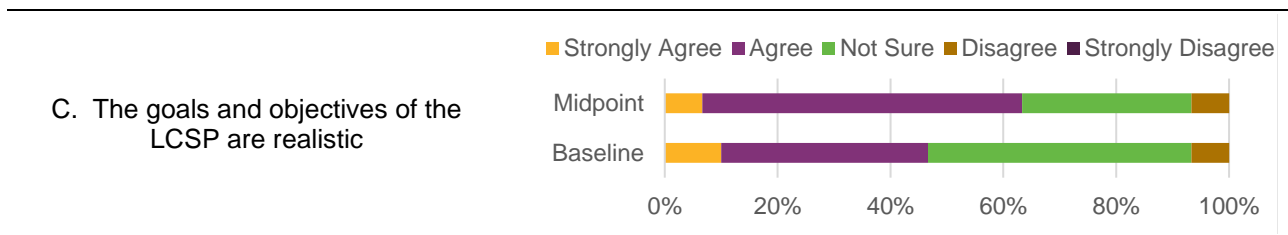
- C. The goals and objectives of the LCSP are realistic.

At midpoint, there was a significant shift in responses to this item, with 64% of respondents 'agreeing' with the statement compared to 47% of respondents at baseline. This suggests growing confidence amongst LCSP members that their goals and objectives can be achieved.

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<sup>4</sup> From this point on, when discussing survey results, the percentage of respondents who 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with a statement are combined and simply referred to as 'agree', unless otherwise stated (e.g., if 10% of respondents 'agree' and another 10% 'strongly agree' this will be described as 20% of respondents 'agree'). This approach is also used for the percentage of respondents who 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with a statement.

Figure 3: Perceptions of the feasibility of LCSP goals and objectives amongst LCSP members



However, when broken down by pilot site, differences emerge between the pilots (see Appendix C, item 2.4.). In pilot Z, for instance, 100% of respondents *agreed* that the goals and objectives were realistic. This compares with 44% and 40% *agreement* in pilots X and Y, respectively. It is difficult to definitively explain such a large difference from the data available at this point in the lifecycle of the pilot. When these results are considered within the context of all the data gathered so far, the differences could reflect more general perceptions amongst LCSP members of the progress and health of their respective partnerships -- the more progress and better functioning respondents believe their partnership to be, the more realistic the goals and objectives appear.

The main barriers and enablers identified by participants to members perceiving LCSP goals and objectives as realistic, revolved around the idea of “managing expectations”. This means that members “don’t go away with the thought that the community safety partnership is going to be able to address all the issues and challenges” and understand that “this is a more holistic approach that will take time to deliver”.

## LCSP roles and structures: A source of tensions and trade-off’s

This sub-theme considers:

- The structure of LCSPs
- The roles and representativeness of LCSP members
- The role of LCSP Coordinators
- The roles of Independent Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons on the LCSPs
- Leaders and leadership on the LCSPs.

### The structures of LCSPs

LCSPs are intended to have a core structure, as set out in the *Community Safety Policy Paper* (Department of Justice, 2021b). Namely, 30 voluntary members supported by a paid, full-time Community Safety Coordinator. The 30 voluntary members include an Independent Chairperson. The remaining 29 members should comprise a wide range of community and public service representatives, with at least 51% community representation. If considered appropriate, the LCSPs can also establish sub-groups.

In practice, based on the most recent membership data available to the evaluation team, recruiting and maintaining a membership of 30 voluntary representatives -- of whom 51% are community representatives -- can be a challenge. As shown in Table 6, all three pilots have close to 30 members, and yet turnover of members and barriers to recruitment remained an issue for

the pilots at midpoint.<sup>5</sup> This can have implications for achieving 51% community representation, with Table 6 suggesting community representatives outweighed public service representatives in only one pilot at midpoint.

The majority of participants believed the 30-person membership was a large group size. The pros and cons that come with such a large group meant many participants were conflicted about whether its size was appropriate. Most believed a 30-person membership was too big to realistically enable the partnerships to be managed and function effectively. At the same time, participants recognised the benefits of a large group with diverse representation and could even identify gaps in the representation of their partnership that would require it to expand.

“Paradoxically, even though there's 30 people there, there are whole swathes of society that aren't represented at the moment in the process, in the dialogue, on a continuing basis. I'm concerned about that but pushing the membership beyond the 30 figure, that's problematic too, so this is not easily solved” [T2, int-296].

Table 6: LCSP membership in each pilot site

Members	Pilot A	Pilot B	Pilot C
<b>Independent Chairperson</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Community Members</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>
Local Resident Reps	0	4	4
Youth Reps	2	1	1
Older Persons Reps	1	0	1
New/Minority Communities	4	0	1
Business	0	2	1
Education	2	2	2
Community Reps Involved in Community/Social Projects	2	1	2
Voluntary Sector	0	2	2
Other Community Members	3	0	0
<b>Public Service/Statutory Members</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
Political Reps (Local Councilors)	7	6	5
An Garda Síochána	1	1	2
Local Authority	1	1	1
HSE	1	1	1
Tusla	1	1	1
Local/Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce	1	0	1
Other Public Service/Statutory Members	2	2	1
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>

**Note:** These figures are accurate as of June 2022 in Pilot A; October 2022 in Pilot B; and August 2022 in Pilot C. Some members may represent more than one group (e.g., local residents and new/minority communities). These members are counted only once to avoid double counting the number of members.

Together, these contrasting viewpoints indicate the first of several tensions and trade-offs in the design and functioning of LCSPs.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The selection and recruitment of members, including barriers and enablers, are discussed at length in the baseline report (CES/UL Evaluation Team, 2022, pp. 42–46), and so are discussed only briefly in this interim report.

<sup>6</sup> Where a tension and trade-off is highlighted, this indicates a feature in the design or operation of LCSPs where there are tensions between different goals or in the practical realities of operating a

### **Tension & Trade-Off 1:**

#### *Broad representation and inclusivity Vs. Partnership efficiency*

There is a tension between the desire for broad and inclusive representation on the one hand, and a partnership that is nimble enough to take quick decisions and actions and allow sufficient opportunity for all members to meaningfully contribute to discussions.

As well as the size of the membership, participants identified pros and cons in the balance and composition of the membership. When compared with Joint Policing Committees (JPCs), the more diverse membership of LCSPs were perceived to facilitate a greater focus on collective responsibility; more holistic, collaborative ways of working; and a broader range of experience, skills and resources to draw from.

“the JPC was really focused on “Listen, what are the guards doing? What are the issues in the community in terms of our interaction with the guards?”. It was very focused, very tunnelled to policing. Whereas the community safety partnership is “Ok, the guards have a role to play, the community has a role to play, the organisations in the community groups have a role to play, the state agencies have a role to play”, because safety is our collective responsibility” [T2, fg-206].

Moreover, the 51% community representation of LCSPs is intended to provide the community with majority decision-making power, thus ensuring LCSPs are genuinely community-led. While virtually all participants agreed with the concepts of ‘community participation’ and a ‘community-led’ partnership, there were some conflicting views about the balance of the membership and the requirement for 51% community representation.

JPCs -- the forerunner to LCSPs -- can be similar in size but differ in their composition to LCSPs (See Box 2). For instance, JPCs are recommended to have 25% community representation and 45-55% political representation (depending on whether ‘Members of the Oireachtas’ are included). In LCSPs, these proportions are reversed, and locally elected representatives now account for less than 25% of the membership in LCSPs.<sup>7</sup>

In interviews and focus groups, participants indicated that this attempt to redistribute power may have “undermined the commitment of [some of] the elected representatives” who perceived it as an “erosion” of their role, especially if their JPC had been functioning well. This appears in some pilot sites to have contributed to “friction” or “a frosty dynamic” between locally elected representatives and community representatives.

“I didn't envisage how much of an effect the undermining of the councillors -- and maybe undermine is wrong word but maybe the trial of reducing the councillors so drastically from 15 down to 6 or 7 we have at the moment -- would have such a

#### **Box 2: Recommended size and composition of JPC membership**

According to the most recent *Guidelines for Joint Policing Committees* (Policing Authority, 2022, pg. 12), “each JPC should have 25-35 members depending on the size of the local authority area it is representing. The membership breakdown should roughly reflect the percentage breakdown outlined below:

- Local Authority officials (10%)
- Gardaí Síochána representatives (10%)
- Local elected representatives (45%)
- Community representatives (25%)
- Members of the Oireachtas (10%)”.

partnership. At this point there are no clear and obvious solutions to these tensions because each solution involves trade-offs. This means that resolving one aspect of a tension almost inevitably creates, or worsens, another aspect of the tension. The preferred solution will most likely depend on which aspect of the tension the relevant stakeholders consider to be more important.

<sup>7</sup> All three pilot sites have space for 7 locally elected representatives out of a membership of 30. This is equivalent to 23% of the membership.

drastic impact and the [community representatives] being given that huge increased role onto it, that would create so much potential friction” [T2, int-176].

As well as the redistribution of power, it was suggested that “cross overs between the day-to-day business of the Councillors and the areas of involvement that the Partnership is looking at” could also be contributing to perceptions amongst Local Councillors of an “undermining of their role locally”, with implications for their engagement with and participation in LCSPs.

“It will be an ongoing piece of work to see how best the [Local Councillors] and their local area reps will settle into an effective role in the Partnership so that they don’t see it as something that has the capacity to undermine their role locally and the relationship they have built with residents and others” [T2, int-191].

When asked what their preferred membership composition would be, participant responses ranged from returning the proportion of elected representatives to that of JPCs, to having an equal balance between elected representatives and community representatives, to reclassifying elected representatives as community representatives, to potentially having no elected representatives on the LCSPs at all. Arguments for increasing the proportion of elected representatives typically centred around elected representatives having “a mandate, they’re elected by the people”. Arguments against tended to focus on wanting more direct representation from local residents.

“a challenge... with things like community safety partnerships or JPC’s or structures like that, or the community and voluntary sector, is they often leave the actual residents behind. So, everyone talks about what’s best for people but they’re actually not the people, they’re talking for the people. So, people in the voluntary sector they’re talking on behalf of people, politicians speak on behalf of people... when in actual fact the biggest challenge is how do you actually get people who live in the area to get involved? How do you encourage them to do it in a non-tokenistic way” [T2, int-947].

These contrasting viewpoints indicate the second tension and trade-off in the design and functioning of LCSPs.

#### **Tension & Trade-Off 2:**

*Strengthened role of nominated community representatives  
Vs. reduced role of elected public representatives*

There is a tension between reducing the proportion of elected public representatives on LCSPs compared to JPCs -- as it may be perceived as an “erosion” of their role, thus reducing their buy-in and engagement -- and strengthening the role of nominated community representatives to redistribute power to the community and improve opportunities for more direct, “non-tokenistic” representation from local residents.

Changing the size of membership could help to resolve this situation and yet possibly at the expense of *Tension and Trade-Off 1*.

Outside the tension described above, others suggested there may be an argument for adjusting the proportion of community representatives over the lifetime of an LCSP as it moves more from action planning to action delivery. This is based on the belief that public services are likely to be delivering most actions.

“the structure for the community safety partnership has been set up at the moment is based upon the LCDG model, certain percentage public and a certain percentage private. So you then have to ask “well when it comes to the implementation phase is that still the right model?” because ultimately at the end of the day it’ll be the public agencies... [that] will have to deliver a lot of the actions rather than the private, as in the community reps” [T2, int-013].

Beyond an LCSP's size and composition, the presence of local media at LCSP meetings can be an important contextual factor in some areas, though their attendance at meetings varies considerably across the pilots. It was noted that access to local media can be valued by some stakeholders (such as elected representatives) as a way of communicating their work and views to the local public, but also as a mechanism for holding other stakeholders to account. Some participants also believed local media can, for better or worse, be highly influential in shaping local public perceptions of an LCSP or community safety.

“local media is very important here... They [Department of Justice] are probably not appreciative [of] how impactful they are but they record meetings, they record what goes on and sometimes I'd read accounts of things that have happened at a meeting... and it sounds like we were killing one another, and it makes for great reading or great radio... it's like the local drama” [T2, int-586].

The *Terms of Reference* for each pilot site make provision for LCSPs to appoint sub-groups “for any specific purpose”. All LCSPs began establishing sub-groups (in the form of steering groups, working groups or both) by the end of baseline, well before the publication of a community safety plan.

The sub-groups are considerably smaller in size, usually 14 members or less, though their composition tends to be more flexible as stakeholders outside the partnership have been recruited to some sub-groups. At times, these “didn't really work out the way we had hoped” if “it was very difficult to get [sub-group] meetings going” or if there was “resistance to people joining”, meaning some sub-groups had to be paused or adapted. Nevertheless, evaluation participants generally perceived the establishment of sub-groups, particularly working groups, as an important step in the development of LCSPs. The working groups help generate a sense of progress and momentum in the LCSPs amongst members, as it is here that much of the practical work of the partnerships is expected to happen.

“I think the high point was getting the working groups up and running... being at those meetings and people seeing that this is where the work begins to happen” [T2, int-176].

Communication and reporting mechanisms from sub-groups to the full LCSP partnerships appeared to be largely informal, or still to be clarified in some pilots. Meeting minutes for sub-groups were being recorded in some areas, though it was not clear from the data available if these are recorded for all sub-group meetings in all pilots. Where evidence of communication and reporting mechanisms were observed, verbal updates from sub-group members during full partnership meetings appeared to be the main mechanism, although this may need to be verified at the final phase of the evaluation.

## The role and representativeness of members on the LCSPs

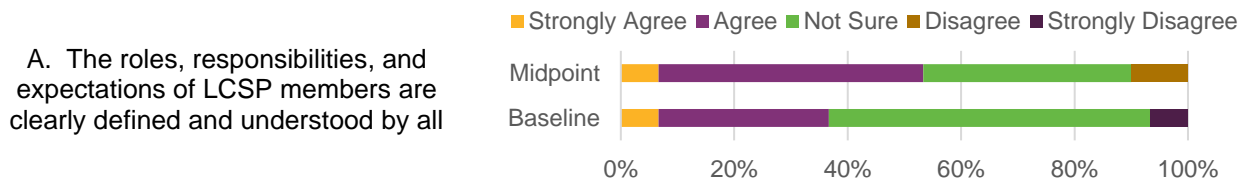
At baseline and midpoint, the survey of LCSP members asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

- A. The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of LCSP members are clearly defined and understood by all.

The survey results indicate an improved understanding of LCSP member roles, responsibilities, and expectations, with 54% ‘agreeing’ at midpoint that they were clearly defined and understood by all, compared to 37% ‘agreeing’ at baseline. While a considerable improvement, the results also suggest that almost half of the respondents (46%) were still ‘not sure’ or ‘disagreed’ at midpoint that the roles are clearly defined and understood by all.

There was considerable variation in the results across the three pilot sites at midpoint. For example, two-thirds of respondents (67%) in pilot X ‘agreed’ with the statement, with the remainder (33%) responding ‘not sure’. This compares with pilot Y, which had an almost even split in those who ‘agreed’ (40%), were ‘not sure’ (30%), and ‘disagreed’ (30%) that the roles of LCSP members are clearly defined and understood by all.

**Figure 4: Perceptions of the definition and understanding of LCSP member roles, responsibilities and expectations**



Interview and focus group data suggest that part of the challenge for some members may lie in still getting to grips with the roles of others on the LCSP (e.g., whom they represent, what their role is outside of LCSPs, what they can bring to the LCSPs.), as well as understanding their own role.

“I always feel that I don't know what everyone else roles and responsibilities [are], we were never introduced as “ok you're here, your name is, you're representing [stakeholder group]”. I never know what everyone's roles and responsibilities are which I do see as a huge downfall of the whole thing” [T2, fg-903].

Overall, the survey results suggest that role clarity and understanding amongst LCSP members are improving. However, further time and work may be required for a significant cohort of members, across the three pilot sites, to improve the clarity and understanding of both their own role and the roles of others.

Data from interviews and focus groups shed some light on barriers to role clarity and understanding. The barriers identified by participants include:

- The use of virtual meetings, especially in the formative stages of the partnerships, reduced opportunities for members to socially interact and learn about one another.
- Not introducing members by their names and who they represent at the beginning of meetings.
- Absence of a job description, clear guidelines and national-to-local communication that explains to individuals and organisations on the LCSPs their role, responsibilities and expectations.
- That agencies identify an appropriate, relevant individual or role to represent them on the LCSP.

On the other hand, enablers to role clarity and understanding include members knowing and expecting that it may take time to fully understand their role. This includes willingness to commit and persevere if they initially feel confused or lack knowledge and confidence in the role.

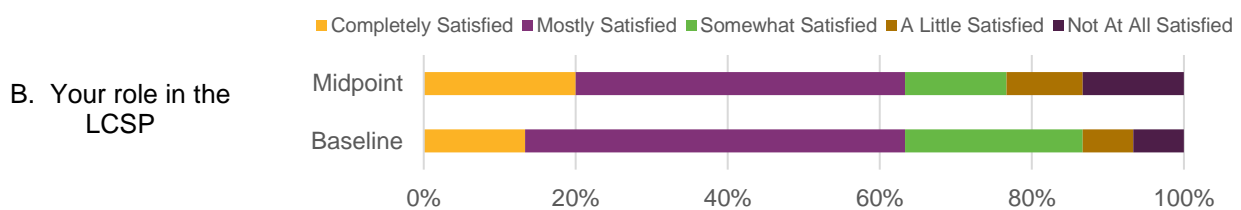
“When it started first, I felt “what do I have to give? What am I doing here?” and [the] more people talked about problems [the] more I said “God I don't know where I am”, you know, that was very challenging, the lack of knowledge really of what was involved... You need to give it a lot of time so I appreciate that now but I made the commitment, so I said “OK I'll stay with it”” [T2, fg-206].

Beyond understandings of their roles, the survey of LCSP members also asked respondents to what extent they were satisfied with:

B. Your role in the LCSP.

The majority of respondents at midpoint (63%) are ‘*completely satisfied*’ or ‘*mostly satisfied*’ with their role in the LCSP. At the same time, a relatively small but growing proportion of respondents were only ‘*a little satisfied*’ (7% at baseline vs. 10% at midpoint) or ‘*not at all satisfied*’ (7% at baseline vs. 13% at midpoint) with their role.

**Figure 5: Members’ satisfaction with their role on LCSPs**



When the results are analysed by pilot site, the increase in dissatisfaction is found in one site only (see Appendix C, item 6.1). That is, at midpoint in pilots Z and X, no respondents were ‘*a little satisfied*’ (0%) or ‘*not at all satisfied*’ (0%), compared to pilot Y where the majority of respondents were either ‘*a little satisfied*’ (27%) or ‘*not at all satisfied*’ (36%).

This pattern is supported by interviews and focus groups with LCSP members, whereby community participants in some pilot sites expressed deep dissatisfaction with their role, to an extent and intensity not yet expressed in the other sites. Community participants in pilot Y used terms such as “ignored”, “disappointed”, “frustrated”, “wasting personal time”, and “no respect to date” to describe their experience and have not experienced their LCSP as a ‘partnership’ yet.

Regarding the representativeness of LCSPs, the Baseline report identified several areas where participants hoped LCSPs could bring added value above other existing partnership structures. This included encouraging more authentic and representative community involvement. At midpoint, some participants identified this as an area for potential improvement as they perceived limited direct representation from certain groups or segments of the local community. This, in turn, was seen as diminishing the representativeness of some partnerships and missing an opportunity to hear different voices with lived experience of the local community and/or specific community safety issues.

“We need to get new people on it, new voices, not the same people that have been involved in the community for the last 20 or 30 years, we need new people” [T2, int-098].

Public Participation Networks (PPNs) were identified in the Baseline Report as a source for the recruitment of community members. While this continued to be acknowledged at midpoint, some participants also questioned the representativeness of members recruited via the PPNs. This view is based on the belief that the PPNs are a better source for representatives from local voluntary and community organisations rather than local residents per se or individuals with lived experience of particular situations. Relatedly, some participants noted that even when groups or segments of the local community have a direct representative with lived experience of that group, it is “very hard for one voice” to genuinely represent a whole group.

The gaps in membership identified by participants tended to vary between the pilot sites, in part reflecting differences in the needs and demography of each pilot area. However, one group that was consistently identified across all three pilots as a challenge to recruit direct representation from was young people aged 18-25.

Participants identified several barriers to achieving a partnership that is representative of the local community. These included:



- Over-reliance on recruiting LCSP members from a small number of sources that themselves either have limited or missing representation from key stakeholder groups.

“I would prefer to have a couple of reps from the PPN but have the opportunity to select community reps from other organisations as appropriate... We also have a number of people who’ve come through the PPN who are representing community services... but at the same time they’re professional workers, they’re not residents” [T2, int-796].

- Miscommunication or misunderstanding from other networks or sources of members about the kind or range of members to be included.
- Inadequate input from LCSPs over whom agencies, organisations or networks nominate as a representative.
- Inflexibility in adjusting the size and composition of the membership to better match local needs and demographics.

On the other hand, factors noted by participants that enable a representative partnership include:

- Recruiting local community and voluntary organisation representatives via the local PPN.
- Balancing standardisation nationwide in the size and composition of LCSP membership to ensure certain essential stakeholders are always represented, with the flexibility to adapt the size and composition of LCSPs to better match local needs and demographics.

“We need to give a little bit more thought to which agencies are around the table and why. That might vary even from council area to council area. For instance, I would see because of the statistics in [area name] that [agency name] are a key ingredient here but they might not be a key ingredient somewhere else... if we were starting again, we might have a slightly different configuration. Part of it is around the definition of who should be on the partnership, part of it is [being] flexible enough to respond to local needs... But at the same time there are some organisations that need to be represented around the table” [T2, int-301].

## The role of Coordinators on the LCSPs

All three LCSP pilot sites are staffed by a full-time Coordinator (see Box 3). At baseline, we reported that the LCSP Coordinators “were seen as crucial to the eventual success of the LCSPs, but also as “daunting” and time-consuming roles by some participants” (CES/UL Evaluation Team, 2022, p. 47). The interview and focus group findings at midpoint reinforced the findings at baseline. Coordinators are viewed as a vital resource by evaluation participants, with consistent reports in interviews and focus groups that they are a key driving force in the LCSPs.

### Box 3: Role and responsibilities of the LCSP Coordinators

The *Terms of Reference* for each pilot site describe the role and responsibilities of the Coordinators as follows:

“The work of the Local Community Safety Partnership will be supported by... a Community Safety Coordinator. The role of this officer will be to support the Local Community Safety Partnership in its work to bring together a diverse group of agencies and the community in joint planning for activities to improve the safety of the community.

Key responsibilities of the Community Safety Coordinator include:

- Supporting the work of the Local Community Safety Partnership
- Designing and delivering of community safety projects in [area name]
- Proactively engaging with other actors working in community safety in the area
- Acting as a focal point for community safety in the area
- Overseeing the administration of funding made available for implementation projects”.

“it's been said over and over again the amount of work that the coordinator has put through to get to this stage is absolutely remarkable” [T2, fg-206].

Since the beginning of the LCSPs, two pilot sites experienced turnover in the position of Coordinator. Unsurprisingly, given the importance of Coordinators, turnover and disruption in these roles can lead to a considerable slow-down in the work and progress of LCSPs.

Coordinators are a key driving force for LCSPs in several ways. Perhaps most obvious is the large volume of work they carry out. They are the most active ‘doers’ of the LCSP, increasing the quantity and quality of LCSP outputs. Their position as a ‘focal point’ for the LCSPs allows them to act as a bridge between siloed organisations, facilitating multi-agency communications, coordination and collaboration. Just as importantly, where Coordinators are perceived to be enthusiastic, proactive, approachable, respectful, honest and diplomatic, this can help to increase the enthusiasm, buy-in and productivity of other LCSP members and can help create an atmosphere where members perceive their LCSP to be a safe space for interacting and sharing ideas.

“The Coordinator has been a powerhouse in terms of getting the buy-in from everybody and [they have] made [themselves] so approachable, so accessible, and has been really open to those frank and honest conversations which sometimes need to be had when you're working with multi-agency groups and we all have our coming to the table with a different agenda... [they have] a level of diplomacy in [them] that I suppose allows that space to be organic but also allows it to be very respectful... buy-in has come from the top and that being the coordinator, [they have] been exceptional in that role... [they] very much kind of reach out, so if [they] haven't heard from you in a while, [they] make sure [they] hear from you, so [they are] not just ignoring any groups, [they are] making sure [they are] checking in with the groups as well and making sure [they are] thinking of people ” [T2, fg-206].

At the same time, Coordinators can easily become overstretched by the breadth of their role and the administrative tasks attached with it, especially when not supported by full-time administrative staff (for more on this, see the sub-theme ‘LCSP staff: An essential resource needing more support’, pg. 66). The day-to-day work of the role was consistently described as extremely busy.

Enablers to the role of Coordinator identified by participants include:

- Being employed by the local authority, which is further strengthened by being located in the local authority head offices because it facilitates easier access to specific local authority departments.
- Having “continuity” in the person employed as Coordinator.
- Having good knowledge of and familiarity of the process and procedures of the host agency for an LCSP (i.e. local authorities), as well as with the local community and who is active in it.

In terms of the profile or background of individuals in the LCSP Coordinator role, it was suggested that “there isn't a one size fits all” and different profiles come with different strengths and weaknesses.

“the position is well suited to an established member of the community that is known, trusted and has an understanding of the issues and a rapport with the stakeholders, residents, community members etc... however I also think that there is room for a ‘new face’ who has an ability to develop these valued relationships and build rapport. It can also be an advantage that some of the local politics, local soft knowledge is not known to [them] and that [they] are starting with a fresh view” [T2, int-191].

## The roles of Independent Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons on the LCSPs

The duties of the Independent Chairpersons are described in Box 4. Similar to findings at baseline, the role of Independent Chairperson was again described as “particularly demanding on time” at midpoint, though as a voluntary role it was also acknowledged that the specific time demands “very much depend upon the approach of the individual Chair”.

The Chairs - similar to Coordinators - were often commended for their work ethic and role in providing direction to their partnership.

“I think the Chair has done an excellent job in bringing it to where it is. I admire [their] enthusiasm and [their] energy for it” [T2, int-098].

Nevertheless, challenges were identified with the role in some pilots. For example, when coupled with the fact that it is a voluntary position, which is unpaid, some participants highlighted the potential challenge of attracting Independent Chairpersons for all LCSPs when rolled out nationwide.

The independent nature of the Chairperson role received little attention in most interviews and focus groups. However, at times different views emerged, even within the same pilot site. Some believed “it was important that there was an independent Chair”, while others suggested the Chairperson should be democratically elected from within the partnership. This is based on the premise that it is typical practice in partnership-type structures to elect their Chairpersons and that the Chairperson could be more accountable to its membership if elected.

“if there was one thing that I'd like to see changed from that going forward is that the Chair wouldn't be appointed from outside, it would have to be elected by the members of the partnership that they're a Chair of, and responsible to the people who elected them” [T2, fg-251].

Uncertainty about the scope and function of the Chairperson role was also raised. The uncertainty tended to revolve around the extent to which the Chairperson is intended to act as a neutral, independent facilitator of the LCSP members, versus acting in a dual role where they are neutral and independent on the one hand and “a citizen” whose own views can influence the direction and priorities of the partnership, on the other hand.

When asked about the qualities of a ‘good’ Chairperson, focus group participants suggested relational and facilitative qualities such as getting to know members and facilitating discussions “to make sure everyone’s voice is heard”. Behaviours that participants discouraged in a Chairperson include overly controlling meetings, disproportionately using time to discuss their own views and experience, imposing their own agenda, talking over people and making decisions for the group.

The findings indicate that good facilitation, communication, relationship-building and leadership skills are core competencies required of an LCSP Chairperson.

“I think one of the most important roles of the chairperson is the role of affirmation, meeting particular community activists and affirming to them the value of their positive interventions in their local areas, and to try to motivate them to continue and

### Box 4: Role and responsibilities of the LCSP Independent Chairpersons

The *Terms of Reference* for each pilot site state that the role and responsibilities of the Chairpersons are to:

- Provide leadership and direction for the Local Community Safety Partnership.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the Local Community Safety Partnership in all aspects of its role, including delivery of the Local Community Safety Plan.
- Ensure active participation and contribution from all members across all sectors.
- Ensure active engagement of the community by the support staff of the Local Community Safety Partnership.

to expand that. Or in some cases to counsel them to consider to continue their engagement with the LCSP rather than throw their hat in and give up, because there are as many defeats as there are successes” [T2, int-781].

Barriers identified by participants that can make the role of Chairpersons more difficult included:

- The “considerable time commitment” involved in the voluntary role, often during normal working hours.
- Pre-existing negative perceptions of a Chairperson.
- The challenges of facilitating virtual or hybrid meetings compared to in-person meetings.

When asked what enables the role of the Chairperson, responses included:

- Past experience as a Chairperson and of chairing large meetings.
- Commitment and support at the highest levels of management in organisations represented on LCSPs.
- The support and teamwork of the Coordinators.

In addition, appointing an Independent Chairperson from outside of the LCSP area was described as having both benefits and drawbacks. An ‘outside’ Chairperson may be less likely to have pre-existing ties to the LCSP area and find it easier to act genuinely independently. On the other hand, they may lack “knowledge of what’s on the ground” compared to a Chairperson from the LCSP area, and in certain contexts they may actually be perceived as less legitimate and accountable than a “democratically elected” Chairperson voted for by members from within the partnership.

Unlike Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons were not independent and were typically selected during the initial meetings of the LCSPs from within the membership. In interviews and focus groups, the role tended to receive relatively little attention and appeared to be unproblematic in sites where the role was shared between community representatives and public service representatives (also referred to as ‘public interests’ and ‘private interests’, respectively. See Box 5).

Where the role was not shared between stakeholder groups, however, the selection process and reality of the role (which in some cases did not meet expectations) appears to have been an early source of “unnecessary unpleasantness” between stakeholder groups competing for selection. At the same time, some participants were unsure what the actual scope and function of the role was. Others believed the role to be too limited and lamented a ‘lost opportunity’ for greater empowerment of, and leadership opportunities for, members.

“I think that the Vice-Chair is an opportunity for the Community Safety Partnerships to be more inclusive and more invitational, and I think an opportunity is lost by the way we set up the terms of reference... it’s no role at all to my understanding of it, there’s no point [to the role]. For me a Vice-Chair has to have... something with teeth so that... somebody new to this went “Jesus I’d love that”” [T2, fg-251].

#### Box 5: Roles and responsibilities of Vice-Chairpersons

The *Terms of Reference* (ToR) for each pilot site make only brief reference to the role of Vice-Chairperson, yet this varies slightly for each pilot in terms of the number of Vice-Chairs and how they are selected. Moreover, only one ToR states the responsibilities of Vice-Chairs.

The ToRs state:

- “The *Chairperson* shall *appoint two Vice-Chairpersons*, one from private interests and one from public interests” [Pilot A, emphasis added].
- “The *LCSP* shall *select two Vice-Chairpersons* from among its members, one from private interests and one from public interests” [Pilot B, emphasis added].
- “A *Vice-Chairperson* shall be *elected by vote of the members*... The Vice-Chairperson shall fulfil the role of Chair in the event of any absence by Chair” [Pilot C, emphasis added].

## Leaders and leadership

Independent Chairpersons were conscious of avoiding “over-exerting your influence and the effect of your personality” on the LCSP. Rather, there were examples of purposeful attempts to “empower” members (including Vice-Chairs) through leadership opportunities and “allow a certain amount of autonomy to develop... rather than trying to steer [the members] all the time at every level”. For example, chairpersons typically stepped back from working-group meetings, allowing others to gain experience and skills in chairing meetings and providing leadership.

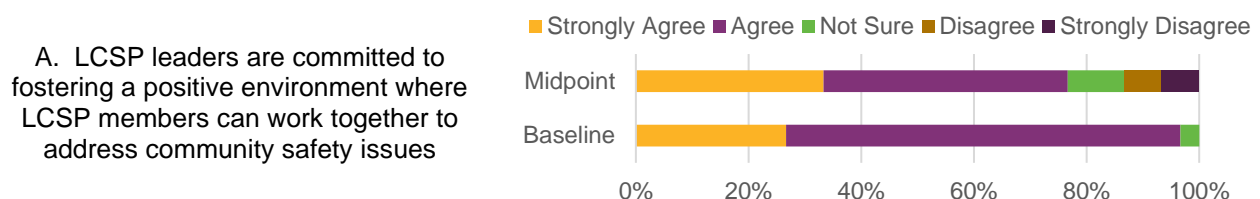
Leaders, include Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Coordinators and members who are particularly strong at championing LCSPs, proactive in taking responsibility for actions, and positively influencing the opinions and behaviours of others. While there are examples of leadership in each pilot, the extent to which informal leaders have emerged across the pilots is difficult to tell from the data available to date.

At both baseline and midpoint, the LCSP members survey asked respondents to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment where LCSP members can work together to address community safety issues.

At baseline, there was virtually unanimous agreement (97% ‘agreed’) with this statement. At midpoint, the vast majority of LCSP members again ‘agreed’ (76%), though the results trended in a negative direction with almost one-quarter of respondents either ‘not sure’ (10%) or ‘disagreeing’ (14%) with the statement.

Figure 6: Perceptions of LCSP leadership



When the results are broken down by pilot site (see Appendix C, item 3.2.), 100% of respondents in pilots X and Z ‘agreed’ that LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment, compared to 30% of respondents in pilot Y.

Feedback in interviews and focus groups largely align with these survey results. For instance, on the positive side leaders were described as playing an important role in creating a shared vision for members and driving towards it; for encouraging and energising others through their motivation, enthusiasm, work-ethic and initiative; for modelling teamwork and collaboration; for creating a respectful and open atmosphere where members feel safe to interact, share ideas and question the status quo; and for generating goodwill and reciprocity through their actions.

On the other hand, leadership can have a demoralising and divisive effect when actions are perceived by some as “controlling” or acting in a “top-down” way without providing adequate opportunities for input from members.

The absence of good leadership can also be problematic, as without a central figure to galvanise and coordinate others, cooperation and collaboration between stakeholder groups can become “disjointed”.

“normally the [stakeholder group] work very closely together and a natural leader takes control of the [stakeholder group] and knows their personalities and would

know what jobs they all do, and that's how... the Joint Policing Committee became so successful, is the [stakeholder group] actively participated... That kind of leadership [is] missing from the [stakeholder group] at the moment... and they are just that little bit disjointed, they're all nearly individuals as in working together" [T2, int-176].

### 3.4. Theme 3 - Partnership-Working in Practice 2: Engaging, relating and working together

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This is the second of three themes on 'Partnership-Working in Practice'. These themes are intended to give the reader a feel for what partnership-working is like in practice and the realities of bringing together large diverse groups of people into an LCSP, from the perspective of evaluation participants.

'Partnership-Working in Practice 2' focuses on 'engaging, relating and working together'. That is, participants' experiences of engaging in LCSPs, relating with other LCSP members and staff, and the practice of working together. The perspectives and experiences of participants captured within this theme, more than for any other, varied considerably between (and sometimes even within) the three pilot sites.

The theme is split into three sub-themes:

- Meeting attendance
- Commitment
- Engagement.

#### Meeting attendance: Varies from "very good" to "intermittent at best"

In 2022, the first full calendar year of the LCSP pilots, each pilot site scheduled four regular meetings to be held on a quarterly basis (the minimum required number of meetings), with one pilot also holding a special meeting during the year. Participants in several focus groups suggested that "meeting four times a year is not a very effective mechanism". Roughly 3 months between each meeting was considered too long a period to make decisions and progress work in a timely way, especially if meeting lengths were short.

"they have it [LCSP meetings] every four [three] months. Now maybe it should be every two months probably in the start, I'd probably feel that that is needed... in terms of all the work that has to happen" [T2, fg-868].

Despite the low frequency of meetings, all three pilots described attendance rates as varying between LCSP members.

"Attendance from some people is very good, attendance from others is intermittent at best and I think that's something we need to look at" [T2, int-301].

#### Box 6: Stipulations on the frequency of LCSP meetings

The *Terms of Reference* for each pilot site stipulate that:

- There shall be regular meetings of the Local Community Safety Partnership, no fewer than four per annum.
- Special meetings of the Local Community Safety Partnership may also be called to discuss matters of particular importance to it.

Similarly, attendance rates differed in some pilot sites depending on the type of meeting.

“We have really good attendance at the main meetings. We set up working groups and they didn't really work out the way that we had hoped... it was just very difficult to get meetings going... people could not attend, or we had three or four coming on” [T2, int-796].

Participants identified several effects of poor or intermittent meeting attendance on the functioning of the partnerships. These include missing voices and perspectives from conversations; “disheartening” of LCSP members given the level of effort in organising meetings; perceptions of inadequate buy-in to LCSPs; and a reduced timeliness in making decisions and delivering actions.

Some participants described how poor or inconsistent attendance rates at meetings could prevent the realisation of 51% community representation in practice and disrupt the majority decision-making power community members are intended to have. This, in turn, could potentially further reduce the timeliness of decision-making.

“you can't make a decision, or you can't do anything unless you have the majority community people. So that might be something that we have to look at, why are they not attending? Is this something that we're doing? Are we making it more difficult for them?” [T2, int-796].

Evaluation participants identified the following barriers to attending LCSP meetings:

- Competing priorities and members being too “busy” to attend meetings.
- Meetings being held in-person rather than virtually, which incur a greater time commitment and travel costs.
- Holding meeting during “peak holiday season” when members are less likely to be available.
- Members holding onto their position on the LCSP despite being too “busy” to attend or meaningfully engage.
- Perception of low added value from LCSP participation amongst some members that are already involved in other partnership-structures.

Several of these barriers relate to the limited time that members have to attend meetings. The barrier of time constraints for some members was reported frequently and consistently across all three pilot sites. However, when contrasted with the desire for more frequent LCSP meetings, a third tension and trade-off in the design and functioning of LCSPs can be seen.

#### Box 7: Power granted to Chairpersons, in the event of poor meeting attendance

The *Terms of Reference* for each LCSP pilot site makes the following provision:

“Where a member of the Local Community Safety Partnership is absent from three consecutive meetings without adequate reason, the Chairperson shall request:

- That member to resign as a member of the Local Community Safety Partnership, and
- The member's nominating body to provide a replacement nominee to the Local Community Safety Partnership

Chairpersons have the power, under specific circumstances, to request the resignation of a member with a poor attendance record. However, one participant noted that Chairpersons can be reluctant to use such power, especially early in the partnership process.

“we have it in our terms of reference but when you're setting up something new you don't want to fire people the first few meetings” [T2, Lon, int-301].

### **Tension & Trade-Off 3:**

#### *Meeting frequency Vs. Members capacity*

There is a tension on the one hand between the desire for more frequent LCSP meetings to improve partnership efficiency, and the limited capacity of many LCSP members on the other hand to attend more frequent LCSP meetings.

Participants also identified enablers to LCSP meeting attendance, which included:

- Chairpersons and Coordinators engaging separately with LCSP members who are struggling to attend meetings to encourage attendance and keep them informed of developments.
- Holding meetings virtually rather than in-person, as they lower time commitments and travel costs.

## Commitment: An essential ingredient

Commitment from LCSP members and member organisations was viewed as an essential ingredient for a successful LCSP.

“to be successful we need commitment. I think people need to be held responsible for absence [from meetings]. It's the key to make this. We really need this in order to make this partnership work” [T2, fg-643].

In interviews and focus groups, conflicting views emerged, sometimes even within pilot sites, about the commitment of members to LCSPs. Some participants perceived the commitment of members to be a strength within their partnership, while others questioned the commitment so far of some members and member organisations.

“my sense of it is that there is a huge willingness from other sectors around the table that are very passionate about the service that they're representing and the work that's needed to be done and I think there's a huge willingness there from the service providers” [T2, fg-868].

“the commitment of agencies and government departments would be a big challenge, again keeping people engaged with the process, keeping them engaged say with the action plan and development of the plan” [T2, int-013].

As alluded to earlier, there were also more general perceptions of a “negative attitude to the partnership[s] politically”, whereby the changes to the structure of LCSPs compared to JPCs is believed to have “undermined the commitment” of some (but not all) elected representatives (see *Tension and Trade-Off 2*, pg. 29).

Survey data also show a mixed picture. For instance, in Figure 7, LCSP members were asked to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. All LCSP members are committed to achieving its goals and objectives.
- B. All LCSP members are committed to working in partnership.

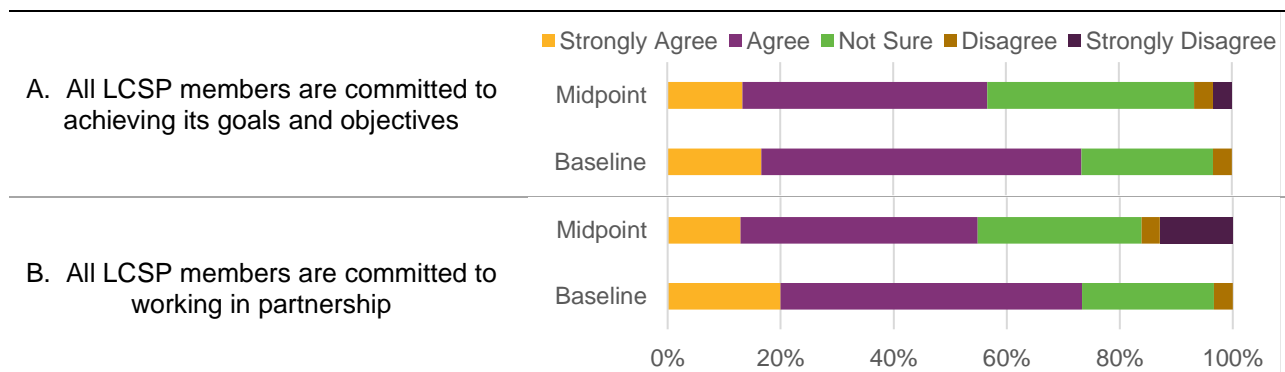
For both items, most respondents ‘*agreed*’ that LCSP members are committed. However, compared to baseline, there is a noticeable trending in a negative direction, with fewer survey respondents agreeing to the statements at midpoint: there was an 18% decline in those *agreeing* with item A (74% at baseline vs. 56% at midpoint) and item B (73% at baseline vs. 55% at midpoint), respectively.

When the survey results for midpoint are broken down by pilot site (see items 2.5. and 2.6. in Appendix C), clear differences between the pilots emerge, with a considerably greater *agreement*



for these statements in pilots X and Z compared to pilot Y. In fact, in pilot Y, more respondents ‘disagreed’ (45%) with item B than ‘agreed’ (36%).

Figure 7: Perceptions of LCSP member commitment to LCSPs



Open-text responses to these survey items, along with interview and focus group data, shed light. In pilots X and Z, respondents tended to question the commitment of certain statutory agencies, with poor commitment indicated by inconsistent meeting attendance, substituting representatives or sending representatives without decision-making power.

“I don't know how these state agencies work but getting consistent engagement from them, it's still not fully there. When you look at [statutory agency] and [statutory agency], we didn't have full engagement... this is an issue, and I'm not talking about every committee member, but key members... [statutory agency], [statutory agency] and [statutory agency], they need to be involved in every meeting... you need people at the proper level to be there. For example, you do have the [high-level statutory agency rep] sits at the thing - it's a lot different having him than having a rookie [statutory agency rep] sitting at the table. From the other agencies we need people that are at a certain level... and that they are the same people that come to the meetings. It's not X this week or X next week and Y a month after, because you lose consistency” [T2, fg-643].

In pilot Y, however, participants instead questioned the commitment of certain non-community stakeholders to the principle of a community-led partnership:

“There is a divide between statutory reps and community reps. The community reps are not respected as much as the other reps... the community reps appear to be tolerated rather than encouraged to be a part of the LCSP” [T2, sur-654].

Enablers to commitment (and perceptions of commitment) identified by participants include:

- Regular, consistent attendance at LCSP meetings by members.
- Organisations and agencies being represented by someone who can make decisions on behalf of their organisation.
- Recruitment of members who are enthusiastic and are coming to LCSPs “with fresh heads, with a different perspective”.

“There's no remuneration for it [LCSP membership]. That would be why there's a reluctance by [some stakeholders] to be part of the Community Safety Partnership. They really have to have a passion for safety in their communities to come on because... if you're genuinely interested, it is a lot of work and a lot of travel” [T2, int-296].

Conversely, the barriers to commitment (and perceptions of commitment) included:

- Members having a negative experiences of their LCSP, especially when early in its lifecycle.
- Low levels of enthusiasm amongst some members for community safety or partnership-working, potentially due to low interest, low expectations or negative past experiences of partnership-working.
- Turnover or changes in the roles of members within their respective organisations.

## Engagement: A “work in progress”

Good meeting attendance with committed members, when achieved, does not automatically lead to meaningful engagement and participation in meetings. In interviews and focus groups, when asked ‘how well are members working together?’, there were positive examples of members communicating and collaborating well together. However, overall, the general sentiment across the three pilots tended to be that it was a “work in progress” and there is “still a long road to travel” in how members work together.

And yet, a deeper interrogation of the data suggests a varied and complex picture across the three pilot sites, depending on the aspect of partnership-working being considered. To help untangle the variations and complexities, the engagement of LCSP members and staff is considered from the following aspects:

- Decision-making, influence and power
- Communication, trust and cohesion
- Meeting processes, participation and collaboration
- Sharing information and resources
- Sharing tasks and responsibilities.

### Decision-making, influence and power: Unequal influence and power can manifest in different ways

The *Terms of Reference* of each pilot site stipulate how decisions should be agreed by the partnerships (see Box 8). In practice, however, when and how decisions were actually made by the LCSPs were, at times, either unclear to the evaluation team or appeared to depart from the processes laid out in the *Terms of Reference*.

For example, while there is evidence of the decision-making processes in Box 8 being applied, a common reflection from observations of LCSP meetings was that a ‘proposer/seconded’ method<sup>8</sup> - which is usually a way of deciding whether a topic should be discussed -- was also frequently used as a way to decide the outcome of a discussion. Document analysis of LCSP meeting minutes add

#### Box 8: LCSP decision-making process stipulated in the *Terms of Reference*

The *Terms of Reference* for each pilot site lay out the following processes for decision-making:

“All acts of the Local Community Safety Partnership, and all questions coming or arising before the partnership, shall be determined:

- a. By consensus of those members present and eligible to vote, or
- b. Where consensus cannot be achieved, by a majority of the votes of the members present and eligible to vote”.

For one pilot site, one additional provision has been made, stating:

- c. “In the event where there is no majority, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote”.

<sup>8</sup> A ‘proposer/seconded’ method is sometimes used in meetings as a way of ‘proposing’ a motion, which then requires a ‘seconded’ (i.e., second person) to support the motion in order to bring it forward for discussion by the group.

some additional support to the observations (see Case Study #1, pg. 51).

The use of a ‘proposer/seconded’ method may be a symptom of *Tension and Trade-Off 1* (see pg. 28). That is, a ‘proposer/seconded’ decision-making method can improve the speed and efficiency of decision-making because it technically only requires input from two people. However, this comes at the risk of excluding or reducing the input of certain members in decisions and could unintentionally become a means of sidestepping the majority decision-making power community representatives are intended to hold via 51% of the membership. This is not to say that a ‘proposer/seconded’ decision-making method is never appropriate, but that partnerships may want to consider the type of decisions it is used for in order to strike a balance between efficiency and inclusivity.

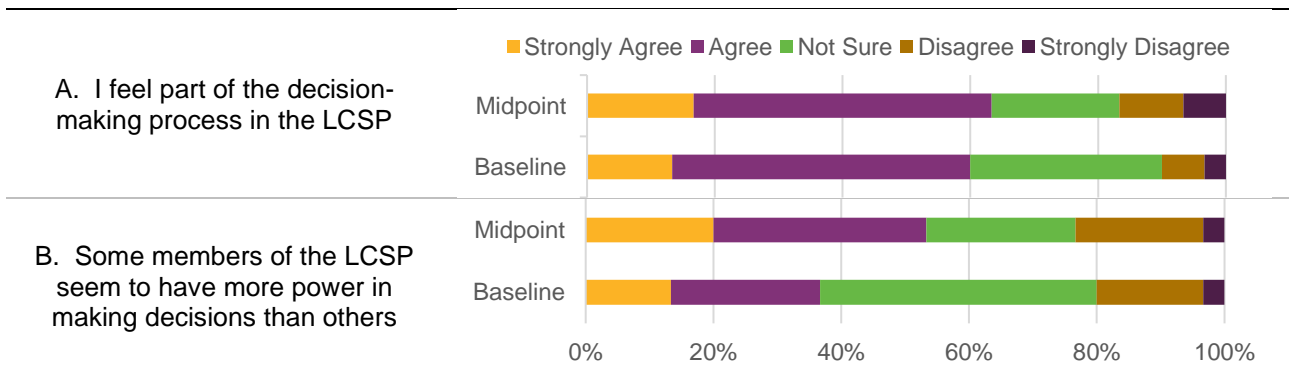
In the survey of LCSP members, respondents were asked -- at both baseline and midpoint -- to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

- A. I feel part of the decision-making process in the LCSP.
- B. Some members of the LCSP seem to have more power in making decisions than others.

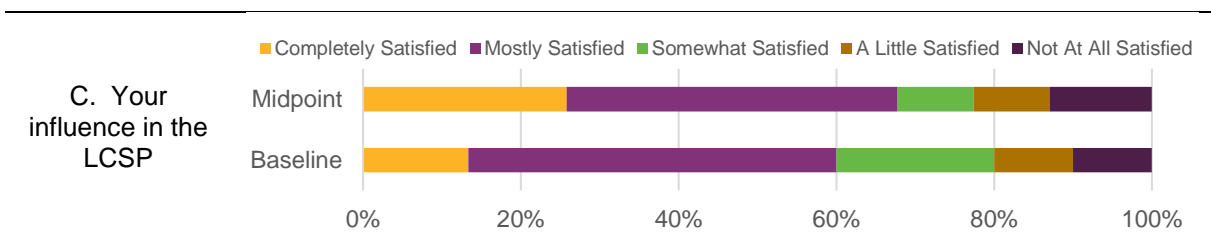
In addition, the survey also asked members -- at both baseline and midpoint -- ‘to what extent are you satisfied with’:

- C. Your influence in the LCSP.

**Figure 8: Perceptions of decision-making power amongst LCSP members**



**Figure 9: Satisfaction amongst LCSP members with their influence in LCSPs**



As shown in Figures 8 and 9 above, there was a slight increase, between baseline and midpoint, in the proportion of participants who felt part of the decision-making process and were satisfied with their influence in their pilot site. Namely, most participants ‘agreed’ with feeling part of the decision-making process (60% at baseline and 64% at midpoint for item A) and were ‘completely or mostly satisfied’ with their influence (60% at baseline and 68% at midpoint for item C). And yet, a growing proportion of respondents also ‘agreed’ that some members seem to have more power in decision-making than others (36% at baseline vs. 53% at midpoint for item B).

When the midpoint results are broken down by pilot site, different trends emerge. For example, in pilot Z almost all respondents (91%) ‘agreed’ they felt part of the decision-making process, compared to 55% in pilot X and 40% in pilot Y. Similarly, 100% of respondents in pilot Z were

'completely or mostly satisfied' with their influence, compared to 77% in pilot X and 27% in pilot Y. In pilots X and Y, a considerably larger proportion of respondents 'agreed' that some members seem to have more decision-making power than others compared to pilot Z (67% and 70% in pilots X and Y, respectively, compared to 27% in pilot Z).

Qualitative data from various sources<sup>9</sup> suggest the wide differences in perceptions of decision-making power might be partially explained by the nature of the power differences and misperceptions about who can or should make decisions. On the nature of power differences, for instance, differences in decision-making power in pilot Z were usually attributed to some stakeholder groups being "more vocal", holding "stronger viewpoints" or taking up more speaking time than others. This could be seen as reflective of characteristics of individuals rather than the partnership per se. Similarly, some interview participants expressed concern that "there may be a perception that decision-making lies with the Coordinator... and with the Chair". Either way, both explanations -- which reflect challenges in generating active participation in decision-making from all LCSP members -- result in a concentration of decision-making power within the hands of a relative few. This could potentially create an important challenge to the empowerment of LCSP members, and in turn, the effectiveness of the partnerships.

"There is a danger that the Coordinator becomes more than the 'face of the partnership', for the want of an alternative expression. The goal here is for the members to see themselves as the decision-makers and have the opportunity to effect change. I have felt on occasion that there may be a perception that the decision-making lies with the Coordinator on its face and with the Chair. The approach [LCSP leaders are taking] is to encourage the partners to see themselves as being more effective together and that the lack of active participation will only undermine the effectiveness of the overall objective" [T2, int-191].

On the other hand, power differences in pilot Y were more likely to be perceived as reflective of larger structural and process issues within their partnership, such as a lack of transparency and communication from LCSP leaders, poor governance procedures, limited opportunities for community involvement in decision-making, or competition for influence between stakeholder groups (as discussed as part of *Tension and Trade-Off 2*, see pg. 29).

"by and large whether it's a steering group meeting or a general partnership meeting, whatever is discussed is brought up by [LCSP leaders] and the actions to be taken get decided long before anyone gets consulted about it... We [community representatives] are being informed what's happening, we're not providing what we want" [T2, fg-251].

## Communication, trust and cohesion: From conflict to camaraderie

As with decision-making power and influence, the climate and cohesiveness of the partnerships also varied across the pilots and appeared to influence how well members worked together.

Some participants noted that building trust and group cohesion takes time, and that challenges to cohesion are normal, in groups, and to be expected for a partnership of the size and diversity of the LCSPs.

"The nature of the partnership. being 30 [members], being such a large number... it's taking quite a while to build relationships with the individuals involved, the community reps and indeed the statutory reps and to build the level of trust. That work is slow by its nature. The people who are engaged as key decision makers are busy people. So, I think the nature of it will, and should be, a relatively slow process" [T2, int-781].

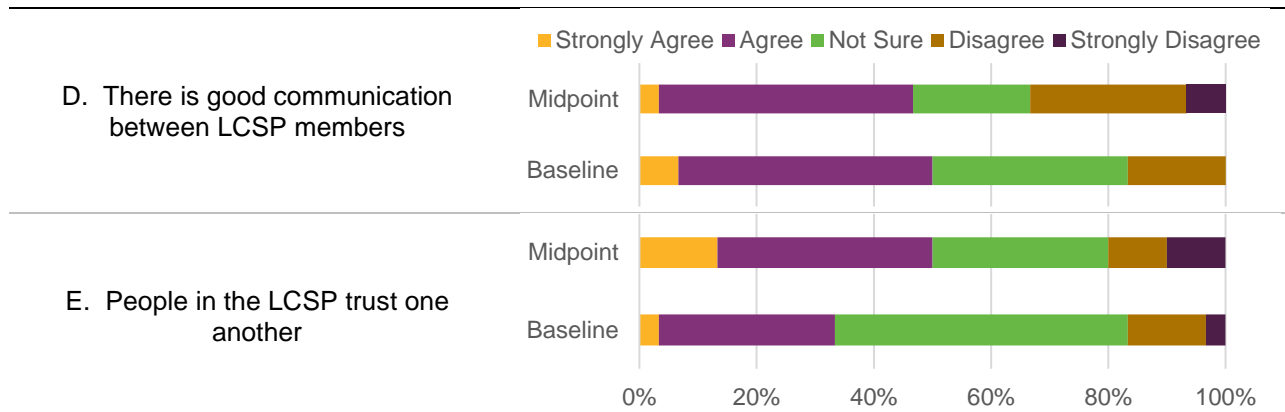
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<sup>9</sup> Interviews, focus groups, open-text survey responses and observations of LCSP meetings.

Survey respondents were asked to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- D. There is good communication between LCSP members
- E. People in the LCSP trust one another.

**Figure 10: Perceptions of communication quality and trust between LCSP members**



Overall, the survey results suggest that while the level of trust between members is growing, the perceived quality of communication may be declining. Neither statements had a majority agreement from survey respondents at midpoint (46% ‘agreed’ with item D and 50% ‘agreed’ with item E, respectively), indicating considerable room for improvement.

That said, when the midpoint results are broken down by pilot site, large differences emerge. For example, in pilot Y, the majority of respondents ‘disagreed’ (70%) that there is good communication between LCSP members, compared to 30% who ‘agreed’. The proportions are reversed in pilot Z, with a majority ‘agreeing’ (64%) that there is good communication, compared to only 18% who ‘disagreed’. Pilot X occupied a middle ground, as 44% ‘agreed’, 44% were ‘not sure’ and 11% ‘disagreed’. When considering whether ‘people in the LCSP trust one another’, the percentages change a little from the previous statement, yet the patterns across the three pilot sites are the same, with pilot Z returning the highest agreement (73%). This is followed by pilot X (44%) and then pilot Y (30%).

The qualitative data<sup>10</sup> supports the varying perceptions across the pilot sites. For instance, in some pilot sites, a climate of “negativity” and an “us vs. them” dynamic between different stakeholder groups on the LCSP membership was described. Such an atmosphere and dynamics can set the foundation for conflict between stakeholder groups and threaten the functioning of a partnership. At the same time, conflicts are to be expected at some point between members in partnerships of the size and diversity of LCSPs. When managed well, working through conflicts can facilitate shared understanding, trust and good relations between members. This in turn can lead, over time, to a more effective partnership.

By the end of midpoint data collection, there were some signs of conflict between stakeholder groups occurring in some pilots, which had yet to be resolved. Most of factors which appear to have contributed to this have been mentioned already. These include perceptions of a lack of transparency, poor communication, leadership and governance; as well as perceptions of limited opportunities and/or competition between stakeholder groups to participate in and influence the work of the LCSP. Social interactions within the partnership, if perceived as “controlling”, or lacking respect, can also have a demoralising and divisive effect.

The processes by which grievances are aired were considered important to ensure informed discussions could take place. The findings highlight the importance of respectful engagement

<sup>10</sup> Interviews, focus groups, open-text survey responses and observations.

with all stakeholders and, from the outset, setting down collectively agreed processes for working well with conflict. The risk of not having a collectively agreed procedure for grievance and conflict management is that serious issues between members go unresolved. In such scenarios, frustration and bitterness can fester, thus diminishing trust, cohesion, and ultimately the effectiveness of a partnership. Participants suggested that conflicts can be resolved when there is a genuine, shared willingness for resolution, and when stakeholders communicate respectfully by listening to and valuing each other's contributions.

“Respect that's the first thing you do if you want us on the board... There is a willingness in this group to try and fix things, to try and get beyond it” [T2, fg-251].

Participants across the pilot sites also identified the following as barriers to communication, trust and creating a cohesive partnership:

- Members discovering information about their partnership from outside sources, including the media, instead of hearing it first from within their partnership.
- The redistribution of decision-making power between JPCs and LCSPs, and competition between stakeholder groups for positions of influence or status on the partnership, may contribute to an initial atmosphere of distrust and suspicion between some stakeholder groups.
- Personalising issues within a partnership and disseminating them publicly, rather than working through the issue together.

On the other hand, the qualitative data also supported survey findings suggesting members on some partnerships were improving their communication, levels of trust and cohesion with one another over time.

“the first few meetings there wasn't a massive amount of achievement in them... But I see something that's happened there perhaps as a group, because the event that we had... I think it was more cohesive, I can feel more cohesiveness, people were all trying to work together to come up with something to make this work, and I can see that so that makes the difference” [T2, fg-643].

The findings suggest a powerful driver for building trust and relationships within the partnerships is the opportunity for members to socially interact -- formally and informally, in-person, face-to-face. Being together in person appeared to facilitate the trust and relationship-building process over and above online interactions.

“It's very difficult to develop relationships with people when you're only meeting them remotely” [T2, int-586].

This seemingly simple and obvious idea can take place in small incremental and large ways, all of which appear to be helpful. For example, in-person meetings bring members together to socially interact *formally*, and opportunities for members to chat “over a cup of tea” before, during or after meetings can bring members together to socially interact *informally*. Several participants emphasised the importance of informal social interactions in particular for cultivating trust and relationship-building.

“The [LCSP programme], that started over a cup of tea during a break in one of the meetings. So that thing of the social interaction between the members is creating opportunities to build relationships, which wasn't happening when we were doing it on zoom” [T2, fg-206].

This has implications for the size, format, frequency, attendance and processes of LCSP meetings and the extent to which they facilitate social interaction between members.

As well as building trust and relations, opportunities for social interaction facilitate improved partnership-working. The communications between members enable improved knowledge and

understanding of other members and their organisations. The exchange of ideas can support the identification of opportunities for collaboration and more holistic, creative responses to community safety issues. As relationships improve and ties strengthen between members, their motivation to collaborate also appears to strengthen.

“The interaction between the different agencies... that has come about it because [of] people getting to each other and knowing what they do” [T2, fg-206].

There are early indications (though they will require verification at evaluation endpoint) that trust and relationship-building can be accelerated by opportunities for more *intensive* or *extended* periods of social interaction (e.g. several hours to days) in settings outside of LCSP meetings (e.g. events or trips) with a community safety focus. By the end of data collection, some pilot sites had had such opportunities and reported positive results.

“I think [getting members to work together was] difficult at first because it was in a clinical meeting scenario. People didn’t know each other. So obviously you do the usual, you have your cups of tea, and you have it in different venues... trying to get people to ice break, bits and pieces like that, we tried all those types of scenarios... So that was a difficulty. The [LCSP event] was a great example, because you had to hop on the bus, you have to chat going up there, everyone’s meeting strangers... So, they all have to talk amongst themselves and you’re meeting people you’ve never met before, you’re having a meal together, all those types of things... So, it’s a grower. I wouldn’t judge the community safety partnership as a body meeting every three months as a mechanism to know whether it’s achieving anything. It’s more the interaction between meetings” [T2, int-947].

The positive reports gathered through interviews and focus groups were further verified during observations of LCSP meetings that occurred in the weeks after members had returned from an extended period of time together. For example, the observation report recorded:

“The members of [LCSP] appear to be functioning well as a group. Most members seemed comfortable with each other, and interpersonal relations, trust and meeting engagement appear to be significantly improving when compared to the previous LCSP meeting. Furthermore, the levels of trust, engagement and the sense of camaraderie observed during this meeting were quite clearly the highest observed of any meeting in any of the pilots so far... An intense team-building activity... has acted as a catalyst: that is, a short but intense event that has greatly sped up the time needed to build relationships and trust between members of the LCSP, and/or re-invigorated the belief and motivation of members as to the possibilities of the LCSP” [T2, Obs-620].

To this extent, opportunities for extended periods of social interaction can act as a sort of shortcut to more rapidly building trusting and cohesive partnerships. Furthermore, the findings indicate that learning from examples of successful approaches to community safety elsewhere, that are both relevant and realistic for LCSPs can further enhance the experience of members by ‘making real’ the potential of LCSPs. What is unclear from the data available to date, however, is how long the effects of such events last and the work that is needed afterwards to sustain the positive effects.

As well as opportunities for social interactions, other enablers for cohesive partnerships include:

- Regular, consistent attendance at LCSP meetings by members.
- Members who are bought-in to LCSPs, and willing and open to share information and ideas.
- Having the “right people” with the right mindset and personalities on the partnership.

“another key piece to this success has been the right the people with the right mindset being together, because I don't think we had any sort of friction... the personalities have just been really key” [T2, fg-206].

## Meeting processes, participation, and collaboration: Another source of tensions and trade-offs

Opportunities for social interaction were severely hampered for much of the lifecycle of the pilot. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and public health restrictions during the baseline phase of the evaluation meant the pilots were forced to rely heavily on virtual meetings during this time. After the baseline phase, other factors, such as the geographical distance members had to travel and the rising costs of living meant that some pilots relied on virtual meetings longer than others. By the end of the midpoint phase, all pilots were using in-person or hybrid meeting formats and evaluation participants reported a strong preference for these types of meetings. In comparison to purely virtual meetings, in-person meetings were believed to be easier to facilitate and provide greater opportunities for informal social interactions between members. This, as described previously, helped to accelerate relationship-building, the sharing of ideas and the pace of progress of a partnership.

“One frustration would be around the fact that we had to work remotely so much of the time because I've always found that you made more progress with people on the margins of meetings. Talking is better one to one and we were very restricted in being able to do that. I would put that down as one of the factors that has made slow progress” [T2, int-296].

Nevertheless, in-person meetings are not a panacea to improved meeting engagement and participation. The challenge of encouraging “meaningful input” was described even in pilot sites that rely primarily on in-person meetings, along with a perceived reluctance or inability amongst some members to take responsibility for actions.

“a lot of people are there with a good heart and intention but not great capacity... they are representing the community but they don't have any power to do anything, they are just [there] to give an opinion” [T2, int-522].

To help assess perceptions of participation and collaboration, the survey of LCSP members asked respondents -- at both baseline and midpoint -- to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- F. All LCSP members are actively involved in planning and setting priorities
- G. The members of the LCSP worked/are working together to develop the local community safety plan.<sup>11</sup>

At first glance, the overall results in Figure 11 below appear to be somewhat contradictory, with perceptions of declining participation (item F) and improving collaboration (item G). However, on closer inspection the results may be more closely aligned than they first appear.

For instance, Item G suggests strong -- and growing -- *agreement* (77% at midpoint, vs. 64% at baseline) that LCSP members are working together to develop their local community safety plan. However, item F, unlike item G, asks about *active* involvement, which sets a higher standard for participation. Thus, when asked about active involvement of all LCSP members in planning and

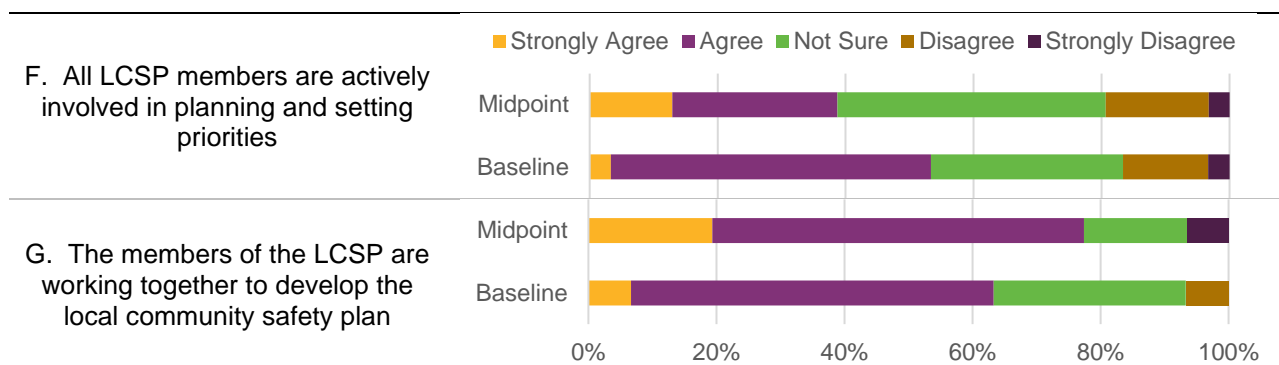
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<sup>11</sup> This item is phrased in both past and present tense because one site had completed its local community safety plan and two sites were in the process of developing theirs at the time of survey completion.



setting priorities, the results show declining *agreement* (39% at midpoint, vs. 53% at baseline) and growing uncertainty (42% 'not sure' at midpoint, vs. 30% 'not sure' at baseline).

Figure 11: Perceptions of members participation and collaboration in LCSPs



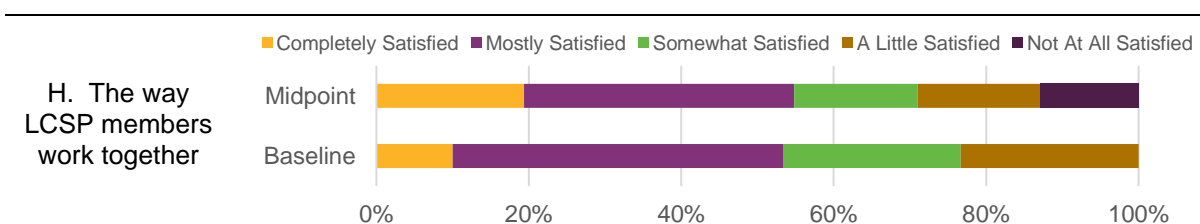
When the midpoint results are analysed by pilot site, interesting patterns emerge. With item G, two pilots had almost unanimous *agreement* (100% in pilot X and 91% in pilot Z) that the members were working together to develop their community safety plan. This compares with pilot Y where only 45% *agreed* (pilot Y). This suggests that, in most sites, respondents believe they are collaboratively developing their plan, while in the third site some respondents may feel excluded or unaware of the role other members are playing in developing their plan.

When asked about *active* involvement (item F), however, the results are more similar across the three pilot sites, with *agreement* ranging from 33% in pilot X up to 45% in pilot Z. In pilot Y, responses were almost equally split with 36% *agreeing*, 36% *disagreeing* and 27% 'not sure' that all members are actively involved in planning and setting priorities. These results align with results on other survey items and again suggest some respondents feel excluded or perceive limited opportunities for active participation. In comparison, in pilot X, the majority of respondents (67%) were 'not sure', indicating uncertainty or a lack of awareness about the level of participation of other members.

Finally, the survey also asked members -- at both baseline and midpoint -- to what extent they were satisfied with:

H. The way LCSP members work together.

Figure 12: Satisfaction amongst LCSP members with how they work together



The midpoint results are similar to baseline. There remains a slight majority who are 'completely or mostly satisfied' (54% at midpoint, vs. 53% at baseline) with the way members work together, though there is also a slight increase in the proportion of respondents who are 'a little or not at all satisfied' (29% at midpoint vs. 23% at baseline).

When the midpoint results are broken down by pilot site, the results vary. Pilot Z respondents reported high levels of satisfaction (82% 'completely or mostly satisfied' and 0% 'a little or not at all satisfied'), followed by moderate levels of satisfaction in pilot X (44% 'completely or mostly satisfied' and 22% 'a little or not at all satisfied'). Relatively low levels of satisfaction with the way

LCSP members work together were reported in pilot Y at midpoint (36% '*completely or mostly satisfied*' and 63% '*a little or not at all satisfied*').

Overall, the survey results in Figures 11 and 12 suggest that while respondents in most pilots believe they are working together to develop their community safety plan, there may be challenges in generating -- or ensuring opportunities for -- more *active* participation of members. This aligns with reports from some participants of challenges in generating "meaningful input" and may have implications for how satisfied members are with the way their partnership is working.

In interviews and focus groups, meeting processes were sometimes described as "procedural" in nature, with the processes used so far -- e.g., presentations from organisation members followed by questions and answers time; dedicating meeting time for discussion of members interests and any other business, -- appearing to have limited success in encouraging interaction and engagement in meetings beyond a small number "who are vocal".

"they [LCSP meetings] are kind of procedural... previously with JPC [Joint Policing Committee] meetings we would have had probably an awful lot more interaction and arguing and complaining about specific issues. So we don't have that here, we don't really want that at the Community Safety Partnership but at the same time people aren't really putting anything forward specific issues for discussion at the meetings, so we've been bringing stuff to them for approval, they've had the presentations, we've talked about a few small things... but the partnership meetings aren't really a forum for discussion around issues... so maybe we need a different approach. We've seen an awful lot of people come to the meetings and they don't have a huge amount to say and that's both statutory and some of our community side. Then we have four or five of them who are vocal and it's the same people all the time" [T2, int-796].

Strategies to encourage interaction and engagement during meetings started in advance of the meetings themselves. Some of the pre-meeting strategies described by interview and focus group participants included:

- Distributing meeting documents and materials to members several days or weeks in advance of a meeting
- Providing opportunities for members to add agenda items and provide feedback on meeting materials
- Sending reminders to members to provide feedback on meeting materials in advance of the meeting.

The sentiment that "maybe we need to look at structuring it [LCSP meetings] a little bit differently" was voiced by several participants across the pilot sites. To better understand this perspective and identify potential areas for improvement, more detailed analyses of LCSP meetings were carried out based on data gathered through meeting minutes and agendas (see case study #1) and data gathered through observations of LCSP meetings (see case study #2).

## **Case Study #1:**

### **An assessment of LCSP meeting practices and processes using meeting minutes and agendas**

#### **Background**

In his book, *The Surprising Science of Meetings*, organisational psychologist Steven. G. Rogelberg examines the research on meetings and outlines a series of evidence-informed strategies for improving meeting quality and participation. Using Rogelberg's analysis and suggestions as a guide, the evaluation team analysed the LCSP meeting agendas (n=12) and minutes (n=17) supplied to them to identify areas of good practice and areas for potential improvement in how LCSP meetings are organised and operate. The analysis examined:

- **Meeting content** (e.g., were the agenda items topics that require genuine, meaningful interaction between members?).
- **Agenda item flow** (e.g., were agenda items ordered based on importance, from most to least important?).
- **Agenda item owners** (e.g., have agenda items been assigned 'owners' or 'lead speakers'?).
- **Meeting processes** (e.g., what meeting processes were used?).
- **Decision-making methods** (e.g., what decision-making methods or processes were used?).

#### **Analysis**

There were, on average eight agenda items discussed per meeting throughout the three pilot sites. Approximately one-third of agenda items were assessed as requiring genuine, meaningful interaction between LCSP members. This may have included planning or strategy activities, identification and discussion of new ideas or dissemination and interpretation of key information.

Almost 50% of the meetings did not appear to discuss agenda items in order of importance (i.e., important items or member-suggestions near the beginning and less important items towards the end), and the majority of items did not appear to have an assigned 'owner' or 'lead speaker'.

The most popular process used for discussing agenda items was verbal updates, which were recorded in 100% of meeting minutes. Other processes recorded in meeting minutes included presentations (23.5%), group discussions (23.5%), small group workshops (23.5%), Q&A sessions (23.5%), learning from observations (5.8%), polling (5.8%), icebreakers (5.8%) and interactive presentations (5.8%).

A decision-making process was recorded for the majority of decisions made in LCSP meetings. These processes included 'proposer/seconded', group consensus and majority vote. There was also no evidence in the documents to showcase whether actions decided during a meeting were followed up on in the following meeting.

#### **Conclusions**

While there are examples of good practice recorded in LCSP meeting agendas and minutes (e.g., items requiring meaningful interactions), the analysis also highlights potential areas for improvement of meeting quality and participation. These could include, for example:

- Utilising other communication channels (e.g., emails) for items not requiring meaningful interactions between members.
- Ordering agenda items in terms of priority and importance and assigning 'lead speakers'.
- Utilising more interactive processes to discuss agenda items.

Finally, developing standardised agenda and minutes templates that record decisions, decision-making processes, actions, action 'owners' and whether these are followed up from meeting to meeting could be considered to improve the transparency and accountability of the LCSPs.

## **Case Study #2:**

### **Observations of factors influencing engagement of attendees at LCSP meetings**

#### **Background**

During the midpoint evaluation phase, five LCSP meetings were observed across the three pilot sites. This included four full partnership meetings and one sub-group meeting. Three meetings were held in-person and two meetings were 'hybrid' meetings (a mix of in-person and virtual attendees).

Unlike other data collection methods for the evaluation, observations allowed the evaluation team a first-hand view of how LCSP meetings work. The purpose of this case study was to, using observation data, briefly compare patterns of engagement in LCSP meetings across the three pilot sites and identify factors that appear to help or hinder engagement by attendees.

#### **Analysis**

Twenty factors influencing the engagement of attendees at LCSP meetings were identified.<sup>12</sup> The factors are listed in Table 7 (see Appendix 4 for explanations of how/why the factors appear to influence engagement). Of these, eight factors are listed as '*helpful*', four as '*somewhat helpful*', six as '*hindering*' and two as having a '*mixed*' influence. The number of meetings a factor was observed in is also listed for each factor (e.g. [2/5]).

In short, the analysis suggests that the engagement of meeting attendees improved when: meetings were held face-to-face for relatively longer periods of time (90-180 minutes) with small group sizes; attendees were clear about the purpose/focus of the meeting and their role/reason for attending; breakout groups were used to generate discussion rather than relying solely on full group discussions; attendees were treated respectfully and collegially at all times by meeting leaders; members were more experienced and confident in committee/procedural-type meetings; and a camaraderie had begun to develop between members where they were more familiar with, trusted, and respectfully interacted with each other in a collaborative spirit and as equals.

There are some exceptions to these findings, however, and a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate. For example, the analysis also suggested relatively shorter meetings (75 minutes or less) could be utilised without reducing engagement in meetings with small group sizes (e.g. sub-groups) when there is a clear meeting purpose, a specific limited focus of discussion and attendees are clear about their role/reason for attending the meeting.

The engagement of meeting attendees, though important, is only one of many considerations for meeting leaders when planning and facilitating meetings. The observations suggest that these other considerations (explained in Appendix 4) can sometimes conflict with or impede the '*helpful*' factors. The most prominent conflicts mainly revolve around:

- Ensuring meetings are inclusive and attended by all relevant representatives, which, for full partnership meetings, can conflict with having small meeting sizes.
- Having relatively longer meetings, face-to-face, that employ breakout groups to enable discussions and build relations, but which impose a greater time and travel burden and conflict with the limited availability of many members.

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<sup>12</sup> This does not mean that these are the only factors that influence engagement, but simply that these are the factors that were identified in at least one or more meetings by observers.

**Table 7: Factors identified in LCSP meeting observations as influencing attendee engagement**

Factors	Observed influence on attendee engagement
↗ = helpful; → = somewhat helpful; ↘ = hindering; x = mixed	
<b>Meeting Size, Length and Purpose</b>	
<b>Meeting size and attendance</b>	↗ Smaller meeting group sizes [1/5]. ↘ Larger meeting group sizes [2/5].
<b>Meeting length</b>	↘ Relatively short meetings (roughly 75 minutes or less) [1/5]. ↗ Relatively longer meetings (roughly 90 - 180 minutes) [2/5].
<b>Clarity of purpose and role</b>	↗ When attendees are clear about the purpose/focus of the meeting and their role/reason for attending [1/5].
<b>Meeting Methods and Processes</b>	
<b>Meeting formats</b>	x Large procedural-style meetings [2/5]. ↗ Face-to-face and hybrid meetings, compared to virtual meetings [3/5].
<b>Group discussion methods</b>	↘ Full/larger-group discussions compared to breakout/smaller-group discussions [2/5]. ↗ Breakout/smaller-group discussions (followed by feedback to the full-group and full-group discussion), compared only to full-group discussions [1/5].
<b>Facilitation style of the Chair</b>	→ When Chairs allow time and space for comments, questions, and discussion [3/5]. → When Chairs invite specific, relevant attendees for their view [2/5]. ↗ When Chairs treat attendees in a respectful and collegial manner at all times [4/5]. ↘ When the role of Chair is blurred between 'meeting facilitator' and 'meeting participant' [1/5].
<b>Seating arrangements</b>	→ Circular seating arrangements with attendees seated close together [2/5].
<b>Meeting Content</b>	
<b>Updates on LCSP work and activities</b>	↘ When solely delivered by the Chair and/or Coordinator [2/5]. → When also delivered by members [2/5].
<b>Attendee Characteristics and Relationships</b>	
<b>Experience and confidence of attendees in large procedural-type meetings</b>	↗ Members more experienced and confident in committee/procedural-type meetings [3/5]. ↘ Members who are unfamiliar with and lack confidence in committee/procedural-type meetings [2/5].
<b>Familiarity and relations between members</b>	↗ Familiarity with other members, trusting relationships, camaraderie, respectfully interacting with other members as equals and in a collaborative spirit [2/5]. x Where there is an 'Us vs. Them' dynamic between different stakeholder groups [1/5].

### **Conclusion**

The results draw attention to a range of factors that influence meeting attendee engagement. These include the format, length and size of the meeting, and the relations between members. However, other considerations can conflict with or impede factors that are helpful to meeting engagement. A main enhancer is ensuring meetings have wide representation and are accessible for all relevant participants. This leads to two further 'tensions and trade-offs' that are associated with planning and facilitating LCSP meetings -- especially full partnership meetings.

#### **Tension & Trade-Off 4:**

##### *Meeting size Vs. Broad representation and inclusivity*

Related to *Tension & Trade-Off 1*, the 30-person membership of LCSPs is intentionally designed to increase representation, inclusivity and diversity compared to JPCs, yet this appears to be a contributing factor to reduced engagement at full partnership meetings. The most obvious solution would be to reduce the meeting size, but at the risk of reducing representation, inclusivity, and diversity.

#### **Tension & Trade-Off 5:**

##### *Meeting length and format Vs. Members capacity*

Longer meetings held face-to-face could help improve meeting engagement by allowing more opportunities for members to socially interact and build relations, and for Chairs to utilise more innovative processes that facilitate greater engagement. Yet, these would likely impose greater time and travel burdens on members which are already a challenge for many.

The perceived effects of low engagement and participation in meetings were similar to those of low meeting attendance (see pg. 39). In addition, less creative community safety solutions and perceptions of a lack of progress were also noted as possible effects of low engagement. These issues were not considered to be unique to LCSPs, but as universal for partnership structures that would need to be overcome.

“There are great resources there [amongst members], there is a great level of expertise, a great level of knowledge and... all of them are really, really good people. But it's time constraints for them. So how do you make it easy for them to work?... that's a universal issue, it's not specific to us, it's every structure. Like the LCDC structure, it's the same for every structure that you have, that the administrators run it and then you know you get people coming in occasionally, maybe working with someone, giving their opinions on something. But you don't want this partnership to end up being that, run by administration and people just giving their views afterwards” [T2, int-522].

Barriers to members committing and participating fully in LCSPs suggested by participants included:

- **Meeting processes and procedures**

- Formalised, procedural-style meeting processes to accommodate the size of the partnerships.

“The formal meeting itself, of the thirty [members], there's a requirement and a necessity to do them... And they've improved as we go through them, we've learned and each meeting has improved... But we keep coming back to the idea of a partnership of 30 individuals, as a forum, is a challenge” [T2, int-781].

- Uncertainty about how to design meetings in a way that would facilitate improved communication and more equal power relationships, thus enabling all members to feel confident to participate.
- The inability of some members to attend meetings if held in person at times and locations that are inaccessible to them.

- **Member characteristics and competencies**

- Unfamiliarity with the norms and processes of partnerships or with the language/jargon used can limit the confidence of some members participating, particularly for community members who may be new to partnership-working.

“if you come from a particular professional background and language or you have a way of operating like they have in the County Council and then you're a community member and you're not familiar with all of that, it's very difficult to pick up what you're supposed to be doing, how you're supposed to be participating and then giving the time that it requires in order to be able to fully participate” [T2, fg-868].

- Uncertainty amongst some members about their role within the LCSP and how they can help.
- Limited capacity to engage due to other work or life obligations.

“everyone is very busy in their job... it [LCSP participation] is additional to your day job and sometimes it's very hard to find the time to do it” [T2, fg-903].

- The nomination or recruitment of members who are inactive in the community; whose primary motivation may be personal gain rather than community improvement; or simply to “tick a box”.

- **Contextual factors**

- An over-reliance on “goodwill” in the absence of a “statutory legislative base” to compel members to participate.

“I can see a lot of merit in what we are doing here but it is so dependent on so many other stakeholders standing up and saying “yes we will give resources to implement these in the community”... there could be a lot of sort of too-ing and fro-ing and we can't quote any legislation to say "yes you must cooperate" or "you must do this" so it's difficult” [T2, fg-868].

- An over-reliance on a small number of “really strongly engaged [and] enthusiastic people” who themselves may not have strong support from their organisations for LCSP engagement.
- Perceived hesitancy or risk-aversity amongst some members or member organisations to ‘take a leap of faith’ or ‘be the first’ to trial or carry out new activities in partnership with others.

“I am confident that all of the Partners would like to see a new [collaborative] approach work, but there are definite concerns and reluctances to venture into a new and untested process” [T2, int-191].

- An increase in community needs and a perceived deficiency of resources for agencies post-Covid-19, leaving some agency members with very little capacity to participate fully in LCSPs.

The enablers of strong commitment and engagement noted by participants included:

- **Meeting processes and procedures:**

- Workshop-style meetings and the use of small/breakout groups to encourage discussion.

“What is very positive is the smaller working groups, where we have an ability to engage with individuals who have expertise or a specific interest in specific areas, and when that comes into it the meeting works really well, it provides a forum for being -- whether that be community outfits or statutory bodies -- people feel more comfortable in a smaller environment and also talking, conversing about the topic that they're into” [T2, int-781].

- In-person meetings rather than virtual meetings, particularly in the early stages of an LCSP to facilitate quicker and better relationship-building between members.
- Opportunities for one-to-one or “peer-to-peer communication” before, during and after meetings as “that’s really where key matters are discussed and where people can share their experiences”.

- **Recruitment processes**

- That those nominating or recruiting members to the LCSP are familiar with and knowledgeable of the local community and who is active within it.
- Avoiding an over-reliance on a single or small number of sources for recruiting members.

- **Member characteristics and competencies**

- Good buy-in to LCSPs, whereby members perceive LCSPs as a good opportunity.
- Members demonstrating a willingness and openness to engage, understand the perspectives of others and take risks.

“[for] more Partners to work together to address an issue... is dependent on relationships between the Partners and that there is a willingness to gain an

understanding each other's perspective, and even a bit of calculated risk taking on their part" [T2, int-191].

- Members approaching the LCSP with an open, positive and collaborative mindset, rather than a competitive mindset.
  - Members feeling familiar with, experienced and confident in formalised, procedural-style forums and meetings.
  - Members feeling able to discuss issues that have a personal connection to them without perceiving the discussion as a personal slight.
- **Contextual Factors**
    - Good relationships between members to facilitate collaboration.

Many of the enablers suggested above could be considered as personality characteristics and competencies. This speaks to the more general beliefs amongst some members that having the right personalities involved is an important enabler for an effective partnership, as well as being problem-focused -- that is, people looking at the same issue with a view to resolving it, rather than taking it personally or considering it only from their own agency perspective.

"it's about making sure the right people get appointed as well to the positions and that comes back to the day one [of the LCSP]. I can't emphasise how important it is to make sure the right people are appointed to the partnerships and [that they] are people that are in the community, working in the communities, have good personalities [and] they're not there for their own independent role" [T2, int-176].

## Information and resource-sharing: Opportunity for improvement

The level and quality of information-sharing by LCSP members was described as a "work in progress... it was sluggish at first but is starting to come along now". A consistent message from interview and focus group participants across all pilot sites was the call for better information-sharing from An Garda Síochána (AGS) with LCSPs. When compared with Joint Policing Committees (JPCs), there was also widespread agreement that the level and quality of information-sharing by AGS appeared to have declined for LCSPs, though the reasons for a decline are unclear.

"there is also an issue about the level of Garda communication and information sharing with the group vis-a-vie how it would have been progressed around the country through the JPC model and I think there is a deviation between the experience that the JPC had... this is still being teased out between the Department [of Justice] and Garda headquarters... but I would be hoping that this new forum would show an enhanced level of communication... Community safety is not something that [is] simply resolved by boots on the ground and flashing blue lights... But at the same time the Gardai remain a key a key agent in ensuring community safety" [T2, int-296].

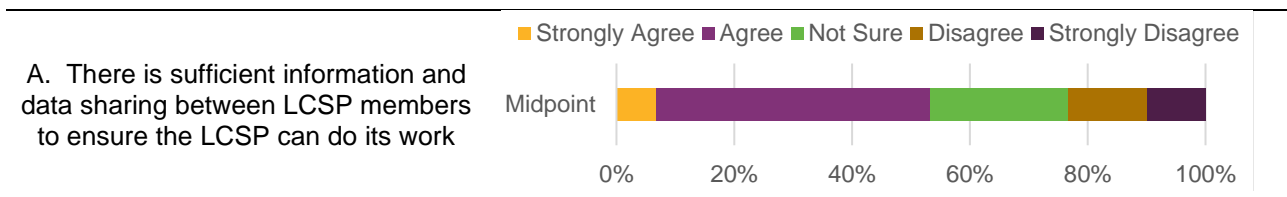
At midpoint, a new item was added to the survey of LCSP members, asking respondents to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. There is sufficient information and data sharing between LCSP members to ensure the LCSP can do its work.

The overall survey findings (see Figure 13) indicate that most respondents 'agreed' (54%) there is sufficient information and data sharing. This is more than double the proportion who 'disagreed' (23%).



Figure 13: Perceptions of information and data sharing among LCSP members



A. There is sufficient information and data sharing between LCSP members to ensure the LCSP can do its work

However, the overall survey results appear to mask large differences in perceptions between the pilot sites. In pilot Z, 91% of respondents ‘agreed’ there was sufficient information and data-sharing. Opinions were more evenly split in pilot Y, with 40% agreeing and 50% disagreeing. And in pilot X, opinions were also split but this time ‘not sure’ was the dominant response (56%) compared to 22% who ‘agreed’ and 22% who ‘disagreed’.

The extent to which these survey results are reflective of objective differences in the level and quality of information-sharing between the pilot sites is unclear from the data available. This may require further exploration at endpoint.

In observations of LCSP meetings, information-sharing between LCSP members was observed - - to varying degrees -- in at least 4 out of 5 observations. During some observations there were positive examples of information and data-sharing being used to identify and understand community safety issues, followed by collaboratively identifying and coordinating solutions. However, this use was not regularly observed. Instead, observations and document analyses suggested a more common purpose for information and data-sharing so far appeared to be to update or educate LCSP members about activities and services within the LCSP area.

At times, relevant data were shared with LCSP members for only a single point in time -- making it difficult to identify trends or changes in outcomes -- or in a raw not user-friendly format that could be difficult to utilise meaningfully without further analysis. It is unclear if the LCSPs have the capacity (in terms of time, skills or technology) for such analysis.

A key barrier to information and data-sharing identified by some participants was the administration and resource strain that gathering, analysing and interpreting data can have on some agencies. This is particularly the case when within a broader organisational context of limited resources and limitations in IT systems, IT skills and data analytics.

“if they [LCSPs] are looking for the kind of things I think they’re going to be looking for, then it could have an administrative burden... unless we have some sort of world class IT system that can give it all out at the push of a button... My one concern would be the data, that we end up requiring backroom staff just to pull all of this data together, which we just don’t have the staff to do. I understand where they’re coming from looking for it. But there’s a presumption that we have access to all this data, [that] we can just push a button and we get all of this printed out with world class systems. It’s not [that] simple” [T2, int-098].

Other barriers to information and data-sharing included:

- Uncertainty and hesitancy about sharing information in the absence of an agreed set of GDPR-compliant data-sharing memoranda and protocols.

“The issue about GDPR needs to be thrashed out... because that stops a whole heap of stuff getting done. It stops me talking to X about Y because my organization hasn’t got an agreement” [T2, fg-643].

According to some participants, poor information and data-sharing can lead to a less reliable understanding of community safety needs; actions and interventions that are poorly targeted

because they are not evidence-informed; and a reduced ability to monitor trends and assess intervention impacts.

“there are issues with data gathering, that really frustrate me because without the evidence base underpinning the actions we’re taking, they’re weaker... at the same time you’d like to think that if somebody is saying [pilot site] has the highest rate of childhood referrals to Tusla, we’d like to see Tusla’s data to confirm it has or it hasn’t, rather than depending on what somebody said at a meeting who might not know or understand” [T2, int-301].

Beyond information and data-sharing, several participants also identified resource-sharing as key to an effective LCSP.

“if all the agencies together don’t act in cohesion... and concentrate on giving the extra resources then this will not be an effective safety partnership” [T2, fg-868].

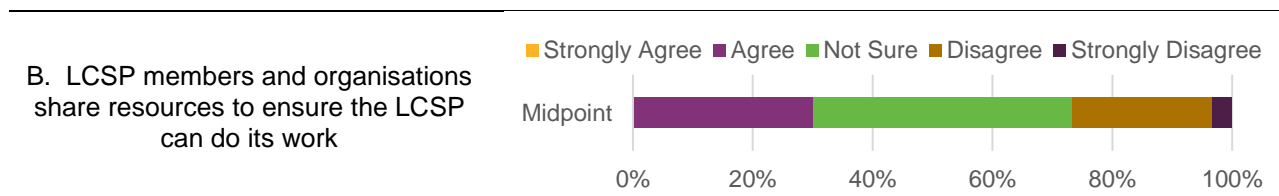
The level and adequacy of resource-sharing amongst LCSP members and member organisations received relatively little attention from interview and focus group participants at midpoint. When it did receive attention, participants tended to identify it as an area for attention and improvement.

“if we had better [financial] contribution from our partners [LCSP members] [it] would be of greater value than specifically financial resource being channelled through the LCSP” [T2, int-781].

To better understand perspectives on this, another new item in the midpoint survey of LCSP members was added, asking respondents to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

B. LCSP members and organisations share resources to ensure the LCSP can do its work.

Figure 14: Perceptions of resource sharing among LCSP members



Overall, 43% responded ‘not sure’, 30% ‘agreed’ and 26% ‘disagreed’, suggesting mixed opinions with a large proportion either uncertain or unaware about the extent or adequacy of resource-sharing. When broken down by pilot (see Appendix C, item 4.7.), the exact results differ but the patterns and conclusions largely align with the overall picture.

From the data available, it is difficult to say what kind of resources were shared amongst LCSP members, in what way, or to what effect. However, participants were able to identify some barriers to resource-sharing within LCSPs. These included:

- Existing resource pressures within member organisations, particularly An Garda Síochána
- A lack of dedicated community safety funding in the budgets of member organisations.

“each agency, each organisation has their own committed budget which they would normally allocate X amount to different programmes and that’s generally done at either the end of the year or at the beginning of the new year, and you know unless they have dedicated funds to support the community safety partnership, we’re constantly beg, borrowing and stealing for different programmes, you know so that that’s a challenge” [T2, int-013].

- Insufficient decision-making power or authority amongst some members to share information or resources on behalf of their organisation.

There were examples of the LCSP Coordinators working closely with other programmes in their local area by “sharing workload”, resources and information on overlapping initiatives.

“We have the [Healthcare initiative] and... we’re looking at the exact same things just through different lenses. We’re working really closely with them... and there’s a synergy there... we’re sharing workload on some initiatives” [T2, int-796].

In these situations, several factors appeared to enable the sharing of workload, resources and information, including:

- Recognition of where the work of LCSPs and other programmes overlap, and where there are opportunities to share.

“I would envision our plan feeding directly into the LECP [Local Economic and Community Plan] because it’s very important... that needs to reflect the community safety issues. So... we’re going to give access to the lads running the LECP or doing the LECP, so they will have access to our information” [T2, int-522].

- Establishing and maintaining good interpersonal relationships with key people in other programmes.
- The co-location of LCSPs with other programmes to facilitate easier, more direct access and communications.

### **Sharing tasks and responsibilities: Responsibility for tasks seems to be spreading and yet a small few are driving the work**

In the period since baseline, Coordinators have emerged, even more so than previously, as key drivers of LCSPs. They are recognised and praised by most evaluation participants for their enthusiasm and the quality and quantity of their work. However, as one participant described, the breadth of the role combined with the high amount of administration meant Coordinators were constantly “very busy... trying to do absolutely everything”.

“the role of the Coordinator is to coordinate, but it’s not actually, the role of the coordinator is actually driving everything... the work is all done kind of by one person and it’s very hard to get people to feed into that. Yet... the board can be quite critical of what’s not being done” [T2, int-522].

An analysis of LCSP meeting minutes (see Box 9) appears to lend some additional support to this view.

Beyond the Coordinator, a picture emerged in interviews and focus groups of the majority of the workload being driven by a relatively small number of “really proactive members” acting as “a great driving force” for LCSPs.

“we’ve worked on some interventions with them [proactive members], developing actions for the plan, going to meetings and just in general having a better working relationship... but again what you’re really talking about there is specific individuals rather than the organisation” [T2, int-796].

Outside this core group of “really proactive members” building the motivation and capacity of most members to take a greater role in delivering tasks was described as a challenge by many participants.

“people [members] aren't interested in giving up their free time [to help with tasks]. I don't blame them to a certain extent because people are busy and if somebody came from another area and asked me to do something like, you know, want you to give away a night, you'd similarly be thinking I've enough to do in my own work and that's the truth” [T2, int-522].

Case Study #3 below offers insights into the sharing of responsibility for community safety across a range of agencies with signs of responsibility spreading beyond An Garda Síochána.

At midpoint, a new item was added to the survey of LCSP members asking to what extent respondents *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. Tasks are distributed fairly between LCSP members.

The responses suggest mixed views.

40% *'agreed'* that tasks were fairly distributed between members, compared to 43% who were *'not sure'* and 17% who *'disagreed'*.

**Box 9: Analysis of the assignment of actions in LCSP meeting minutes**

As part of the document analysis of LCSP meeting minutes for case study #1, the assignment of actions in meetings were analysed. The analysis asked:

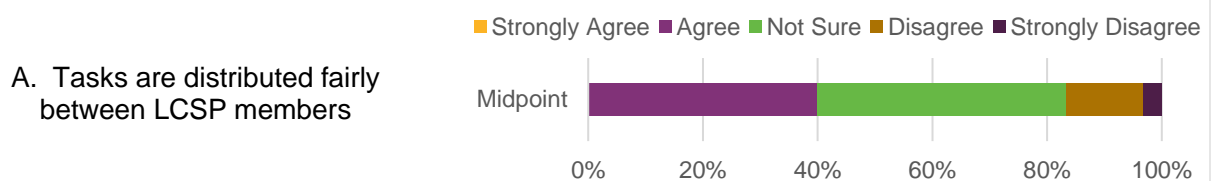
- Were tasks/actions assigned to owners?
- If so, were they assigned to most relevant person/agency?
- Were the tasks/actions followed-up on in the next meeting?

The findings show that for tasks and actions that arose during the meeting, approximately 40% did not record an assigned owner. For actions that did record an assigned owner, the majority of actions were assigned to an owner that the evaluation team classified as 'most likely' the most relevant person or agency to carry out the action.

However, there appeared to be an unequal distribution of ownership of actions and tasks, with the majority of actions being assigned to one individual. For example, in one pilot site over 50% of actions that arose during working group committee meetings were assigned to the coordinator.

For the large majority of meetings, it was unclear whether the actions were followed up with in the following meeting.

**Figure 15: Perceptions of the fairness of task distribution between LCSP members**



When the results are broken down by pilot site (see item 3.10. in Appendix C), significant differences emerge. Only in pilot Z, did a majority of respondents (55%) *'agree'* that tasks were distributed fairly between LCSP members. This compares to 33% who *'agreed'* in pilot X and 30% who *'agreed'* in pilot Y. Furthermore, in pilot Y, those who *'agreed'* was matched by those who *'disagreed'* (30%). However, the considerable proportion of *'not sure'* responses, particularly in pilot X (67%) and pilot Y (40%), also suggest that many respondents are simply unaware of how or to whom are tasks are distributed.

### **Case Study #3:**

#### **Comparing responsibility for actions in the Longford Joint Policing Committee Strategic Plan (2016-2022) and the Longford Local Community Safety Partnership Community Safety Plan (2022-2024)**

##### **Background**

A guiding principle of LCSPs is that community safety is not the responsibility of the police alone. With this in mind, the aims and objectives of LCSPs include the development of “proper strategic partnership approaches to a range of local issues” [*Terms of Reference*] and to improve multi-agency collaboration in each pilot area (Department of Justice, 2021b, p. 3).

Moreover, as detailed in the evaluation baseline report, one of the areas evaluation participants hoped LCSPs may be able to bring added value is planning and delivering more holistic responses to community safety in comparison to JPCs.

At the time of writing, one LCSP has published a community safety plan: Longford LCSP. This provided an opportunity to compare the *Longford LCSP Community Safety Plan (2022-2024)* with its forerunner, *Longford JPC Strategic Plan (2016-2022)*, to assess if improved multi-agency collaboration and more holistic responses to community safety were evident.

##### **Analysis**

The *Longford JPC Strategic Plan (2016-2022)* contains 49 actions. Those assigned responsibility for an action were referred to as “Lead Agencies & Partners”. In total, 15 distinct agencies and groups were listed as “lead agencies & partners”.<sup>13</sup> On average, two “lead agencies & partners” were assigned to each action.

However, as An Garda Síochána (AGS) and Local Authorities are the two core agencies on the JPCs, the vast burden of responsibility falls on both agencies. As shown in Figure 14, AGS was a “lead agency & partner” for 78% (n=38) of actions, along with Longford County Council for 43% (n=21).

In comparison, the *Longford LCSP Community Safety Plan (2022-2024)* contains 62 actions. Those with responsibility for an action were assigned into two separate categories: “Lead Agency” and “Other Stakeholders”. In total, 78 distinct agencies and groups were listed as either a “lead agency” or “other stakeholder”.<sup>14</sup> On average, two “lead agencies” were assigned to each action, rising to 5 when “other stakeholders” were included.

Figure 15 below focuses on LCSP member organisations assigned “lead agency” responsibilities in the *Longford LCSP Community Safety Plan (2022-2024)*. Like the *Longford JPC Strategic Plan (2016-2022)*, An Garda Síochána and Longford County Council again have the largest number and percentage of actions assigned to them (19%, n=12; and 32%, n=20, respectively), though Longford County Council

<sup>13</sup> The ‘JPC’ was listed as a “lead agency & partner” for some actions but we do not include them as a distinct agency or group for the purpose of this analysis. Similarly, within the LCSP community safety plan, we do not include reference to the ‘LCSP Coordinator’ or generic references to the LCSP -- such as ‘Longford LCSP’, ‘LCSP members’, ‘LCSP partner organisations’ or ‘LCSP stakeholders’ -- as a distinct agency or group. This is in an attempt to clearly identify which unique agencies or groups were assigned responsibility for actions, and because most of these generic terms are open to interpretation. When these terms are included in the analysis, the ‘JPC’ was listed as a “lead agency & partner” for 10% of actions. In the LCSP community safety plan, the ‘LCSP Coordinator’ is identified as a ‘lead agency’ in 10% of actions, while ‘Longford LCSP’ is identified as a “lead agency” in 47% of actions and as an “other stakeholder” in a further 27% of actions. The term ‘Longford LCSP’ could be interpreted as implying (1) that all member agencies and groups have responsibility; (2) that the LCSP Coordinator has responsibility but by a different name; or (3) some combination of both. Assuming interpretations (2) or (3) are accurate, that would mean the LCSP Coordinator has “lead agency” responsibility in up to 57% (n=35) of actions, potentially rising to 84% (n=50) of actions if “other stakeholder” responsibilities are included.

<sup>14</sup> This figure could arguably be as low as 34 or as high as 131, depending on how those listed under “lead agency” and “other stakeholders” were categorised. For the purpose of this analysis, they were categorised into 78 distinct agencies and groups.

now holds the largest proportion of “lead agency” responsibilities. When “other stakeholder” responsibilities are included, these figures rise to 39% (n=24) and 58% (n=36) of actions, respectively.

At the same time, there is also evidence of a greater sharing of “lead agency” responsibilities in the LCSP plan compared to the JPC plan. For example, the HSE and Longford Community Resources Ltd are both tied with the third largest share of “lead agency” responsibilities at 11% (n=7) each in the LCSP plan, compared with the Public Participation Network (PPN) in the JPC plan who were designated as a “lead agency & partner” for 8% (n=4) of actions. In addition, while not included in Figure 2, non-LCSP member organisations are also assigned “lead agency” responsibilities for 27% (n=17) of actions in the LCSP plan.

Figure 14: Distribution of Responsibilities for Actions in the Longford JPC Strategic Plan (2016-2022)

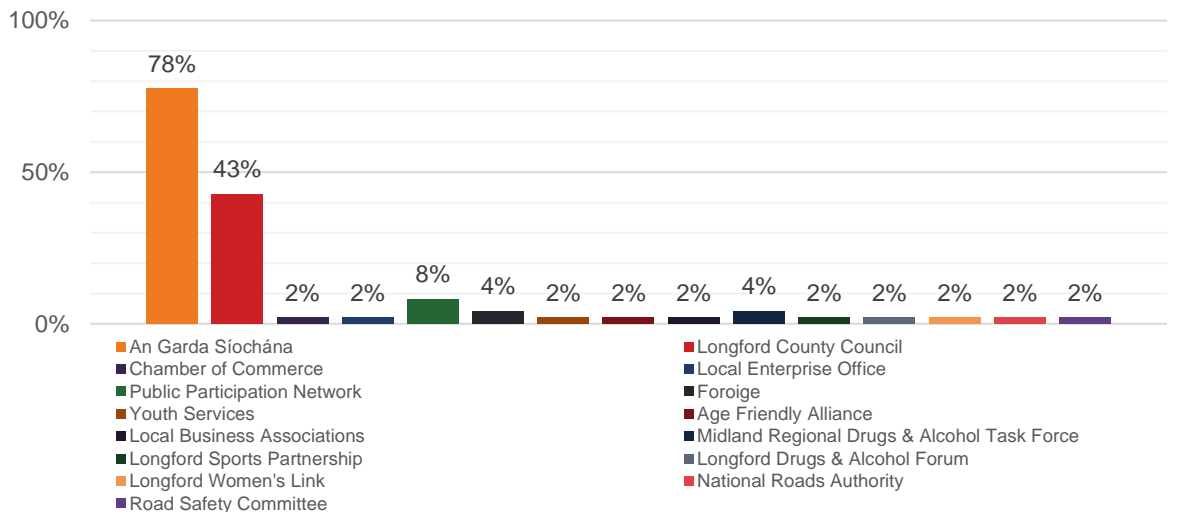
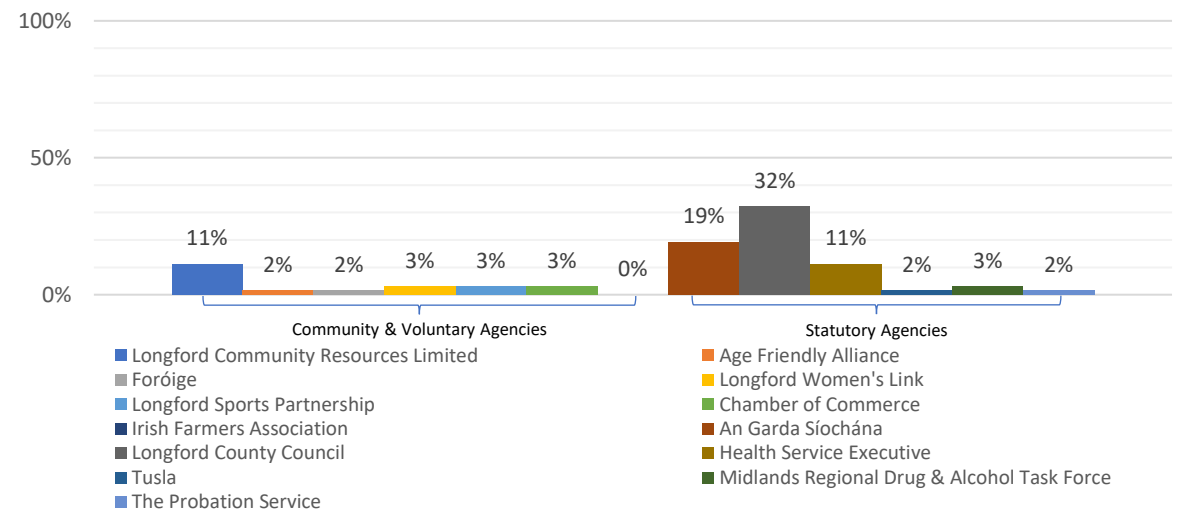


Figure 15: Distribution of "Lead Agency" Responsibilities for Actions in the Longford LCSP Community Safety Plan (2022-2024) amongst LCSP Member Organisations



### Conclusion

When compared with the *Longford JPC Strategic Plan (2016-2022)*, this case study indicates that the *Longford LCSP Community Safety Plan (2022-2024)* has successfully abided by the principle that community safety is not the responsibility of the police alone and has set a foundation for improved multi-agency collaboration and more holistic responses to community safety. To this extent, this case study could be interpreted as confirming the ‘proof of concept’ of LCSPs, at least in relation to community safety planning.

The LCSP plan brings together a wider variety of stakeholders and better shares the responsibilities for community safety actions. In particular, it significantly reduces the number and proportion of community safety responsibilities assigned solely to An Garda Síochána.

However, while the LCSP plan better shares community safety responsibilities, a disproportionately large amount of the responsibilities appear to have shifted from An Garda Síochána to the Local Authority. This indicates considerable scope for further sharing of responsibilities beyond both the Local Authority and An Garda Síochána, both of which continue to retain, by some way, the largest proportions of community safety responsibilities amongst LCSP members.

Some participants identified what they believed could be the potential effects of an over-reliance on a small group of individuals and agencies for taking responsibility for actions. In general, these participants believed it could seriously hamper the ability of the partnerships to achieve many of their main goals - such as improved multi-agency working, improved community trust in local institutions, and ultimately improved community safety.

“the idea of the partnership is agencies working together to enhance community safety, to make people feel safer in their homes and also, one of the things is do people... have greater faith in agencies and in the Community Safety Partnership? Do they have more trust in them? That's one of the tools we will be measured on at the end [LCSP]” [T2, int-522].

Participants identified several factors that enabled members to proactively take ownership of tasks, share responsibilities and drive the work of LCSPs. These included:

- Buy-in and participation from the highest levels of management in LCSP member agencies.
- Projects that are specific, practical, tangible, relevant and beneficial to member organisations and/or the local community.

“In [area]... we are working on a specific project and when it relates to them [members or member organisations] and where they have a kind of a benefit at it, that works well, you know. But I think... when it's very broad and generic, it doesn't work as well. Specific projects pull people together. Strategic stuff, people aren't really interested in that” [T2, int-522].

- Working, from early in the LCSP lifecycle, to strengthen members' belief in the vision of their LCSP and their ability to create change through the LCSP.

On the other hand, potential barriers to task ownership suggested by some members included:

- Perceived inability of a relatively large proportion of members to take responsibility for tasks related to service delivery.

“the community people, like while they can potentially come and contribute to the design of an intervention... very few of them can actually commit to anything or deliver anything, so that's very difficult. And I do think that the community voice is really important, it is extremely important but it's actually agencies or that statutory or community agencies that are going to have to deliver on a huge amount of the interventions” [T2, int-796].

- Insufficient decision-making power among some members. within their own agency, to commit resources or take ownership of an action. This barrier, in turn, is compounded by the:
  - Large size, bureaucratic organisation and differing geographical divisions of some statutory agencies (e.g., HSE and Tusla) which can make it difficult to identify representatives with the appropriate time, local knowledge and decision-making authority to be effective representatives on the LCSP.

- Inadequate national governance structures through which LCSPs can escalate an issue of unsatisfactory representation from statutory agencies.

“this person is like way down on the web in the organisational chart and they're expected to cascade up and it's going nowhere, it's very frustrating... It needs to be a balance, [a member] needs to be local but you also need to have in particular with the agency [members] somebody who has authority to action or commit resources or to change an action plan or whatever the case may be” [T2, int-796].

- Insufficient resources (human, financial, time) to take ownership of and deliver actions.
- Absence of a statutory obligation compelling agencies to engage with LCSPs and assist in the delivery of tasks.

### 3.6. Theme 4 - Partnership-Working in Practice 3: Supporting and Resourcing LCSPs

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This is the last of three themes on 'Partnership-Working in Practice'. These themes are intended to give the reader a sense of what partnership-working is like in practice and the realities of bringing together large diverse groups of people into an LCSP, from the perspective of evaluation participants.

'Partnership-Working in Practice 3' focuses on how participants understand and experience the supports and resources available to LCSPs.

The theme is split into five sub-themes:

- National governance and guidance
- LCSP staff
- LCSP funding
- LCSP training and skills
- Time and space in the LCSP.

## National governance and guidance: Call for more coordination, and streamlined communications

### National oversight

The draft *Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill 2022* intends to establish a comprehensive governance and oversight framework for LCSPs when rolled out nationwide. For the pilot phase of LCSPs, the *Terms of Reference* of each pilot site describe the national oversight structures that are intended to be in place currently (see Box 10).

From data collected early in the midpoint phase, it appeared that a Sponsors' Group was formally operational for only one out of the three pilot sites.

“I've heard there's a sponsors group, but I've had no interaction. I don't even know who's on it for certain... So shall we say the communication flow from the Sponsor's Group to the minions on the ground isn't that effective at the moment” [T2, int-301].



Besides a Sponsors' Group, participants from all pilot sites described the following national oversight mechanisms and communication channels:

- Meetings held between the DoJ and LCSP Chairs and/or Coordinators.
- Monthly written updates on LCSP activities from Coordinators to the DoJ.
- Informal communications between the DoJ and LCSP Chairs and/or Coordinators.

“there are meetings held at intervals, there have been a couple of them between the partnership Coordinators and Chairs and the Department [of Justice], there are informal channels as well” [T2, int-296].

Some participants commenting on this national oversight and governance arrangement believed that the Department of Justice was, for the most part, contactable and listened to feedback from the pilots regardless of a Sponsors' Group.

“The accessibility and availability of the Department [of Justice] has been positive” [T2, int-781].

Other participants, however, in the absence of a Sponsors' Group, did not perceive there to be adequate two-way communication or opportunities to meet regularly between national and local levels, leading to feelings of “frustration” and lack of support, particularly when trying to escalate local issues that require national input to resolve.

Either way, there were relatively consistent calls for a more “regular structured interaction” between LCSPs and the Department of Justice.

In October 2022 a second, combined Sponsors' Group was formally established for the two pilot sites previously without this structure. Both Sponsors' Groups now in operation have the same functions and design, with the exception that the combined Sponsors' Group does not have representation from the Department of the Taoiseach, as agreed by all stakeholders. Perceptions of and satisfaction with the Sponsors' Groups and the more formalised governance arrangements will be further explored at endpoint.

## National-level coordination and commitment

Several member organisations on the LCSP have their own statutory national oversight bodies (e.g., the Policing Authority provide oversight of An Garda Síochána) with an interest in the LCSPs. Some participants reported that requests for information can come from multiple national stakeholders. These requests can, at times, add to the additional administrative work of the Chairpersons and Coordinators and increase duplication when the same information is asked for. As such, some participants noted the potential for more coordinated, streamlined and two-way information-sharing between national and local stakeholders.

### Box 10: The national oversight structure originally intended for the LCSP pilot sites

The *Terms of Reference* of each LCSP make the following provisions for national oversight during the pilot phase:

- Oversight of the Local Community Safety Partnership will be led by a Sponsors' Group comprised of officials from the Department of Justice, the Department of the Taoiseach and [each Local Authority].
- The Sponsors' Group will engage primarily through the Chairperson of the Local Community Safety Partnership in order to:
  - Receive updates on the activities of the LCSP, engagement of representatives on the partnership and engagement with the wider community.
  - Administer funding to the LCSPs for community safety activities.
- The Local Community Safety Partnership shall provide regular updates to the Sponsors' Group on the performance of its functions.
- The Sponsors' Group will support the work of the Local Community Safety Partnership and the Community Safety Coordinator and will be responsive to issues as they arise.

“they [oversight bodies] write [to] us regularly, they all want to monitor what we're doing but it's all one-way information flow and again I think that the [LCSP oversight] structure that they set up nationally could maybe have us all in the room at the one time for feed down to us as well as feed up” [T2, int-301].

At a local level, all three LCSPs appear to be operating in a crowded environment, whereby several pre-existing partnership-structures may be separately working to address overlapping community issues. In the absence of coordination between these partnership-structures, some of the potential effects of this noted by participants are duplication of services, reduced capacity and motivation of those members on multiple partnerships, the incentivisation of competition rather than collaboration, and at times an inefficient distribution and use of resources.

“particularly here in [LCSP area], there's been such an overlap with... the work of ourselves and many other organisations. Where there is a bit of an overlap, the same people are being asked to attend similar meetings at different organisations at multiple locations” [T2, int-781].

In practice, some of these potential effects have been mitigated at the local level where LCSPs have a good understanding of the ‘partnership landscape’, are co-located with other partnerships, use the work of pre-existing partnerships to inform the work of LCSPs, actively reach out to other partnerships to collaborate, and/or include other partnerships in the LCSP membership. Nonetheless, as these partnership-structures often come under the remit of different government departments, improved national-level coordination of the ‘partnership landscape’ was suggested as a necessity to improve the context nationwide.

“We have a couple of other similar initiatives [operating in the local area]. I just think they need to... coordinate better up at central [national-level] because there's lots of similar things being funded but they're not coordinated well. There's a new thing coming into [local area]... which will be really great but another agency is running it... they're going to have to set up a similar structure... and the nature of that organisation, they're difficult to work with as it is... they will want to retain as much as they can for themselves” [T2, int-796].

This echoes calls for “more cross-departmental and whole-of-government involvement and commitment” to demonstrate high-level buy-in to LCSPs and encourage greater commitment to LCSPs from statutory agencies at a local level.

“What we're trying to do is to create that cross agency cooperation at a local level... However, I would like to see it being demonstrated at a national level and that there is a full buy-in by government departments and that they are working together and coordinating on what needs to be done at a very strategic and government level... if we don't see a whole of government approach to this, that to me is going to be the significant barrier because at the end of the day agencies and organisations will need to be able to incorporate it [community safety] in their corporate plans, their strategic plans. If it's not in those plans it does not form part of the of their priority list” [T2, int-013].

Contributing to a desire for more “whole-of-government involvement and commitment” is a recognition, amongst some local stakeholders, that “some issues are local issues but oftentimes safety issues can be regional or national issues” that are beyond the remit of the Department of Justice to resolve alone.

In interviews and focus groups, participants reported how the attendance of high-level government figures at LCSP events created a perception of high-level political buy-in to LCSPs. This was said to improve local-level buy-in from members and the local community to LCSPs.

“the Minister for Justice showed up at that [LCSP event] which gave us a bit of a boost in terms of recognition, that there was political buy in and at the highest level” [T2, int-301].

## LCSP staff: An essential resource needing more support

All three LCSP pilot sites are staffed by a full-time Coordinator. The Coordinator is supported by a full-time administrator in one pilot site, part-time administrative support in a second pilot site, and a part-time student researcher in a third pilot site.

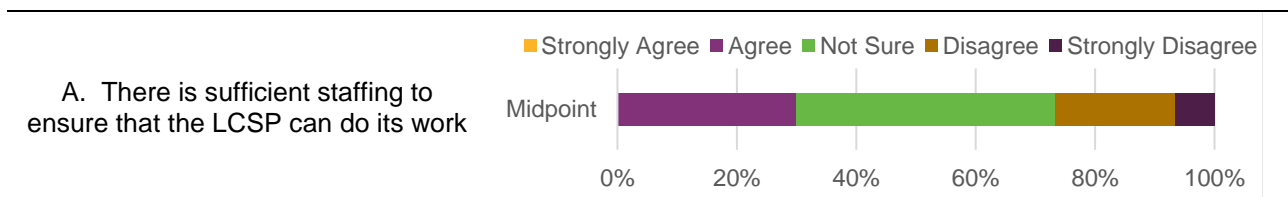
As mentioned previously, Coordinators are considered an essential resource. However, there is evidence to suggest that Coordinators are being “overworked”, particularly in those pilot sites without full-time administrative support. Some participants questioned the sustainability of this situation.

“The administrator [Coordinator] does trojan work but must be working day and night to try and get all done and long term I doubt this is sustainable” [T2, sur-654].

At midpoint an item was added to the LCSP members survey asking to what extent members *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. There is sufficient staffing to ensure that the LCSP can do its work.

Figure 16: Perceptions of the sufficiency of LCSP staffing amongst LCSP members



Despite the consistency of the message in interviews and focus groups about the need for additional human resources for the LCSPs, the survey results show mixed views about the sufficiency of staffing: 43% were ‘not sure’, 30% ‘agreed’ and 27% ‘disagreed’ there is sufficient staffing. When broken down by pilot site (see Appendix C, item 4.4.), there is some variation, and yet ‘not sure’ is the joint most popular response in all pilot sites (ranging from 36% of respondents in pilot Z to 50% in pilot Y). When ‘not sure’ responses are excluded, the proportion of respondents who ‘disagreed’ outweighed those who ‘agreed’ in two of the three pilot sites. However, none of the ‘agreed’ or ‘disagreed’ responses reached a majority in any pilot site.

It is difficult to definitively explain the contrasting findings between the qualitative and quantitative data above. Given that the evaluation team have worked closely with -- and observed first-hand the busyness of -- Coordinators, in addition to the relatively high proportion of ‘not sure’ responses in the members survey, the most likely explanation may be that much of the work of Coordinators is hidden -- ‘behind the scenes’ -- and thus goes unnoticed by most LCSP members simply through lack of awareness.

“the day-to-day work that [Coordinator]... and [Chairperson] are involved in... we don’t know the day-to-day work assigned... I’m not aware of what they’re doing on a day-to-day basis” [T2, fg-084].

Certainly, amongst interview participants most familiar with the day-to-day workings of the role, there were clear calls for full-time administrative support for LCSP Coordinators at the minimum

to ensure the role is tenable long-term. As stated already, one LCSP had full-time administrative support for LCSP Coordinators at the midpoint phase and clearly identified the benefits of this, noting how an additional staff improves the LCSPs communications with the local community, the capacity of the LCSP to carry out work, and the professionalism of the LCSP.

“the additional support is of great value. It has been necessary to establish and maintain effective communications with callers to the office, ensure that the phones are answered and messages taken, emails acknowledged, meetings recorded and so on. The effective running of the office is critical to establishing a professional working standard with the partners (LCSP members) and all other stakeholders”.

## LCSP funding: Not clear yet how much is needed, though it may be more than is currently given

While many participants recognise that “there are opportunities for shared resources” between agencies on the LCSPs, this was typically accompanied by the belief that:

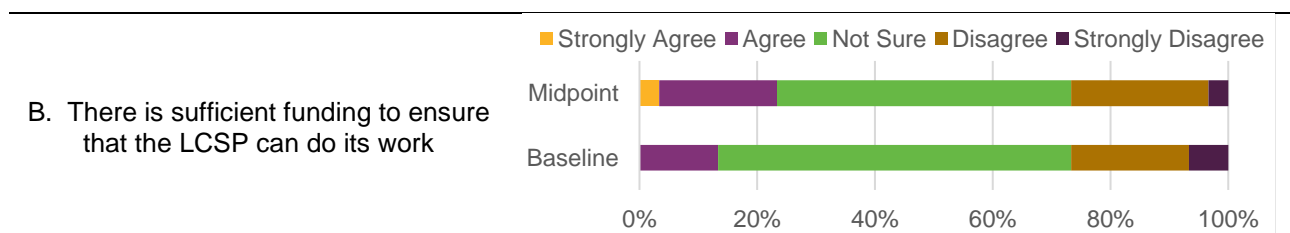
“additional resources are needed along with that [sharing of resources] and the outcome of this whole thing will be dependent on the actions of relevant agencies around the table and the resources that come at the end of it as well” [T2, fg-868].

To this extent, adequate funding was seen as essential to the future success of LCSPs. In the survey of LCSP members, respondents were asked at baseline and midpoint to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- B. There is sufficient funding to ensure that the LCSP can do its work.

There was relatively high uncertainty amongst members about the sufficiency of LCSP funding (50% *not sure*), despite a small improvement in those who *agreed* at midpoint (23% *agreed* or *strongly agreed*) compared to baseline (13% *agreed* or *strongly agreed*). The high proportion of *not sure* responses suggests that many members are unaware of the level funding received by or budgeted for their LCSP (see Box 11 for funding information).

Figure 17: Perceptions of the sufficiency of LCSP funding amongst LCSP members



Interesting differences emerge in the survey results when broken down by pilot site, though the reasons for these differences are difficult to explain from the data available, at this point. In pilot X, for example, a majority of respondents *disagreed* (55%) that there is sufficient funding for the LCSP to do its work. This compares with pilots Y and Z where *not sure* received the most responses (70% and 45%, respectively).

Open-text responses to this survey item also revealed a range of conflicting opinions.

“I don’t know enough about funding to answer some of the questions” [T2, sur-654].

“On finance, so far there have been no issues but I expect that this will be an issue in time” [T2, sur-654].

“...it is the level of resources that will ultimately determine its [the LCSPs] success and at present they are wholly inadequate” [T2, sur-654].

Nevertheless, there was general agreement that the level of funding needed would likely increase into the future as the workload of LCSPs grows, as understanding of the resourcing needs of LCSPs improves, and as the focus on community safety interventions starts taking priority over community safety planning. The provision of such funding was seen as critical to the success of LCSPs.

“the budget came in quite close to what we proposed would be a necessary budget... [but] it's only as we're getting busier, I can already see that we need more and more money” [T2, int-176].

On the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022, the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee, opened applications to the Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF, see Box 11). On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, it was announced the LCSP pilots would receive grants for community safety projects ranging from €66,403 in Waterford LCSP up to the maximum grant of €150,000 in Dublin North Inner City LCSP. By this time, the vast bulk of data collection for the midpoint phase had been completed and data about whether or to what extent the CSIF funding changed the perceptions of evaluation participants is not yet available. However, prior to the CSIF funding announcement, participants believed the benefits of additional funding would include the demonstration of government commitment to LCSPs, an enabler for LCSPs to carry out activities and deliver services, and added credibility to LCSPs as vehicles for community safety improvements.

“the [CSIF] funding that the Department [of Justice] has identified that they're going to give us to support, we hope, some of our initiatives, that has to be a positive from my point of view... it gives us a bit of extra credibility and that it [LCSP] is not just a talking shop, things are going to happen” [T2, int-301].

Beyond the core funding and CSIF grants of LCSPs, it was also suggested that making available “discretionary funding” in a way that would allow LCSPs to replicate CSIF grants at a smaller local scale could be a powerful tool for generating local-level buy-in and credibility for LCSPs. This could also provide another avenue for identifying and understanding community safety needs.

#### Box 11: LCSP budgets and funding

Information supplied to the evaluation team from the Department of Justice states that the core budgets for the 2-year duration of each of the pilots is:

- Dublin North Inner City: €350,670
- Waterford: €270,600
- Longford: €270,600

Funding for the core budgets in each pilot comes from the Department of Justice, supported by the Local Authority. In Dublin North Inner City, the North East Inner City (NEIC) initiative also provides core funding.

In addition, each pilot site has also received additional funding outside its core budget for various resourcing needs (e.g., Community Safety Innovation Funding). When funding from all sources is taken into account, the actual funding received in each pilot up to the end of 2022 was:

- Dublin North Inner City: €625,424
- Waterford: €337,557
- Longford: €408,100.

“you could actually do ‘safety grants’ that they [LCSPs or local authorities] could allocate a portion of money to say community safety at a local level for small projects... I know it's more work, but we'll be receiving the application, we would be able to assess them, we'll be able to identify needs in different communities. It gives us more buy-in into communities that like someone comes because they have an issue there and you can go and you can work with them on it, whereas otherwise it doesn't happen and also just gives us a little bit more authority and... a bit more purchase” [T2, int-522].

**Box 12: Brief Description of the Community Safety Innovation Fund**

The Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF) -- which was set up to reinvest proceeds of crime seized by the Criminal Assets Bureau back into communities -- was announced in April 2021 by then Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee, and Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Michael McGrath.

A year later, the fund opened for its first round of applications in April 2022 and a total of 124 were received by the deadline of 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The CSIF invited applications from community safety initiatives as well as groups co-funded with local authorities, NGOs and community organisations working on issues relevant to community safety and youth justice.

The fund was allocated a budget of €2million in 2022, increasing to €3million in 2023. In total, 22 projects across the Republic of Ireland, including the LCSPs, received grants ranging from €5,000 to €150,000 to support the delivery of innovative projects to improve community safety in their local areas (see Appendix 2 for the list of grantees). The grants, and the projects they were received for in each LCSP, are listed below:

**Table 8: LCSP projects receiving Community Safety Innovation Funding in 2022**

Applicant	Project	Funding Received
Longford LCSP	Cornerstone Initiatives	€137,500
Dublin LCSP	Community Safety Warden Scheme	€150,000
Waterford LCSP	Dungarvan Community Project	€41,403
Waterford LCSP	Waterford North West Suburbs Community Action Plan	€25,000

In addition, Dublin City University was awarded €103,546 to deliver the ‘Moving Well, Being Well’ programme in the three LCSP pilot site areas.

Competition for funding is a contextual factor outside of LCSPs that could influence how LCSP member organisations work together and interact. Some participants believed, for example, that competition for funding between member organisations could incentivise against collaboration within the LCSPs.

“if they [LCSP member organisation] need the funding in order to provide those services and then there's another group looking for the same funding, it can be a challenge then because it could become personal between organisations, not necessarily personal as in people, but within organisations” [T2, fg-206].

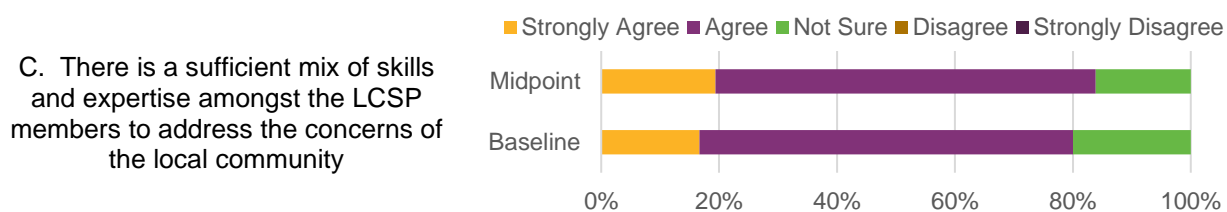
## LCSP training and skills: Members’ skills are seen as a strength, and training needs are slowly emerging

The baseline report found that “one of the benefits of a large partnership like LCSPs identified by participants was the inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders... with various skills, expertise and perspectives” (CES/UL Evaluation Team, 2022, p. 46).

Survey data suggest this belief was held just as strongly by the midpoint phase. For instance, the survey of LCSP members asked respondents -- at both baseline and midpoint -- to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

- C. There is a sufficient mix of skills and expertise amongst the LCSP members to address the concerns of the local community.

**Figure 18: Perceptions of the sufficiency of skills and expertise amongst LCSP members**



As shown in Figure 18 above, 84% of respondents ‘agreed’ with this statement, up from 80% at baseline. Even within each of the three pilot sites, large majorities ‘agreed’ with this statement, ranging from 73% in pilot Y to 100% in pilot Z (see Appendix C, item 4.2.).

In regards to training and supports, during the baseline phase participants generally believed that “training is going to be important” but it was unclear at the time what training would be needed (CES/UL Evaluation Team, 2022). During interviews and focus groups at the midpoint phase, training and support needs for LCSP members were slowly beginning to emerge, in areas including (but not limited to) ‘how to collaborate’, ‘how to problem-solve’, and the ‘roles and responsibilities of LCSP members’ (see pg. 98-99 for more suggestions).

This emergence of training needs was further supported in the community safety plan of Longford LCSP (see Box 13 for more).

To better understand the extent to which members believed training and supports were needed, the survey of LCSP members asked to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- D. There is sufficient training and support available to LCSP members to help them carry out their role.

The results in Figure 19 confirm that uncertainty about training and supports needs decreased from baseline to midpoint (respondents who were ‘not sure’ went from 63% at baseline to 33% at midpoint). Surprisingly though, given the relative consistency of the message in interviews and focus groups, more midpoint respondents ‘agreed’ (40%) there is sufficient training and support available to LCSP members than ‘disagreed’ (27%).

**Box 13: Training and capacity-building in the Longford Local Community Safety Plan**

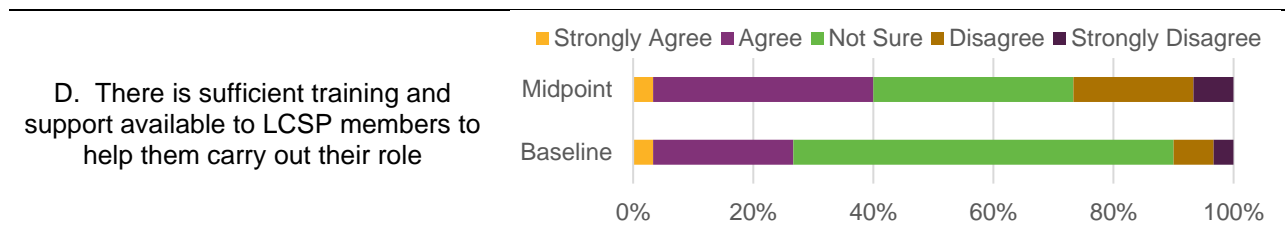
The *Longford Local Community Safety Plan 2022-2024* lists 6 priority areas with 17 objectives and 62 actions. Priority area 2 of the plan is to “build capacity and drive collaboration” within the LCSP. Within that, objective 4 of the plan is the “development of a training programme for members of Longford LCSP... to ensure members are comfortable with inter-agency collaboration”. Finally, the actions within this objective lists two training programmes to be developed and delivered to LCSP members:

- LCSP Training Programme
- Executive Leadership Programme.

Capacity-building is a consistent theme throughout the community safety plan.

For instance, all 62 actions are categorised into four groups, one of which is ‘capacity/relationship-building’. This is defined as an “action or initiative... to build skills, knowledge and confidence of stakeholder, community groups and residents so they can contribute to the improving of community safety or building better working relationships”. 81% (n=50) of the actions in the plan were categorised as being fully or partially focused on ‘capacity/relationship-building’.

Figure 19: Perceptions of the sufficiency of training and supports available to LCSP members



When broken down by pilot site, different pictures emerge (see Appendix C, item 4.3). For instance, only in pilot Z did a majority ‘agree’ (56%) that there is sufficient training and support. In pilot X, a majority were still ‘not sure’ (56%), while opinions in pilot Y were split between 40% who ‘agreed’ and 40% who ‘disagreed’. While these results suggest that the extent to which training and support needs for LCSP members vary across the pilots, they also confirm that a significant minority -- ranging from roughly 1-in-5 (18%) to 2-in-5 (40%) -- of LCSP members believe more training and support is needed to help them carry out their role.

At midpoint, evaluation participants identified the main barriers to the delivery and receipt of training for LCSP members as being limited capacity, motivation and funding to undertake training in most cases.

“...there's training needed... to enable them to do this partnership work to come and work collaboratively but people are unwilling to undertake training because they're so busy or they've done enough training before and that kind of thing” [T2, int-796].

Also, finding training that specifically meets the needs of the partnerships was described as a challenge.

“How do agencies come together to solve problems properly?... I've tried to research it and there's very vague training courses around certain elements of it. But we couldn't find a training course really tightly specifically for agencies in Ireland to work together with communities on specific problems -- and real problems -- and what the end result is” [T2, int-522].

## Time and space in the LCSPs: Enough space, not enough time

LCSP members are volunteers, active citizens - giving of their time to their community. They do not receive remuneration for participating in LCSPs. At baseline, the “substantial voluntary commitment” required from LCSP members to the partnerships was noted as a potential challenge (CES/UL Evaluation Team, 2022, p. 47). By midpoint, this had become a major challenge for many members, to the extent that it appears to be a contributing factor for some to the limited meeting attendance and turnover in membership to date.

“a challenge I think with such partnership would be the time commitment and we have seen some people drop off the partnership because they weren't able to commit to the level of time you need to commit to this to make it a success for the group your representing... members of the partnership have had to really juggle in terms of making ourselves available” [T2, fg-206].

Some members indicated that more information from the beginning of their membership about the time needed to participate in LCSPs could enable future members to better manage their time commitments and, thus, their engagement with LCSPs.



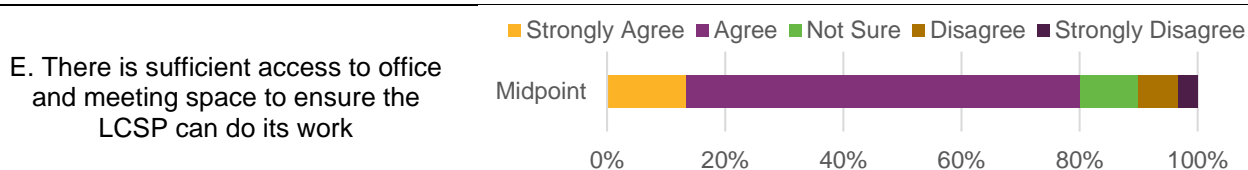
“When this was pitched to us to come onto this panel I don't think we were prepared, well I know I certainly wasn't, for the level of time it was going to take” [T2, fg-206].

At the end of baseline, two out of three pilots had a dedicated office space, which meant views differed considerably between pilot sites about the adequacy of accommodation.

By the beginning of the midpoint phase, all three pilots had an office space. To assess members' views on this at midpoint, a new item was added to the survey of LCSP members, asking to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- E. There is sufficient access to office and meeting space to ensure the LCSP can do its work.

**Figure 20: Perceptions of the sufficiency of access to office and meeting space amongst LCSP members**



As can be seen in Figure 20, a large majority of respondents (80%) *agreed* by midpoint that there is sufficient access to office and meeting space. There was some minor variation in this result across the pilots. Those responding ‘*agree*’ or ‘*strongly agree*’ ranged from 60% in pilot Y to 100% in pilot Z. Open-text survey responses suggest the difference in rates of agreement might be partially explained by differences in the use of virtual meetings rather than in-person meetings.

“The meetings are still remote so I would not know what meeting spaces are available to us” [T2, sur-654].

The design and location of the LCSP offices emerged as important factors at midpoint. Strengths and weaknesses were identified relevant to the offices in each area. For example, when an LCSP office was located within the main office building of the local authority, the greater visibility of the Coordinator for local authority staff was seen as an enabler for improved communication and support from the local authority.

However, locating the LCSP office inside a local authority office building could come at the expense of reduced visibility and accessibility for the local community. Street-facing offices located in higher-density areas could potentially improve visibility, accessibility, and awareness of the LCSP for some of the local community.

### 3.7. Theme 5 - Community engagement and community safety: Importance is growing

This theme focuses on the crucial work of engaging communities and addressing community safety concerns. At this midpoint phase of the evaluation, the findings are largely descriptive. They discuss, for example, how LCSPs appear to be approaching community engagement and community safety, perceptions of the quality and appropriateness of these approaches, and factors that appear to help, hinder or influence them in some way.

It indicates the growing importance that community engagement and community safety initiatives took within LCSPs compared to the baseline phase, while also recognising that LCSPs are at a stage of development where this aspect of the work still has room to grow and mature over time.

The theme is divided into four sub-themes:

- Approaches to and perceptions of community engagement
- Large-scale public consultations
- Enablers and barriers to community engagement
- Approaches and perceptions of community safety activities.

## Approaches to and perceptions of community engagement

Community engagement is a consistent theme in the Department of Justice's *Community Safety Policy Paper* and *Terms of Reference* of each LCSP. Collectively, these documents state that LCSPs should, for example, "listen to the local community about safety concerns", that "communication with the community is central to the work" of LCSPs, and that LCSPs should aim to "foster sustained community involvement" in their activities so that local communities feel "empowered".

LCSPs engage with communities in three ways:

1. By recruiting and engaging with community representatives *inside* the partnership.
2. By engaging *indirectly* with local communities *outside* of the partnership via a third party (e.g., by gathering local community views through second-hand sources like non-community representatives on the LCSP or external consultants assisting with public consultations).
3. By engaging *directly* with local communities *outside* of the partnership.

Previous themes have focused on the engagement of LCSPs with community representatives *inside* the partnership. This sub-theme focuses primarily on the engagement of LCSPs with local communities *outside* the partnership (unless otherwise stated).

The Baseline report documented that early community engagement efforts by the LCSPs were seriously hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic. The baseline findings also indicated early variations in the sequencing of activities with "some of the LCSPs initially focusing their efforts on forming and building their partnerships before engaging heavily in community engagement activities". Other LCSPs "appeared to focus simultaneously, in the early stages, on forming and building the partnership *and* engaging the community" (CES/UL Evaluation Team, 2022, p. 59, original emphasis). Nevertheless, by the end of baseline, all three pilots (to varying degrees) were progressing work on community engagement. Various strategies and methods were employed to do this, including (but not limited to):

- Setting up web pages with LCSP contact details for the general public
- Holding large online public engagement and information events
- Outreaching to local residents or community groups and encouraging direct contact with the LCSP to establish two-way communication lines.

By the end of midpoint data collection, all three pilot sites appeared to have had a "big escalation in community engagement", in terms of efforts by the partnerships to reach out to the community but also in terms of the local community groups or residents reaching out directly to the LCSPs. There was also evidence of LCSPs expanding their 'community engagement toolkit' with new engagement approaches observed at midpoint. These included, for example:

- Holding large-scale public consultations to inform the development of local community safety plans.
- Communicating through social media channels and attending events to share information and improve awareness of LCSPs.
- Arranging community events and programmes either as targeted interventions in response to community safety concerns and/or to build relations with local residents and stakeholders.

As at baseline, the specific approaches used and the sequencing of these approaches across the pilot sites vary. For example, by the end of midpoint data collection, large-scale public consultations were completed in one pilot, ongoing in a second pilot, and being planned in a third pilot (see Case Studies #4 and #5 for more).

At a local level, several factors appeared to influence the particular approaches to community engagement in each LCSP. Collectively, these factors suggest that there is no ‘one-size fits all’ approach for LCSPs to engage with local communities. Rather, the appropriateness and feasibility of certain community engagement approaches will vary according to the stage of development, local context and capacities of each LCSP. These influencing factors are described in Table 9 below. These are indicative rather than exhaustive:

**Table 9: Local level factors influencing approaches to community engagement**

### 1. The size, geography and population density of an LCSP area

The LCSPs pilot sites were intentionally selected in part because of their very different sizes, geographies and population densities. On a day-to-day basis, a high volume of in-person face-to-face interactions are far less feasible in large rural areas compared to small urban areas without those LCSPs becoming highly mobile or far greater resourced. Instead, telephone or digital communications with people from local communities are more likely to play a stronger role in day-to-day community engagements in larger rural areas.

### 2. The availability, design and location of an LCSP office

The LCSP offices provide a consistent physical setting for local people to meet and engage with LCSPs, generally via the Coordinator. As described previously, LCSP offices were set up at different times in different pilots, and the design and location of the offices vary significantly too. While all offices are located in town or city areas, the physical layout and specific locations of the offices are more amenable to certain forms of community engagement than others.

The office descriptions below are not scientific but are intended to give a quick sense of some key differences in the design and location of the LCSP offices:

- Office 1: Street-facing ground-floor office with a large open window in a high-density city area with a large population of local residents in the immediate vicinity.
- Office 2: Street-facing first-floor office in a “corporate” part of a medium-density city area with a smaller local population of residents in the immediate vicinity compared to office 1.
- Office 3: Non-street-facing ground floor office of a corporate building in a medium-density town with a smaller local population of residents in the immediate vicinity compared to office 1.

The design and location of office 1, compared to offices 2 and 3, improves its visibility and accessibility for local residents to “stop and look” and “have a chat and engage” in a way that is less likely to happen with offices 2 and 3. The design and location of office 1 may promote and facilitate more spontaneous, face-to-face interactions between LCSP staff and local residents compared to offices 2 and 3. This can come with costs, however, as it also promotes a more “reactive” way of working for LCSP staff that requires daily plans and priorities to be flexible.

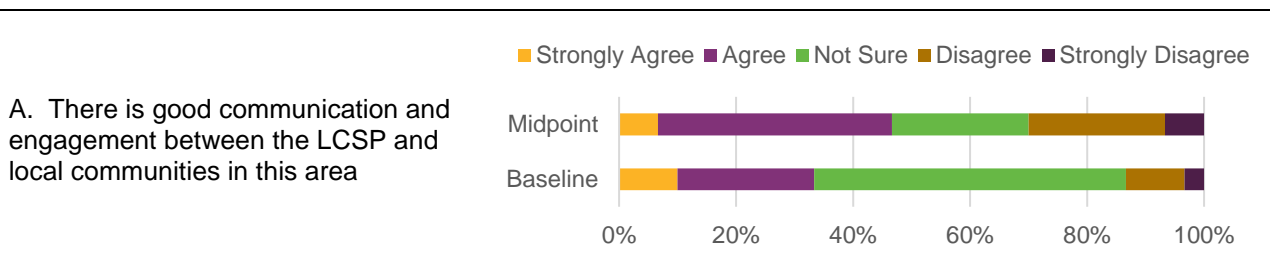
### 3. The approach to and progress of developing a local community safety plan

All three LCSPs have voiced their intention to conduct large-scale public consultations to inform the development of their local community safety plans. The extent to which this had been completed, at the time of this report, depended on the stage of development of the community safety plans in each site.

In the survey of LCSP members, at both baseline and midpoint, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

- A. There is good communication and engagement between the LCSP and local communities in this area.

**Figure 21: Perceptions of communication between LCSP sites and local communities**



At initial glance, the overall results suggest views on this statement may be becoming more polarised between LCSP members at midpoint compared to baseline, with increases in both the proportion of respondents who ‘agree’ (47% at midpoint, up 14% points on baseline) and ‘disagree’ (30% at midpoint, up 17% points on baseline).

However, when the midpoint results are analysed by pilot site, differences between the sites emerge. For instance, in pilot Z a large majority of respondents ‘agreed’ (82%) there is good communication and engagement between their LCSP and local communities. On the other hand, in pilots X and Y, the proportion of respondents who ‘disagreed’ (44% and 50%, respectively) outweighed the respondents who ‘agreed’ (33% and 20%, respectively) with the statement.

From the data available, it is not possible to say definitively the extent to which the survey results reflect actual objective differences in the quality and quantity of engagement between the LCSPs and their local communities. Feedback from qualitative sources<sup>15</sup> suggest there may be several other considerations that help explain these variations in results. These include the satisfaction of members with the community engagement efforts of their partnership, regardless of its actual objective quantity or quality. This in turn appears to be influenced by other factors such as the level of awareness and involvement of members in communications and community engagement activities; varying expectations about the type and levels of community engagement that LCSPs should be carrying out; and perceptions of the communities response to engagement efforts. That is, the extent to which members are aware of, feel part of, approve of their LCSPs community engagement approach and believe it to be successful may also be influencing their perceptions of its quality and quantity.

“just seeing people engaging, gives us feedback that we are reaching out and we are communicating” [T2, fg-206].

“it was raised that the kind of questions asked of the community will direct our [work, and] it was requested in meeting that all reps [LCSP representatives] see and agree questions before data collection happened. [It] did not happen - I've no idea [about the] questions which will ultimately guide our work” [T2, sur-654].

This learning brings community engagement back into the realm of partnership-working. Namely, it suggests that to improve members perceptions of the quality of community engagement, LCSPs should actively and continuously strive to keep members aware of, involved in decisions about, and supported to participate in community engagement activities.

The results of an early snapshot survey of a small number of random members of the community in one pilot site location indicate that there is awareness of the LCSP and appreciation for its

<sup>15</sup> Interviews, focus groups and open-text survey responses.

intentions. Sixty percent of those surveyed had heard of the LCSP in their area. All agreed that the setting up of the LCSP is a good way to deal with community safety issues. Respondents were less sure about who was involved in the LCSP and the fact that a community safety plan is being prepared for their area. The majority were unsure, at this point, whether the community safety plan will focus on the main community safety issues in their area. This was largely down to limited detailed awareness of the work of the LCSP, at that point in time. This will be explored further at endpoint (see Appendix E for more detail).

## A closer look at large-scale public consultation processes

All three LCSP pilots have used, or intend to use, large-scale public consultations to inform the identification of community safety needs and priorities within their community safety plans. By the end of midpoint data collection, one pilot had completed its public consultation and a second pilot was nearing completion. Case study #4 outlines in more detail some of the processes used as part of the consultations, while case study #5 turns focus to a specific consultation method: the 'on-street pop-up consultation'.

Some of the potential benefits of large-scale public consultations noted in interviews and focus groups included:

- A broadening of perspectives and community input beyond the LCSP membership.
- New insights into, and a deeper appreciation of, local community safety issues, needs, gaps and assets.

“the consultation with all the community groups is a great learning experience for everybody and appreciation that other people have problems as well as yourself” [T2, fg-206].

- Provides opportunities for people “to be part of realising a community that you want to live in” and invites “people to be part of the solution”.
- Increased confidence amongst members in the local community safety plan and actions intended to address community safety issues.
- Community feedback and input help establish a baseline of people’s perceptions of safety and LCSPs which can be measured over time to track change and impact.

In interviews and focus groups, participants were asked if any groups were particularly hard-to-reach during the public consultations. Traveller communities, migrant communities or communities not fluent in English, victims of violent crimes, youth, and people with digital literacy issues were sometimes identified as groups that were harder-to-reach or inadequately engaged, though this tended to vary by pilot site.

“[LCSP area] has got a huge Slovak community... the school [has] over [X] children and... a quarter anyway of the population will be Slovak children or Roma children right, but... there's very little engagement with that community” [T2, fg-903].

## **Case Study #4:**

### **Document analysis of large-scale public consultation processes and reach in two pilot sites**

#### **Background**

By the end of midpoint data collection, two of three pilots had conducted -- or were in the process of conducting -- large-scale public consultations to inform the development and priorities of their community safety plans.<sup>16</sup> Both pilots supplied the evaluation team with documentation about their public consultations. Using these, the evaluation team sought to describe the public consultations processes and extract learning that may be of help to future LCSPs on (1) public consultation planning; and (2) public consultation delivery.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Analysis**

Both pilot sites shared a similar primary purpose for their consultations: gathering the views of the local community to inform the development of their community safety plans. Pilot K, unlike pilot L, obtained assistance from an external organisation in the planning and delivery of its public consultation (though both pilots received external support in analysing the data gathered). With this support, pilot K had a well-developed public consultation plan that clearly articulated the target groups of the consultation, methods to reach these groups, as well as a workplan with key dates and milestones.

Timeframes for consulting the public differed considerably, and yet lengthy periods of time were required for both pilots -- roughly 1-3 months -- indicating the high degree of time and effort that can be required to adequately conduct large-scale public consultations. The documentation suggests that both sites targeted individuals that live, work, or visit the community as well as community groups and organisations. Many of the community groups targeted in both pilot sites were intended to gather the views of marginalised communities or groups who are traditionally under-represented in such consultations, such as youth, refugees, travellers and older persons. Pilot D also specifically targeted businesses through their online survey.

To improve the inclusivity, accessibility and representativeness of the consultations, both pilots employed multiple consultation methods. Surveys and open public meetings were used in both sites to gather a broad range of views, with focus groups typically used to target specific groups or stakeholders that might otherwise be hard-to-reach. Pilot K also used 'pop-up consultations' (see Case Study #5) and social media campaigns. From the documents available, pilot L may have consulted just over 1% of the population in its area.<sup>18</sup> In pilot K, however, it is not possible to comment on the percentage of the population reached from the data available as the public consultation was still ongoing by the end of midpoint data collection. The survey data in both pilots suggest there was far stronger engagement from females than males with the community safety surveys, however, with nearly three times more women than men responding in both sites.

The barriers and enablers identified in the documentation varied between pilots L and K. For example, barriers to large public consultations included low initial uptake to participate in focus groups due to challenges recruiting participants. One site also noted difficulties accessing relevant up-to-date data in a timely way that could inform the development of community safety profiles, analyses and interventions. Enablers included creating and leveraging local connections with key stakeholders to improve buy-in and participation in the consultation; acquiring external technical assistance where needed (e.g. feedback analysis); and the attendance of high-level political leaders at consultation events to demonstrate support for, and add credibility to, the consultations.

<sup>16</sup> A large-scale public consultation was due to start in the third pilot shortly after the midpoint data collection phase ended.

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that the public consultation had only been completed in one of the sites (pilot L) by the end of midpoint data collection, meaning documentation covering the whole public engagement process is not available for one pilot site (pilot K).

<sup>18</sup> This is assuming there is no overlap in the samples of different consultation methods in pilot L.

**Table 10: Comparison of public consultation planning and delivery in pilot K and pilot L**

Aspect of Public Consultation	Pilot K	Pilot L
<b>Public Consultation Planning</b>		
<b>Consultation purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ascertain local community views, inclusive of all ages and levels of society.</li> <li>- Promote local collaboration and participation throughout the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritise safety issues and solutions identified by the community.</li> <li>- Measure baseline level of community safety, familiarity with relevant agencies and willingness to participate in LCSP initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation plan</b>	Yes	Not clear
<b>Assistance from external experts</b>	Yes	No
<b>Public Consultation Delivery</b>		
<b>Consultation length</b>	3+ months	4-5 weeks
<b>Consultation methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online and paper surveys</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Town hall meetings</li> <li>- Pop-up consultations</li> <li>- Social media campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online survey</li> <li>- In-person focus groups</li> <li>- Open public meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation reach</b>	<p><u>Online and paper surveys*</u> 560+ responses (0.4% of pilot K population)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 69% female; 29% male; 2% non-binary/gender non-conforming.</li> <li>- 93% Irish; 7% of other nationalities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Focus groups and town hall meetings</u> Not clear from data available. To be updated at endpoint.</p> <p><u>Pop-up consultations</u> Not clear from data available. To be updated at endpoint.</p>	<p><u>Online survey</u> 335 responses (0.7% of pilot L population)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 73% female; 26% male.</li> <li>- 83% Irish; 17% of other ethnicities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Focus Groups and public meetings</u> 208 individual participants (0.4% of pilot L population)</p>
<b>Assistance from external experts</b>	Yes	No

*\*After 5 weeks of launching the online survey. Survey was still open at midpoint so the final number of responses is likely to be higher.*

### **Conclusions**

This case study was largely limited to a description of some of the processes used in the public consultations of pilots K and L, based on documentation available to the evaluation team, rather than an analysis of the quality and effectiveness of the consultations. Nevertheless, the findings suggest, large-scale public consultations are an important way for LCSPs to gather the views of a relatively large proportion of the local community in a systematic, time-bounded way. They can be time, effort and resource-intensive, and some partnerships may require outside technical assistance for consultation processes to support this specific type of work.

Both pilots documented genuine efforts to be as inclusive and representative as possible within the time and resources available to them. The learning suggests that future partnerships could utilise multiple consultation methods to enhance the inclusivity, accessibility and representativeness of their consultations. The results indicate that female participation appears to have greatly outweighed male participation in both pilots K and L, and future partnerships may also want to consider ways to re-balance this. Finally, technical assistance; creating and leveraging local connections; and the visible presence of high-level political leaders at consultation events are enablers that can strengthen the credibility, reach and quality of LCSP public consultations.

## **Case Study #5:**

### **Observations and learnings from ‘on-street pop-up consultations’ in pilot K**

#### **Background**

Two ‘on-street pop-up consultations’ were observed by the Community Based Researcher in pilot K at midpoint. These ‘pop-ups’ were conducted by an external consultancy on behalf of the LCSP at two locations:

- Pop-up event one was held for 90 minutes. It took place in good weather on a Friday afternoon in August at a rural train station with a greenway passing alongside it.
- Pop-up event two was held for 2 hours. It again took place in good weather on a Friday afternoon in August, this time at various locations (close to street shops and walkways) in a town centre.

The pop-ups were “aimed at anyone who lives, works, or is visiting [pilot K]”. Each pop-up was intended to last 1-2 hours with a target engagement of 30-50 people per pop-up [T2, Doc-655]. The process was

“designed to capture public input into the [pilot K] Community Safety Plan in an organic way and aims to expand the inclusivity, accessibility and reach of the public consultation process... By meeting people in the places they are already visiting, [this] provides access to the consultation process in the course of their day-to-day lives and in places they are already familiar with” [T2, Doc-655].

Pop-up stations consisted of a pull-up banner and question boards inviting passers-by to share their views by posting sticky notes on the board [T2, Doc-655].

#### **Analysis**

An estimated 50-70 people in total engaged with the pop-up events, across both sites, with a roughly equal balance of males and females. Consultants were responsive and adaptive, quickly moving the ‘pop-up’ station from ‘quieter’ to ‘busier’ locations when needed. Those that engaged tended to be older, with fewer young people approaching the station. People often approached the stands out of curiosity as they passed by and were encouraged to give opinions. The facilitation style allowed for people to say what they wanted and be on their way. The general feel was friendly and informal -- in tune with the pop up/consultative intentions -- with people volunteering more if they wanted.

Some people wrote their community safety priorities on post it notes and stuck these to a board that was available to capture this data. The plan was to get a graded level of answers that were placed on the notice board in colour co-ordinated boxes, which added a curiosity to the display and allowed the public to see their contribution becoming part of the consultation immediately. These were gathered by the facilitators when they were finished for reference. We do not have the precise detail of the community safety concerns of those who participated as their verbal contributions were not recorded. However, most expressed that they felt safe in the pop-up event areas, particularly compared to other venues in the main town/city where street lighting and the safety of young women on the streets were noted as dominant themes. Some also expressed unease regarding cyclists on the greenway not paying attention to others on the route.

#### **Conclusions**

The pop-up events worked well for their intended purpose. They appear to offer opportunities for open and inclusive engagement with people in specific local areas to give their views in preparation for the community safety plan. The process also gave some visibility to the LCSP. Potential drawbacks of the method, however, are that its reach is limited to those specific times, places and people who frequent the locations chosen for ‘on-street pop-ups’. It is likely reliant on good weather and people feeling comfortable and motivated to approach the stand, meaning careful planning in terms of the ‘when, where and how’ is required to maximise the reach of on-street pop-up consultations. When used as part of a broader suite of engagement methods, on-street pop-up consultations can be a useful tool that help to “expand the inclusivity, accessibility and reach of a public consultation by meeting people in the places they frequent.



## A closer look at enablers and barriers to community engagement

In interviews and focus groups, participants identified a range of barriers and enablers to LCSPs engaging with local communities. The enablers include:

- Building new relationships between LCSP members, staff and other organisations can:
  - facilitate LCSPs in improving their understanding of the community safety needs and concerns of different stakeholders, as well as any pertinent local sensitivities. These needs, concerns and sensitivities can then be incorporated into the work programme and decision-making processes of LCSPs and used to facilitate further future community engagements.

“There has been an escalation in community engagement. This is mainly reliant on relationship building with stakeholders in or associated with the Partnership. [As] a result of gaining an increased understanding of their work commitments and aims I have been able to isolate issues that are likely to reveal concerns of safety or perception of safety and have been able to include [in] our agenda to the work already ongoing” [T2, int-191].

- lead to increased contacts between the LCSP and local stakeholders, and opportunities to improve visibility, awareness and engagement in the community.

“There has been an increased number of callers to the office bringing issues to our attention. We are also being invited to more events, meetings, etc., all lending themselves improved visibility in the community. Again, these opportunities to engage are based on building relationships with stakeholders and gatekeepers” [T2, int-191].

- Leveraging the pre-existing connections and reach into communities that LCSP representatives and member organisations already have. This, in turn, is facilitated by:
  - good buy-in to LCSPs from members and the general public.
  - building good personal relations between LCSP staff and members.

“because of the Coordinator and the partners, we're getting more involved with the partners because they are more familiar with us and they're asking us to come to things, so [that leads to] more community engagement in a nutshell” [T2, int-755].

- organisational leaders encouraging their staff to actively engage with LCSPs.

“we've strong [organisational department] team. And I essentially told them they have to work together with the coordinator and with the chair to bring issues at a community level to focus... so they are on a day-to-day basis engaging with residents and with community groups and residents' associations and that has been made available to the Coordinator and the Chair. And on top of that then there's been very good engagement with individual elected members... and [they] facilitated engagement with community groups. The personal relationships are important in ensuring good community consultation” [T2, int-586].

- Identifying and building good relationships with structures, services and community leaders outside the membership of LCSPs that already engage with hard-to-reach groups and can facilitate access for LCSPs. The success of this approach, however, depends upon the reach and engagement that the supporting structures, services or community leaders have with hard-to-reach groups and the extent to which they are able/willing to facilitate direct access to group members.

“we have fairly active structures, and we have very good engagement with Traveller representatives, however, they are generally Traveller women with very little engagement with the male population. This is problematic, though that's not unique to [area]” [T2, int-586].

- Improving the accessibility of LCSPs by having a wide range of methods through which local communities can engage.
- LCSP representatives “being present”, “being available” and “being visible” in local communities across the whole geographic area of an LCSP, not just in the main urban centres. Related to this is an ability for a partnership to be mobile or have a physical presence in more than one location to facilitate greater visibility and accessibility across the entirety of an LCSPs geographic area.

“[A] mobile office would be critical because visibility is a huge thing and if people see this coming into their estates and they're there to talk to them, to interface with them, coming to them rather than calling them to meetings at 7 o'clock in the evening when [it] doesn't suit people... I think that will be significant. That people start to see us and hopefully get comfortable with the process and feel that there is somebody there” [T2, fg-868].

- Tailoring specific engagement methods to the needs, capabilities and motivations of a target population, as well as to the times and places that will maximise their reach.

“we had this challenge getting feedback from the people. And what we said was, if we go off out into the street and approach people at the peak hours, morning or in the evening -- nobody wants to talk to you... So, we adapted to that and we came up with a QR code. So, what we were doing was just giving it out to people, they could scan it and do it and do it at a later time” [T2, fg-643].

- LCSP members, member organisations and staff actively identifying and facilitating opportunities to promote their LCSP; “finding a space” for the participation of “individuals who we feel have a positive contribution to make”; and affirming to local communities “the value of their input, their contributions”.

“The partnership was advertised in the [LCSP member organisation] leaflet, which I would have seen and also on their social media. And I would just think more of that and more often would be one of the keys because the [LCSP member organisation] leaflet does go everywhere” [T2, fg-643].

- Attendance of high-level government figures at LCSP community engagement events to demonstrate government buy-in and add credibility to LCSPs.
- External specialist support may help improve the capacities of LCSPs to plan, conduct and analyse large-scale public consultations. However, external specialists may themselves need the regular support of the LCSP to reach deeply and broadly into communities if they do not have established connections into local communities. As such, significant time and effort may still be required from LCSPs even with external specialist supports in public consultations. If working with external specialists, LCSPs can support them to reach broadly and deeply into communities by:
  - Acting as a source of knowledge and advice about the local community context.
  - Providing access to LCSP members and their networks, who can act as distribution and information channels for members of the public to get involved in the consultations.
  - Identifying community leaders not on the partnership and leveraging their influence to encourage members of the public to participate.

- Doing some of the public consultation work directly (e.g. conducting focus groups) if the influence and credibility of LCSP staff and members is necessary to boost the likelihood of public participation.
- Setting ambitious yet realistic targets for response rates and maintaining accountability for reaching those targets.

On the other hand, potential barriers to community engagement included:

- Apprehension, distrust, or low motivation among some communities to engage with state services.

“The crossover between phone numbers, email addresses, etc., [of the LCSP and local authority] creates confusion around who you are representing. Local authority housing tenants recognise phone prefixes, email addresses... [and] if the family perceive themselves to have had a negative experience with the [local authority] then there may be an additional hurdle to jump in order to gain trust” [T2, int-191].

- Cultural and language barriers arising from the diversity of migrant communities in some areas. This can be compounded by low visibility of some migrant communities and limited cultural awareness within LCSPs.

“There is a strong migrant population, particularly in [area]... it just proves difficult to engage. Language can be a problem and cultural issues – there are so many communities, and nobody knows they're here” [T2, int-586].

- The tendency for community engagements to “engage with people who are ready to engage anyway”.
- The limited reach and low public awareness of structures that can support their engagement with LCSPs.

“it always surprises me how little awareness... people [have] in the community around the country about the PPN [Public Participation Network] and the function itself as being the middleman between people in the community and the local authority and the government essentially” [T2, fg-206].

- Uncertainty or lack of knowledge about effective strategies for engaging different ‘hard-to-reach’ community groups.

“we tried to engage with kids, engage with more schools and stuff like that, but they're not bothered, it's not cool to clean-up rubbish- which is fine. We are trying different things... and we're trying to offer all sorts of bribes to get younger kids who would be sitting around... to come and give us a dig out” [T2, fg-643].

- A perceived gap in, and time needed to develop, “strong community leadership” or “strong community support” for LCSPs that can help to build community “trust” in LCSPs.
- Low initial levels of community awareness of LCSPs, their members, and inadequate public information about how to contact relevant representatives.

“there really isn't much knowledge that the LCSP exists beyond a small core of people. So you know, I guess what would be beneficial for me is if a message had been sent out, you know saying that this exists and there is an LGBT Rep within this organization if you want to contact the LCSP with issues regards to safety in your part of the LGBT community” [T2, fg-084].

- Related to this, is the barrier of competing priorities and finite time and resources of LCSP staff and members, which can lead to an over-reliance on LCSP Coordinators to engage communities.

“[LCSP Coordinator] has been out and about in areas [engaging community groups]... And in fairness, [they’re] only one person” [T2, fg-643].

- Lack of coordination between different organisations conducting separate community consultations. This in turn is believed by some participants to negatively impact response rates by creating an environment of ‘consultation overload’ within local communities who then become frustrated at a perceived lack of action on the back of public consultations.

“the other area [barrier] is community consultation and overload... The LCDC [Local Community Development Committee] is out doing their consultation... like people do get sick of it and they don't see action and then they're saying you know “I'm talking to everyone and there's no action so what's all this about”. I'm not sure if every organisation needs to be engaged in public consultation, can we not feed off one another's consultation?” [T2, int-301].

- Challenges in differentiating and distinguishing LCSPs from the many other organisations and services providing support to local communities.

“there's so many different facilities and organisations around... So, when you look at any sort of supports, there are all these different organisations. So, I think if the partnership is the only thing that exists there, I think everybody would know about it” [T2, fg-643].

- Organisations ‘protecting their patch’ by blocking or limiting the access of LCSPs to engaging or consulting the communities they service.
- The diverse or scattered nature of some community groups that lack a representative body or individual that can help efficiently coordinate their engagement.

“we tried to [engage] all the youth clubs and it... was quite a challenge in the sense that everybody... does their own thing” [T2, fg-643].

## Approaches and perceptions of community safety activities

Guidance in the *Terms of Reference* of each LCSP direct the partnerships towards strategic, coordinated and collaborative approaches to resolving community safety concerns identified and prioritised by local communities. In addition, the LCSPs are encouraged to empower communities through the co-design and co-delivery of solutions (see Box 14).

**Box 14: Guidance in the LCSP Terms of Reference on approaches and processes for addressing community safety concerns**

The *Terms of Reference* (ToR) of each LCSP give the following direction on approaches and processes to addressing community safety issues. For instance, the overarching objective of LCSPs, as per the ToRs, is that “Local Community Safety Partnerships will take a *strategic approach* to their work so that issues arising can be dealt with in a *coordinated* manner, addressed *collectively* by relevant service providers *in partnership with the community*” (pg.2, emphasis added). Within this, sub-objectives state:

- A *local community safety plan* will be developed which will reflect priorities identified by the community.
- Relevant service providers... will work *collaboratively* on solutions to safety issues.
- The community will be... *empowered to participate* in community safety activities in the area” [pg.2, emphasis added].

To achieve these objectives, the ToRs also state that the functions of LCSPs are:

- To drive community safety programmes and interventions that are responsive to local needs and well-integrated across service providers.
- To identify specific initiatives where the community can support local services and An Garda Síochána in their community safety work, including outreach programmes.
- Foster opportunities for community participation in community safety activities.

In evaluating the extent to which the LCSPs have been able to apply this guidance in practice, much of the analysis so far on partnership-working and community engagement lends insight to this. To briefly recap several pertinent examples, by the end of midpoint data collection:

- LCSPs were engaging with local communities using various methods to understand community safety needs and priorities, and either have or are working towards publishing local community safety plans that are informed by these engagements [Theme 5, sub-theme 1].
- Although the timing of work to progress community safety initiatives varied across the three pilot sites, this aspect of LCSPs has gradually grown since the baseline phase and all three LCSPs started implementing community safety interventions of various sizes and scales, before publishing community safety plans [Theme 1, sub-theme 2].
- Sub-groups were established in each LCSP and it is here that much of the practical work related to community safety interventions is expected to happen, though there have been challenges “to get [sub-group] meetings going” in some areas [Theme 2, sub-theme 1].
- Poor or intermittent meeting attendance, when it occurred, was believed to reduce the timeliness of decision-making and action-delivery to address community safety concerns [Theme 3, sub-theme 1].
- While there have been some early examples of multi-agency collaborations and community co-design and co-delivery across the pilots, by and large the majority of the workload of LCSPs so far appears to be resting primarily on LCSP staff and a relatively small number of “really proactive members” [Theme 3, sub-theme 3, section 5]. This is related to broader challenges across the partnerships in generating -- or ensuring opportunities for -- the *active* participation of LCSP members, including community representatives [Theme 3, sub-theme 3, section 3]. There is also a belief amongst some participants that a relatively large proportion of members lack the capacity or motivation to take responsibility for tasks related to service delivery [Theme 3, sub-theme 3, section 5].
- Limitations in information and data-sharing amongst LCSP members and member organisations could contribute to a less reliable understanding of community safety

needs; actions and interventions that are poorly targeted; and a reduced ability for LCSPs to assess their impacts [Theme 3, sub-theme 3, section 4].

To give a sense of *some* of the community safety interventions delivered across the three pilots by the end of midpoint data collection (i.e., early November 2022), Table 11 (pg. 88) lists and describes a selection of 1-2 interventions from each site.

While all three pilots were working towards a community safety plan, only one LCSP had published a community safety plan by the end of midpoint data collection. Based on participants experience to date, it was suggested that for a community safety plan to be successful, it should have the following characteristics:

- Specific and bounded with a focus on key priorities, but also flexible enough to meet new and emerging needs and priorities.
- Sets timelines, targets and actions that are realistic and achievable.
- Fosters responsibility and accountability by collaboratively developing the plan with all members, identifying lead agencies for each action, monitoring progress and implementing mechanisms for progress to be reported back to the wider partnership.

“it will have to be owned and contributed and devised and developed, we will hope, by the board with input from all... The community safety plan would be the bones of a thousand pages if we choose to look at every single issue that's to be addressed under the term 'safety'. So, I think we'll have to be focussed. And... [they] have to be achievable, realistic goals that we set” [T2, int-781].

The publication of a community safety plan was considered by some participants to be “the highlight of the partnership so far” -- a key output and goal achieved within an ambitious yet achievable timeframe that imbued a sense of progress, pride and achievement amongst the LCSP members. Nevertheless, several participants from across the partnerships were keen to stress that “the plan shouldn't be the endgame”. Rather the community safety plan should be treated as “a tool in your armoury”. Such perspectives typically reflected a belief that the success of the partnerships ultimately depended upon the action its takes to improve safety, rather than the publication of plans per se. To this extent, the importance of “quick wins” achieved regularly and from early in the development of LCSPs was highlighted as important by several participants for increasing perceptions of progress, generating buy-in to LCSPs, and gradually embedding the LCSP in communities.

“I keep talking about quick wins, easy wins, do the basics right, get that right, and then people will start to buy into it and then there will be a sense that things are maybe getting a bit better... So, back again to your earlier question: how do you embed the community safety partnership in the community or how do they know it's there? I would say by doing small actions multiplied by a lot of times, with a regular review -- knock on doors -- is the way you get this thing embedded into communities” [T2, int-947].

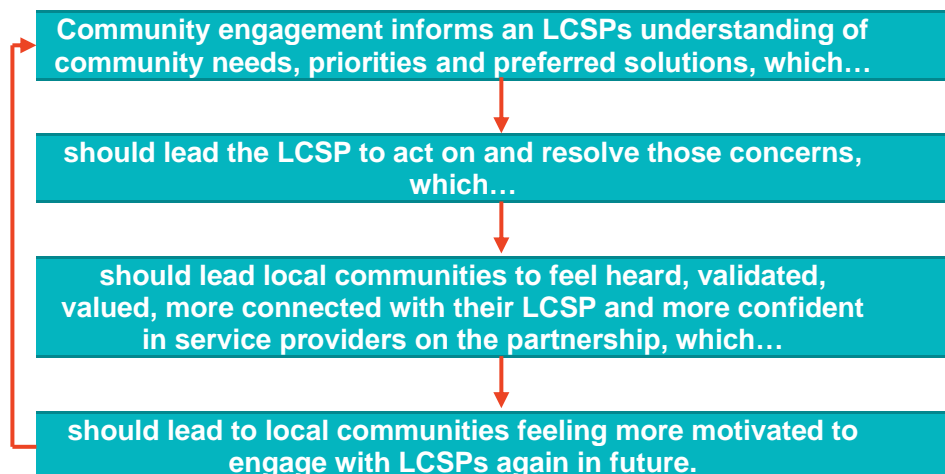
Closely related to the idea of ‘quick wins’ was the idea of timely responses to community safety concerns brought to the attention of LCSPs by the local community.

“The communities gain confidence in seeing immediate responses to changes they want to see brought about” [T2, int-191].

Underlying the importance of timely actions on community safety concerns for some participants was the assumption of a feedback loop whereby community engagement is assumed to prompt LCSP action. This in turn is assumed to prompt future community engagement (assuming the LCSP action is perceived positively). This assumed feedback loop is described in Figure 22 below:

“I know from experience where somebody was giving out about something on Facebook and I contacted them later on [and] brought it back to the [local authority] and they responded positively and you know she felt so seen, she felt really visible, and she actually followed up on Facebook as well where she was giving out, you know, with compliments to say "now I'm glad I highlighted this"” [T2, fg-206].

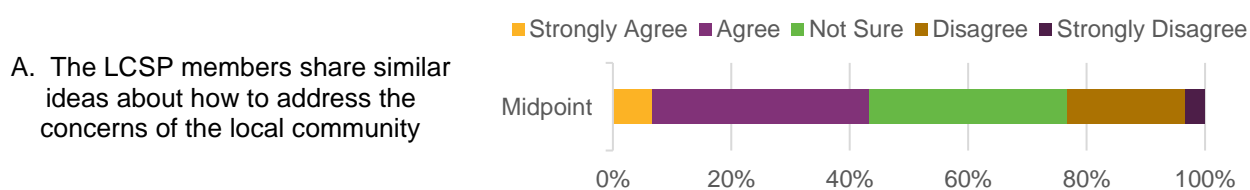
Figure 22: Hypothesised feedback loop between community engagement and LCSP community safety actions



At midpoint, a new item was added to the survey of LCSP members asking to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. The LCSP members share similar ideas about how to address the concerns of the local community.

Figure 23: Perceptions of the similarity of ideas amongst LCSP members for resolving community safety concerns



The overall findings suggest a divergence of views and lack of consensus, with 44% *agreeing*, 33% *not sure* and 23% *disagreeing* with the statement. On the face of it, these results are to be somewhat expected given the diversity of representatives and backgrounds on the LCSPs. Nor is a divergence of views necessarily a negative as it could be perceived as reflective of a greater diversity of ideas.

‘Diverse representation’ is unlikely to fully explain the results though, as when responses are assessed by pilot site the results indicate considerable differences between areas. For instance, in pilot Z, most respondents (63%) *agreed* that LCSP members in their pilot share similar ideas about how to address the concerns of the local community. The remaining pilot Z respondents (37%) were *not sure*, meaning no pilot Z respondents *disagreed* with the statement. In comparison, in pilot Y, those who *disagreed* (50%) outweighed the percentage of respondents who *agreed* (30%), while pilot X appeared to occupy a middle ground.

It is difficult to definitively explain the variance in results between the pilots from the data available. Potentially, as discussed previously, pilot Y results might reflect wider concerns amongst some respondents about commitment to the principle of a community-led partnership (see pg. 40-41), as these concerns might also indicate differences in the perceived role of the local community in resolving community safety concerns. Looking more broadly to all three pilot sites, there is also some limited qualitative data from both baseline and midpoint to suggest differing perspectives within some pilot sites about the timing and ambitiousness of the interventions that should be pursued from an early stage. For example, some participants preferred to develop a robust community safety plan before delivering community safety interventions, with others advocating ‘quick wins’. Similarly, some participants believed that prevention and early intervention initiatives focusing on the root causes of crime could be a strength of LCSPs, while others believed such an approach to be a longer-term focus for LCSPs, advocating instead a short-to-medium-term focus on small, tangible, practical interventions that make a difference in people’s day-to-day lives.

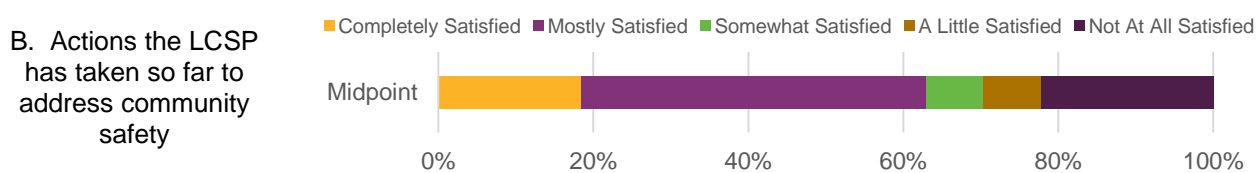
“I keep talking about quick wins, easy wins, do the basics right... and don’t be worried about changing the world. And that’s a challenge. It [community safety plan] can... start talking about things like societal change or things that were just never going to be achieved in this lifetime... it should be seen as a long, 10-year kind of implementation phase. And in that first couple of years, it should be around doing small things well. Then you might take on [larger] things around psychiatric help for [example]” [T2, int-947].

At present, each of these explanations requires further examination at endpoint to confirm or refute them. The survey of LCSP members also asked respondents to what extent they were satisfied with:

B. Actions the LCSP has taken so far to address community safety.

The overall results indicate a majority of respondents (63%) across the pilot sites to be ‘*completely or mostly satisfied*’. A significant minority, roughly 1-in-5 (22%) of respondents, however, were ‘*not at all satisfied*’.

Figure 24: Members’ satisfaction with community safety actions of their LCSP



An analysis by pilot sites revealed significant differences in views. A clear majority in pilots X and Z were ‘*mostly or completely satisfied*’ with the actions their LCSP has taken so far to address community safety (67% and 91%, respectively), while most respondents in pilot Y were ‘*a little or not at all satisfied*’ (70%).

Open-text survey responses suggest that perceived delays or slowness in the delivery of actions to address community safety concerns can lead to frustration and a perceived lack of progress amongst members, in turn contributing to increased dissatisfaction.

“Very detailed planning and discussion which is positive however the translation to practical outcomes appears slow” [T2, sur-654].



This insight appears to lend some support to views about the importance of achieving 'quick wins' from relatively early in a partnership's development to generate perceptions of achievement and progress and improve confidence.

"there's no way to build confidence in structure more than getting that visibility of actual delivery of something" [T2, int-301].

Enablers identified by participants for the (co-)design and (co-)delivery of community safety interventions included:

- Commitment and engagement from public services with LCSPs and their goals.
- Leaders and champions within a partnership that can generate buy-in and belief in an initiative as well as a sense of togetherness amongst members and the community to motivate their involvement in action-delivery.
- Building relationships with local residents and community leaders to build trust in the partnership.
- "Early wins" or "quick wins" in specific locales can instil a sense of progress and improve community buy-in, confidence and engagement as long as communities and members are aware of the wins.

Barriers identified by participants to (co-)designing and (co-)delivering community safety interventions include:

- Inadequate organisational resources (human, financial and time) amongst LCSP members.
- Limited LCSP resources (human, financial and time) to address all community safety needs in an area.

"let's say... all these little communities here know about the partnership and they come with all the issues and, you know, their suggestions, whatever. We have one Coordinator, so that's going to create a huge bottleneck. And the reason I'm saying that is because I have a list of things that I'm trying to get them through [LCSP Coordinator] and it's just kind of on the back burner" [T2, fg-643].

- Lack of commitment to LCSPs, inability to adapt to partnership-working or absence of a partnership-mindset.
- The additional time required to coordinate a multi-agency initiative may slow the pace of implementation for some activities.
- Inadequate information, data or resource-sharing amongst LCSP members and member organisations.
- Excessively big community safety plans with too many actions may actually stifle progress by spreading resources and focus too thin.

"The [community safety plan] probably could have been twice the size but it is a question of coming out, trying to see what the priorities were and say hopefully we can action these. I mean you could have twice the size and end up doing nothing".

- Limited or poor engagement with local communities.
- Reluctance in some communities to engage with public services from fear or concern about negative consequences if seen by others. A potential enabler to partially overcome this, however, is confidential and/or anonymous communication methods for the public with LCSPs and/or public services.

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Table 11: Selection of community safety interventions in each pilot site delivered by the end of midpoint

Issue being Addressed	Intervention	Intervention Status	Intervention Target Group	# of Agencies involved in Intervention Delivery <sup>19</sup>	Lead Agency	Co-Design <sup>20</sup> with Community	Co-Delivery <sup>21</sup> with Community
Anti-social behaviour (ASB) & arson	Coordination of immediate & medium-term multi-agency solutions to stem ASB & fire-starting	Intervention finished	Teenagers in two suburban housing estates	4	Local Authority	Yes	Yes
ASB & on-street drug-dealing/drug-use	Erection of a wall to prevent access to residential areas vulnerable to ASB & on-street drug-dealing/drug-use + development of a two-year to strengthen community capacity to deal with ASB	Intervention ongoing	Local residents & individuals involved in ASB & on-street drug-dealing in a local authority residential complex	5	Local Authority	Yes	No
Halloween-related ASB & bonfires in local estates	'Safer Halloween' campaign providing alternatives to bonfires in local estates and activities to prevent Halloween-related ASB	Intervention finished	Young people and families	6 (estimate)	LCSP Coordinator	Yes	Yes
Sporting opportunities for young people	Collaborative, multi-agency, 8-week soccer programme with local young people	Intervention finished	Children aged 8-11 years, primarily (though not exclusively) from disadvantaged area and Traveller communities	6	Multiple	No	No

<sup>19</sup> '# of Agencies involved in Intervention Delivery' includes the LCSP as represented by LCSP staff and/or Chairperson. Specific agencies that may or may not be members of the LCSP (e.g., Local Authority, An Garda Síochána, voluntary agencies, community groups, etc.) are counted separately.

<sup>20</sup> 'Co-Design' refers to the participation of the community in the design of the intervention. For the purpose of this classification, it can include any of the community members on the LCSP, as well as local residents or community groups not represented on the partnership.

<sup>21</sup> 'Co-Delivery' refers to the participation of the community in the delivery (implementation) of the intervention. For the purpose of this classification, it can include any of the community members on the LCSP, as well as local residents or community groups not represented on the partnership.

## 3.8. Theme 6 - Perceptions of outcomes and impact at the midpoint phase

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This theme focuses on early perceptions of outcomes and impact amongst evaluation participants at the midpoint. The theme is divided into two sub-themes:

- Overall perceptions of outcomes and the time needed for change
- Perceptions of outcomes and impact so far.

### Overall perceptions of outcomes and the time needed for change

“the local community safety partnership is a marathon not a sprint. So, the local community safety partnership will take years in the making, well beyond the pilot. So, I would say the pilot phase is [about] embedding in the community... [and] enabling the members too” [T2, int-947].

When asked about community outcomes, this perspective was consistently heard in interviews and focus groups at midpoint. That is, that the midpoint phase is too early to see widespread population-level outcomes from LCSPs, and moreover that the 2-year pilot phase may not be enough time to see such outcomes.

Instead, a common belief was that *at best* modest community outcomes *might* be observable after two years when the pilot ends. Even where improved community outcomes may be starting to become visible by the midpoint phase, these outcomes are likely limited to small, specific groups or areas that LCSPs have engaged with more intensively so far.

“We certainly have noticed improved community relationships in relation to some of the areas that we’ve been working in in the pilots... so, there is improvement in that and we certainly see that as real and practical, although it’s a very small area, a select area, but we do actually absolutely see a positive impact on that. We see a positive impact in those areas that we’re working with” [T2, int-781].

Some participants also recognised the difficulty of attributing community-level outcomes -- whether large or small -- to the actions of the LCSPs due to the complex nature of the partnerships and their contexts.

“sometimes it’s perhaps hard to say that the local community safety partnership did that or that cause, you might just hear about it, they [LCSP] had a conversation with [Local Authority] and [Local Authority] go off and deal with it or something. That’s how the interwoven network of individuals and structures and fora and committees works in the [LCSP area]. It’s not often clear who’s responsible for getting something done in the end, like, just a conversation could trigger something” [T2, fg-084].

Instead, it was suggested that after two years of the LCSP pilots, more realistic outcomes could include, for example:

- A better understanding of community safety and the roles that different stakeholders can play in it.

- A better understanding of the supports and structures that are needed to ensure future success and positive outcomes.
- Stronger and more balanced commitment across the range of stakeholders.
- More creative and holistic responses to community safety issues.
- The production of community safety plans.
- Reduced duplication between services.
- Improved coordination between the LCSP pilots.

“I think what can be achieved in the two years is the development of the structure and putting in place the structure and developing of the plan... It could also be achieved that there would be a recognition of the resources that are required to actually deliver this... To be more imaginative in how we address community safety, to develop an understanding within the community [of what] safety is about and the role of different organisations” [T2, int-013].

The survey of LCSP members, which are discussed in detail in the next sub-theme, and the Stories of Change received to date as part of the activity tracker, largely support these perspectives. For instance, when asked if the LCSP had improved a range of specific outcomes, ‘not sure’ tended to be most common response for most outcomes at this midpoint phase.

## Perceptions of outcomes and impact so far

As part of the baseline report, the evaluation team identified a collection of 18 intended and unintended outcomes that LCSPs might affect. These are divided into the following areas:

- 1) Intended outcomes and impacts on:
  - a. Partnership-working and service delivery (x5)
  - b. Community engagement and relations (x7)
  - c. Community safety (x2)
- 2) Unintended outcomes and impacts (x4).

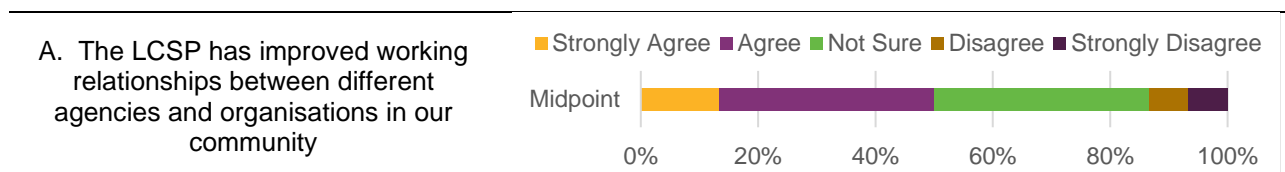
Of the 18 outcomes identified at baseline, 11 were asked about in the survey of LCSP members at midpoint, with the remaining 7 outcomes to be asked about at endpoint.

### Partnership-working and service delivery

At midpoint, a new item was added to the survey of LCSP members, asking respondents to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. The LCSP has improved working relationships between different agencies and organisations in our community.

Figure 25: Working relationships between agencies and organisations in the community



At midpoint in the evaluation this item has one of the most positive responses, relatively speaking, for outcomes, with 50% of respondents ‘agreeing’ that their LCSP has improved

working relationships between different agencies and organisations in their community. Of the remainder, 37% were *'not sure'* and 13% *'disagreed'*.

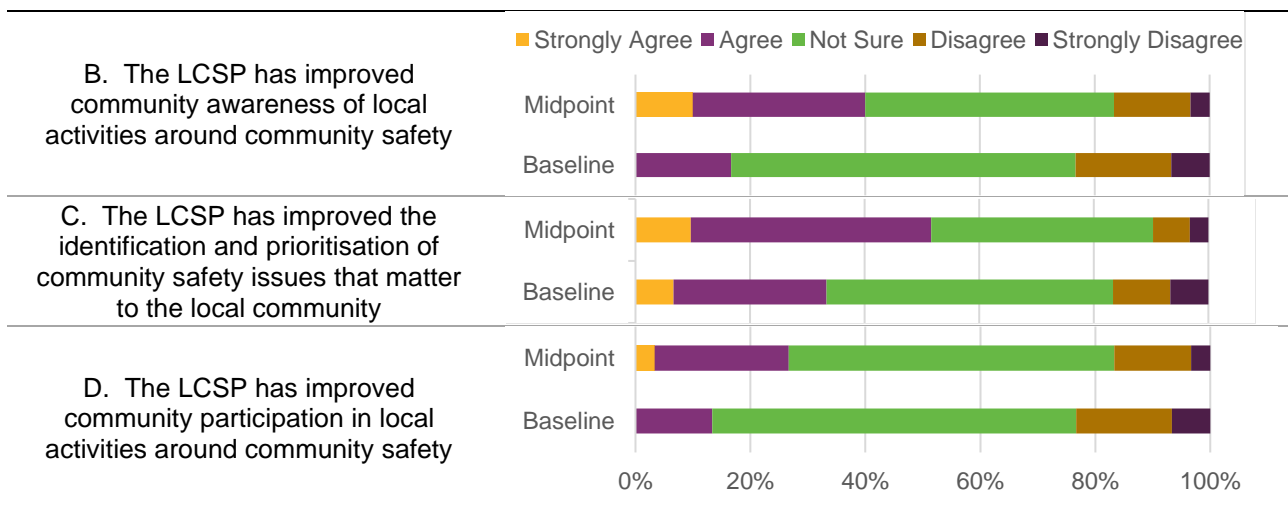
The survey results varied between pilot sites, which is expected given the differences in participants experiences of LCSPs described earlier. In pilots X and Z, most respondents *'agreed'* with the statement (63% and 55%, respectively), with no participants *'disagreeing'* in either area. However, in pilot Y, responses were almost evenly split between those *'agreeing'* (30%), *'not sure'* (30%), *'disagreeing'* (40%).

## Community engagement and relations

Three items in the survey of LCSP members were asked at both baseline and midpoint. These were all related to community engagement and relations and asked respondents to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- B. The LCSP has improved community awareness of local activities around community safety.
- C. The LCSP has improved the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues that matter to the local community.
- D. The LCSP has improved community participation in local activities around community safety.

**Figure 26: Community awareness, participation, and prioritisation of local community safety activities and issues**



At baseline, the percentage of respondents that *'agreed'* with these statements was low, with *'not sure'* the most common response for all three items at the time (60% for item B; 50% for item C; and 63% for item D). These results were expected given the early stages of implementation at baseline. However, by midpoint, the proportion of respondents who *'agreed'* was trending in a positive direction for all three items, with a 23-percentage point rise for item B (17% -> 40%), an 18-percentage point rise for item C (34% -> 52%) and a 13-percentage point rise for item D (13% -> 26%).

These results indicate that a growing proportion of LCSP members believe that their LCSP site is improving community awareness of and participation in local community safety activities and identifying and prioritising community safety issues that are of importance to the local community. At the same time, a relatively high proportion of *'not sure'* responses suggest that many

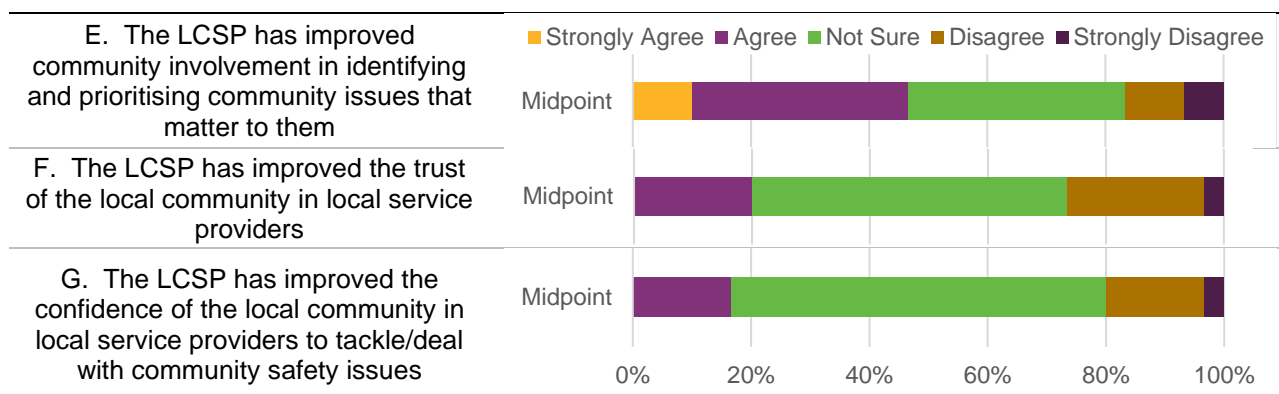
members still believe it is too early to assess if their LCSP has made an impact in these areas yet.

Nevertheless, the survey results vary across the three pilot sites. For example, in pilot Z, where the results for these items are, comparatively speaking, most positive, no respondents *'disagreed'* with any of these statements. Rather, 45% of pilot Z respondents *'agreed'* with item D, 54% *'agreed'* with item B, and 91% *'agreed'* with item C. In comparison, in pilot Y, more respondents *'disagreed'* than *'agreed'* with all three statements, indicating a significant proportion of pilot Y respondents believe their LCSP has either had no impact yet in these areas or is potentially even having a negative effect.

Three additional items on community engagement and relations were added to the LCSP members survey at midpoint. These items asked to what extent respondents *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- E. The LCSP has improved community involvement in identifying and prioritising community safety issues that matter to them.
- F. The LCSP has improved the trust of the local community in local service providers.
- G. The LCSP has improved the confidence of the local community in local service providers to tackle/deal with community safety issues.

**Figure 27: Community trust and confidence in services, and involvement in identifying community safety priorities**



In analysing the results for these three items, similar messages emerge as to the first three items on community engagement and relations. Namely, overall results were most positive on item E relating to the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues that matter to the community, with almost half (47%) of respondents agreeing that their LCSP had improved community involvement in this process. However, similar to item C on community participation, most respondents were *'not sure'* yet if LCSPs had improved the trust or confidence of the local community in local service providers (53% *'not sure'* for item F and 63% *'not sure'* for item G), again indicating the belief that it may be too early to see improvement here.

When broken down by pilot site, the results followed a similar pattern as that for community engagement and relations (items B, C and D). That is, pilot Z appeared to have the most positive responses (though for items F and G, the vast majority of pilot Z respondents -- 73% for both -- were *'not sure'* if their LCSP had improved community trust or confidence). On the other hand, a considerable proportion of pilot Y respondents *disagreed* with items F and G (60% and 50% respectively). Although the trend was partially bucked for item E where a larger proportion of pilot Y respondents *'agreed'* (50%) than *'disagreed'* (40%) that their LCSP was improving community involvement in the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues.

Overall, by the midpoint phase of the evaluation, the LCSP member survey results suggest that a relatively high proportion of members believe their LCSP is improving the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues, and the involvement of communities in that process.

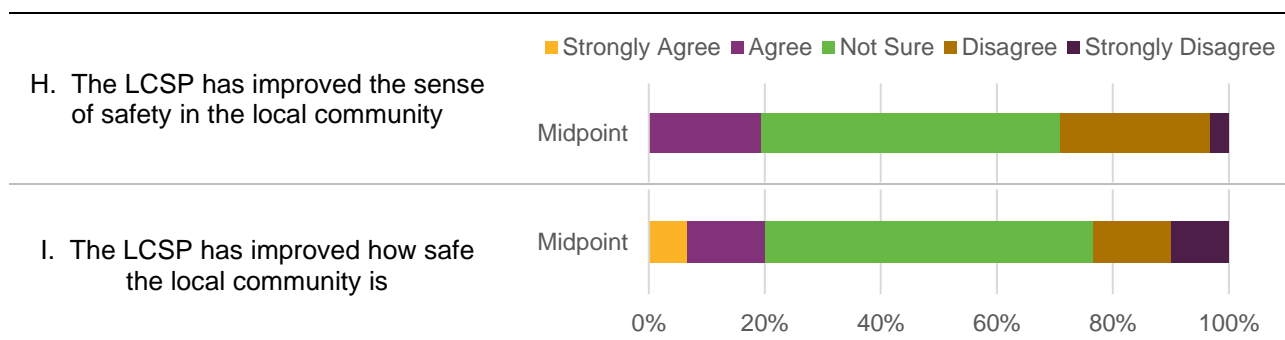
A small and yet growing proportion of members also believe their LCSP is improving community awareness and participation in local community safety activities, though for most it is too early to tell, as they also believe is the case for improvements in community trust and confidence in local service providers.

## Community safety

At midpoint, two items related to community safety outcomes were added to the survey of LCSP members. Specifically, these asked respondents to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- H. The LCSP has improved the sense of safety in the local community.
- I. The LCSP has improved how safe the local community is.

Figure 28: Community safety and perceptions of safety



The majority of respondents were *not sure* for both items (52% for item H and 57% for item I, respectively).

When broken down by pilot site, the results vary across the sites in a similar way for both statements. Namely, the majority of respondents in pilot Y *disagreed* with both items (64% for item H and 50% for item I), while in pilots X and Z the majority of respondents were *not sure* (73% and 56% for item H, respectively, and 64% and 67% for item I, respectively). Pilot Z tended to have the largest proportion, though still a minority, of respondents across the three sites *agreeing* that their LCSP has improved safety and people’s sense of safety in the local community.

Open-text responses indicate that respondents believe it was too soon for their partnership to demonstrate impact on community safety outcomes. This is regardless of the progress their partnerships may or may not have made to date.

“I think it is too early to answer a lot of these questions. We need to see where we are in twelve months to have any real idea if we have made a positive impact” [T2, sur-654].

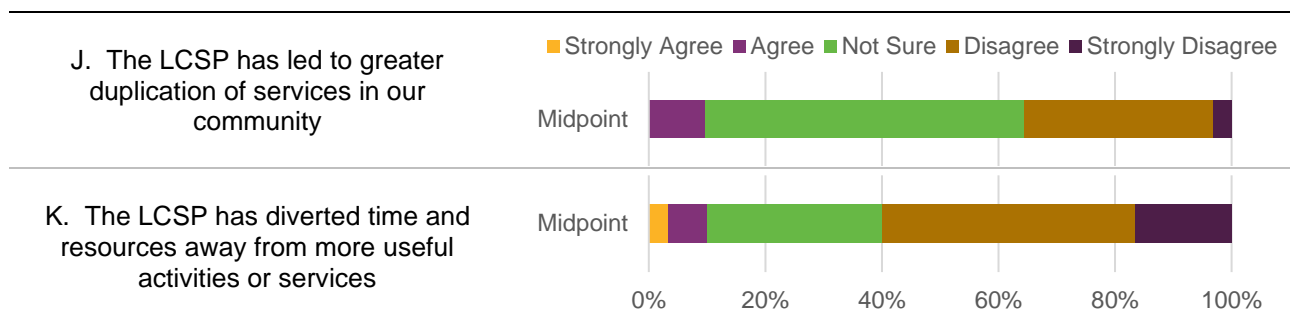
## Potential unintended negative outcomes

At midpoint, two items that examined potential unintended negative outcomes were added to the survey of LCSP members. These items asked respondents to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- J. The LCSP has led to greater duplication of services in our community.

K. The LCSP has diverted time and resources away from more useful activities or services.

Figure 29: Diversion of time and resources from other activities and services



The results suggest that most respondents were ‘not sure’ by midpoint if their LCSP had led to greater duplication of services (55%). A majority ‘disagreed’ that their LCSP had diverted time and resources from more useful activities (60%). Some differences emerge in the results when broken down by pilot, though they continue to largely conform to the overall results.

### 3.9. Theme 7 - Suggestions made by evaluation participants for improving LCSPs

#### Departmental support, governance and opportunities for learnings and corrective actions

The results indicate that improved national-level coordination of community and interagency partnership initiatives (e.g., LCSPs, LCDCs, CYPSCs, DATFs, Sláintecare Healthy Communities, etc.) could encourage coherence and reduce risk of duplication.

“The other thing... is how coordination of national programs is handled because... there’s just so much going on at the same time that you don’t want people to be duplicating one another and you want to be clear whose job what is” [T2, int-301].

Some participants believe that stronger direction from their respective government departments would encourage state agencies to engage better with LCSPs.

“I’d love to see a greater push from the statutory bodies, more pressure put on statutory bodies to engage more wholeheartedly in it. And that the concept is sold directly to them, that would be the strongest ask, and that we would get all of the agencies involved, not just An Garda Síochána and the city council -- [but also] TUSLA, HSE, Probation -- that would be helpful if that could be the case. But... we’d like there to be more pressure centrally for that to happen” [T2, int-781].

There is a call for relevant government departments to ringfence community safety funding for LCSP-involved agencies under their aegis. This would demonstrate partnership-working and commitment to LCSPs at national-level while also resourcing agencies to work together and deliver LCSP tasks at local level.

“More demonstration of cross departmental support, so where the government departments actually physically demonstrate that they have ring fenced funding for the community safety partnership so that then gives confidence to the agencies to come to the table and say we would be able to do this... and would be able to work



together by ring fencing this level of resources. It's a commitment, a whole of government commitment, cross departmental cooperation and also then more demonstration by the Department of Justice that they are absolutely committed to this process" [T2, int-013].

Respondents are seeking quicker turnaround of feedback from the evaluation to facilitate swift corrective action, as necessary within the LCSP pilot.

"We cannot wait for 3-4 months down the line to hear that because in a 2 year pilot, 3-4 months is just too long" [T2, int-013].

Respondents also called for the development of a mechanism for LCSPs to escalate local community safety issues that require regional or national responses to resolve.

"the department needs to look at how they're structuring the whole thing so that we can link in with... the appropriate level regionally and nationally to escalate these issues up because there is lots of local stuff we can do but... in order to get some of the small stuff you have to tackle the stuff that can only be done at regional or national level that we can't actually do ourselves here locally" [T2, int-796].

It was suggested that the Department of Justice could hold formal sessions periodically for Coordinators and other LCSP stakeholders to share learning between the three pilot sites.

"at the moment it [sharing of learning between pilot sites] is informal... [have] some formal briefing sessions meetings or whatever with the coordinators and the chairs" [T2, int-013].

## Resourcing LCSPs

To improve the resourcing of LCSPs, it was suggested to:

- Provide administrative support to Coordinators and consider the potential of other types of staffing to support the work of LCSPs.

"could we have a communication branch within the partnership to actually get out positive stuff on the [LCSP]" [T2, fg-084].

- Increase the grade of Coordinators to a Grade 7 role.

"the coordinator grade should be more like the Drogheda Implementation Board that have a Grade 7 doing it... it makes more sense because you have more authority within the [local authority] structure because you are heading towards management level then" [T2, int-522].

- Develop additional streams of funding for the LCSPs to tap into on top of the Community Safety Innovation Fund. This might include national level funding streams as well as local level funding streams that increase the "discretionary funds" of LCSPs or the budget for interventions.

"there's no discretionary funding whatsoever really in what we are doing. I know we have the Community Safety Innovation Fund, but there's very little, even to try and do a little bit of seed work, you know, to try and give a little bit seed work to projects... [like] safety grants that they could allocate a portion of money to say community safety at a local level for small projects... We'll be able to identify needs in different communities [and] it gives us more buy-in into communities" [T2, int-522].

## Guiding LCSPs

There were suggestions for the Department of Justice to prepare and communicate a guidance document for LCSP members and staff that explains:

- Key concepts including, ‘community safety’, ‘community safety plans’ and ‘collaborative-working’.
- The differences between LCSPs and JPCs.
- The job descriptions, responsibilities and expectations of key roles, such as Chairpersons, and community and public service members.
- How agencies can identify and select the “right person” to represent them on the LCSP.
- The information and data that agencies should expect to provide as part of their collaborative responsibilities on the LCSP.
- A “framework”, “template” or “route map” for developing community safety plans.

LCSPs should develop a guidance document for Coordinators, in preparation for turnover in the position, that can be used when inducting new Coordinators.

## Increasing buy-in and engagement to LCSPs

Some participants suggested putting the LCSPs on a statutory footing<sup>22</sup> as a way to strengthen engagement.

“when you don’t have statutory backing you could be on sticky enough ground. I don’t know where the legislation is, but I would certainly like to see it established sooner rather than later in that respect, because the JPC was a statutory committee” [T2, fg-868].

To improve the effectiveness of placing LCSPs on a statutory footing, it was suggested that the legislation should define ‘engagement’ more broadly than the simple attendance of LCSP meetings.

“It is my understanding based on recent conversation that currently there is nothing in the proposed legislation that places an obligation on Partnership members to engage in an effective way, they are invited to attend. But there’s no expectation of outcomes etc. this in my view may the capacity of undermining the effectiveness of the Partnerships” [T2, int-191].

Some respondents suggested further communicating and emphasising the added value and strengths of LCSPs when explaining the difference with JPCs to increase buy-in.

“the community safety partnership is “ok the guards have a role to play, the community has a role to play, the organisations in the community groups have a role to play, the state agencies have a role to play because safety is our collective responsibility” so that’s the difference and I think that is something that will get the buy in earlier from the JPC, that we are tackling this problem from a holistic point of view” [T2, fg-206].

LCSPs should improve the capacity and motivation for partnership-working amongst their members by seizing opportunities for collaboration, taking time to reflect and learn from the experience, feeding the learning back to other members and showcasing “the possibilities for collaboration and speedy responses to community issues”.

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<sup>22</sup> The proposed legislation, as set out in the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill (draft 2022), once enacted will place the LCSPs on a statutory footing.

“In my view this [partnership-working] will be achieved in the main by taking every opportunity for two or more Partners to work together to address an issue, demonstrate it to all members how the collaboration was achieved and how the issue was targeted in a multi-agency approach and what was achieved and what were the learnings” [T2, int-191].

## Training and capacity-building for LCSPs

There is a call for investment in more training and capacity-building workshops for LCSP members. Areas to focus included:

- The concept of ‘community safety’ and differences between LCSPs and JPCs
- Partnership-working, collaboration, negotiation and mediation skills
- Social justice, equality, discrimination, and diversity in their local community.

“how do you get agencies to work together? How do you actually get them to pull together? How do you get, say, Tusla to work with the [County] Council to work with the Education Board, to work together to actually come up with solutions and stuff?” [T2, int-522].

## Information and data-sharing

The results indicate that it is important that future guidance and communications from the Department of Justice for LCSP members and organisations explains that sharing information and data will be expected, in a GDPR-compliant manner, as part of their ‘collaborative responsibilities’.

“there are... agencies that told us to look up their website when we were looking for data... That's not what they call ‘partnership’ or ‘collaboration’ or anything like that... I think that needs to be nailed down in any guidance that’s issued” [T2, int-301].

## Structures and processes of LCSPs

### Coordinators, Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons

Future LCSP Coordinators are advised to dedicate time from early in their role to “familiarise yourself with the processes and procedures of the agencies that host the Partnerships” as lack of knowledge and familiarity with them “can cause real speedbumps further down the track”.

The findings show mixed views about the optimal ways to recruit and select for the LCSP Chairperson role. Some believe that the ideal person for the Chairperson role would live in the geographic area of the LCSP. Some believe it is best that the process of recruitment of the Chairperson be a “more democratic process” rather than independently appointed from outside the partnership. Either way, it was suggested that individuals appointed as future LCSP Chairpersons should have experience in chairing.

In regards to performing the role of LCSP Chairperson, a forum should be set up for LCSP Chairpersons to meet at regular intervals to share and discuss common issues and good practices based on their experiences. Some participants also advised Chairpersons should also arrange “bilateral” meetings with individual members, especially when they newly join the partnership.

The findings also indicate that the role of Vice-Chairperson requires some attention and specificity of purpose as a way “for the LCSPs to be more inclusive and more invitational”.

Some believe that the position of Vice-Chairperson, in those partnerships where there is only one, should be rotated between community representatives and public-service representatives on a yearly basis to improve collaboration and prevent potential conflict and power-struggles.

## The size and composition of LCSPs

There were mixed views about the size and composition of LCSPs. Participants made a range of suggestions including flexibility at local level to decide the most appropriate mix of agencies on the LCSP membership based on local needs.

“We need to give a little bit more thought to what agencies are around the table and why. That might vary even from council area to council area” [T2, int-301].

It was also suggested by some, that the LCSPs should work to maximise the diversity and representativeness of their membership.

“Most of us that are sitting on it [the LCSP] have relatively comfortable lives and... from the very outset if you had some from the more disadvantaged areas, if you had certainly some youth, like real youth” [T2, fg-206].

At the same time, several participants suggested reducing the size of LCSPs, with a view to improving their efficiency.

“you could do with 15 [members] rather than 30, you would have a lot easier communication” [T2, fg-868].

Several participants suggested that the composition and balance of representatives should be adjusted, however, views about how the balance should be adjusted varied considerably. For example, in regard to the number of elected representatives, some participants suggested there should be more while others suggested there should be less.

“I think that the elected representatives - their role has been diminished and I think that was a flaw from the outset” [T2, int-586].

To help ensure commitment and reduce turnover of members from state agencies, while also allowing new community voices, perspectives and leaders to regularly emerge over time, it was proposed that term limits on LCSP membership (e.g. 3-4 years) be considered.

## LCSP sub-groups and meetings

Participants also offered suggestions about LCSP sub-groups and meetings. These include suggestions that:

- Membership of LCSP sub-groups (e.g., steering groups, working groups, etc.) be kept “under ongoing review”.
- Minutes of LCSP sub-group meetings should be recorded and circulated (even in draft form) to all members ahead of the full quarterly meetings.
- Replace some meetings with workshops to encourage members with less confidence speaking in large meetings to contribute and have their voice heard. In particular, during the early months of the partnership process for LCSPs, workshops (that occur more regularly than quarterly meetings) should be held.

“If you don't have the confidence to get your voice across in meetings, especially when there are stronger voices there you do need the workshops then” [T2, fg-206].

In LCSPs covering large geographical areas, flexible arrangements including hybrid meetings should be explored to improve the accessibility of meetings for all members, particularly as there is no travel remuneration available. Similarly, partnerships should avoid holding full LCSP meetings during “peak holiday season” as doing so may “preclude a whole pile of people” from attending.

## Engaging with local communities

There were a number of suggestions to raise community awareness and understanding of LCSPs. For example, LCSPs could actively advertise or communicate through various channels to local communities the actions they are taking to improve safety, rather than assume that taking action alone is enough to improve community awareness and understanding.

“we [LCSP member organisation] have a website and we do hard copies [newsletters] twice or three times a year. And people still say they don't know what we're doing... it's not enough to do something, you have to tell people what you're doing. You have to brag about it. You brag about it five times a day probably through each of your channels” [T2, fg-643].

Communications could be tailored to different audiences and also convey the message that LCSPs are for everyone in the community, not just specific groups or areas.

“when we are communicating what the [project A or B] is about, we're communicating that to different groups within the community and we need to know our audience. We need to make sure we're delivering the message that can get the buy-in as well and the message that it isn't just for one section of society, it is for everybody within the community” [T2, fg-206].

Given that community safety concerns and priorities can shift with changes in context, it is important that LCSPs engage regularly with local communities and be prepared to adapt their community safety plans and priorities in light of changing concerns and contexts.

The Department of Justice (or National Office for Community Safety, if/when established) could set up a “panel of community consultants” to assist LCSPs with community engagement and public consultation, if a partnership requests it.

Some participants also suggested that additional human and financial resources, and LCSP offices, may be needed to provide LCSPs with the capacity to scale-up its community engagements and improve their visibility and accessibility to local communities.

“There should be [another] office in the [LCSP area], and even that in itself, that's just going to partially resolve the problem [of visibility/accessibility]. I don't know how many people are even aware of the [current LCSP] office on [LCSP area]” [T2, fg-084].

## Piloting, scaling, and future vision for LCSPs

There were mixed views about scaling and future vision for the LCSPs with some uncertainty about the next steps and time frame for the roll-out the LCSP. There was a call for additional clarity from the Department of Justice about their vision for the pilots after the 2-year pilot period ends.

## 4. Insights from elsewhere

### 4.1. Introduction

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The purpose of the *insights from elsewhere* component of the methodology was to examine experience in Ireland and beyond about what works in terms of partnership arrangements, governance, and the implementation of community safety, and other complex policy initiatives, through collaborative models<sup>23</sup>.

The methodology was a bounded and pragmatic piece, drawing on a small selection of papers and stakeholder interviews (8) with people who have expertise and experience of partnership in practice.

The intention is to inform deliberations and decision-making for the future implementation of the LCSP model.

A confidential interview was conducted with each stakeholder to gain insight into their experiences and learnings from advancing collaborative ways of working concerning the community. The interviews were semi-structured and explored the following themes:

1. **Direct experience of/perspective on collaborative ways of working** as an approach to complex policy initiatives -- the reality of this way of working to enhance community safety and any learning to take from this
2. **Enablers of success** – what are the must-haves to enable the partnership to work at all levels to enhance feelings, perceptions, and experiences of community safety and why are they important?
3. **Challenges, risks, and concerns to prepare** for in terms of the wider implementation of the partnership model to address community safety
4. **Data gathering and sharing-** including optimal ways to track and measure the progress of community safety partnerships such as the LCSP
5. **Progress and Impact** - how are progress and impact measured/ what would be a reasonably expected timeframe to see some progress/ impact on the ground and what are the optimal ways of capturing this?
6. **Vision for the future of partnership working** as the optimal way to implement community safety policy with research and data to support the LCSP model.

The following is a summary of the analysis of stakeholder interviews<sup>24</sup> combined with the material drawn from the literature relevant to the practice and experience of applying partnership models to advance policy imperatives.

This summary aims to inform deliberations as the LCSP pilot moves towards endpoint and decision-making about future extension and rollout of the model throughout Ireland. The enablers of effective partnership working are set out alongside the risks to be alert to and prepared for, particularly as we enter the final phase of the LCSP pilot.

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<sup>23</sup> This method replaces the 'counter-factual' element originally included in the evaluation brief.

<sup>24</sup> The generous contribution of the external stakeholders is appreciated and noted in the acknowledgements section of this report.

The consensus is that partnership working is invaluable and is the way forward, particularly for complex policy initiatives. The results point to challenges, risks, as well as the enablers of collaborative working, as set out below.

The reality for the LCSP initiative is that it is still early days, and it is expected that midway through a pilot of this nature that there will be forming and storming, variation across the three sites, and not everything will be clear and uniform.

## 4.2. Enablers of partnership working to advance community safety policy

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The following are the recurring messages arising about the factors and features that enable and support effective partnership working. It could be argued that these enablers support all kinds of effective working to advance policy initiatives. Yet, the themes of doing together and trusting each other, whilst working towards a shared vision, tend to become more pronounced when multiple organisations come together to work in partnership.

- **Vision** – communicating a clear vision for community safety and the LCSP as the optimal model or way of working towards community safety objectives. This includes clarity around policy, governance, structures, and systems and the vision for national coverage and arrangements to achieve this. The legislative process is an essential first step to fulfilling the vision for the future of policing in the broad sense as articulated by the CoFPI, with partnership, plural policing and community safety at its core.
- **Backup and full support of Government/parent department(s)** support, systems, and guidance. Good governance locally and a line of sight to the parent department, particularly when challenges are encountered, and support and guidance are needed. This is particularly important at the pilot stage and yet also follows through into the roll out of the national structures and the implementation of the forthcoming legislation.
- **Leadership** to champion the vision, model and practice of partnership, at a national level and local community levels. Leadership includes facilitating the evolution of the practice of partnership over time through stakeholder involvement and co-production.
- **Trust** is fundamental to the concept and practice of community safety. It is important that people trust each other and trust that people in positions of power are making the right decisions and that the voice of the people is included and trusted and that there is trust between the people and the gardai. Trust building is an incremental and relational process that requires good leadership, resources, communication and agreed systems, procedures and processes for the work of partnership. This includes recruitment, selection, teambuilding, meetings formats and arrangements, decision-making processes and data sharing.
- **Resources** include careful investment and resourcing of projects, staffing, training, and systems. The quality of dedicated staff and their skill set and commitment to partnership working is a key enabler. It is worth considering the resources provided for similar structures, such as those in Northern Ireland. The Community Safety Innovation Fund is an important resource and provides an opportunity to ground and elaborate the meaning of the concept of community safety.
- **Relating and nurturing relationships** are central because partnership work is relational, and it takes time and purposeful effort to establish relationships. It takes at least a year for many of the necessary systems to be set in place.

- **Partnership in practice (Doers)** – the behaviour of partnership working is about doing and influencing and working together. The behaviours differ from siloed ways of working and take time to inculcate. The practice and behaviour of partnership are as important as the structure of partnerships. Leadership, training, mentoring, and capacity building are necessary to support the development of competency to work well in partnership.
- **Honesty and humility** and capacity to admit, share, discuss and learn from mistakes.
- **Priorities** - Need to agree on priorities, ideally bottom-up and yet top-down, can help initially to activate action, however small, to keep movement and momentum towards the vision of community safety.
- **Data** – Good data for and about community safety is necessary to understand the context in each local area and to formulate and track community safety plans and initiatives. For example, the CYPSC<sup>25</sup> gathers outcome data, including data about people’s experiences and services that already exist. There is also a need for good analysis to interpret that data. There is learning from Scotland around the National Outcomes Framework<sup>26</sup>. It is important that data be part of the process of developing innovative ways of understanding and measuring outcomes in a complex area, drawing on available best practice approaches internationally. Community safety is a complex concept, and it requires us to develop new and innovative forms of measurement. The sharing of useful and reliable data is a prerequisite for this.
- **Independence** and autonomy, for example, community safety partnership is not a statutory obligation in Scotland, and yet community planning partnerships are mandatory within each Local Authority, and each has the freedom to plan in accordance with local needs. In Scotland, the community planning partnership is ‘like the motherships of community safety’.
- **Community involvement** - creating purposeful, respectful and engaging ways for all citizens to be involved. Work through all levels and maximise the Third Sector. The ‘*nothing for us without us*’ principle is important. It is imperative to engage the community and adopt community development approaches. Citizen participation is vital and a core principle and this require careful work grounded in the values of good practice community engagement.
- **Time** is an important ingredient as the process of partnership takes time, intention and purposeful work. It cannot be hurried along. The learning from the CYPSCs is that it can take a decade to establish the structures, systems and behaviours of effective partnership, collaboration, and interagency working.

### 4.3. Risks to be alert to as the pilot moves towards endpoint

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The following are the risks to consider and prepare for as the LCSP pilot enters its final phase and transitions to a full roll-out. Awareness and careful consideration of these risks will inform the development of a comprehensive implementation plan for the LCSP nationally.

- Risk of duplication and fatigue given that ‘partnership-land’ is a busy space already, and the reality of advancing a whole-of-government approach is a large body of work across many policy domains.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4cd9f3-shared-vision-next-steps-2019-2024/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes>



- Risk of an uneven commitment and/or possible resistance to the LCSP model. The signs are that the concept of community safety and community safety partnership working comes naturally to some and is a leap of faith for others.
- Risk of diminished staying power if partnerships lose energy and/or enter any turbulence locally.
- Risk of frustration experiencing the trickiness around the incentives and mandates of working in partnership when agencies have their own commitments and do not have responsibility for certain areas.
- Risk of power differentials and struggles within the LCSP, and beyond.
- Risk of breakdown of trust locally and/or nationally.
- Risk of attrition, burn out and/or exhaustion amongst the main doers, e.g., LCSP Coordinators and volunteers.
- Risk of data not being shared enough, useful enough or specific enough to facilitate good decision making and prioritisation for a locale or community.
- Risk of a lack of capacity and expertise to gather, manage, analyse, and interpret data usefully and practically to capture progress and inform decision-making.
- Risk of the LCSP getting lost in the range of existing initiatives and the challenge of distinguishing the LCSP from all other initiatives whilst at the same time working in an integrated way with other initiatives.
- Risk of disillusion and/or impatience waiting for proof of concept of the LCSP in the short term as relationships and systems take time to establish and nurture. This is linked to the importance of being realistic about what can be achieved and the importance of grounding the concept through clear communication and education.
- Risk of communities feeling abandoned and a loss of energy and trust if the pilot sites lose momentum as the pilot phase ends.

## 4.4. Pointers to inform decision-making for the roll out of the LCSP

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The overall conclusion of the analysis of the learning from elsewhere is that there are strong practical and pragmatic pointers to guide decision-making in relation to the roll out of the LCSP model in Ireland.

The following are the pointers arising from the analysis at mid-point:

- **Vision** – Envision communities as strong and safe places (Nolan et al., 2022). Provide clarity around the vision, the policy fit (e.g., alongside citizenship, public health, and wellbeing) and the structures that will hold the LCSP model into the future. This includes what the structures will look like and situate the LCSP alongside other community safety initiatives and other local partnership structures and arrangements. For example, the vision of the Christy Commission on the future delivery of public services in Scotland (Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, 2011) with its focus on prevention and community and citizen involvement was pivotal in advancing the community safety partnership and the planning model that now exists in Scotland. It is important to communicate the ‘why’ of community safety partnerships i.e., why are we moving towards this model? what difference will it make

to people and society? This means situating community safety within a broad vision that is not just about crime and the police but not so broad that we lose sight of the focus on safety. The Community Safety Innovation Fund is useful in this respect.

- **Intentions and outcomes** - Create an outcomes framework for community safety, that aligns with other related outcomes across other policy imperatives and that sits within the sustainable development goals. It is also important to develop new ways of understanding and measuring outcomes, learning from, and building on some of the leading thinking being developed internationally, such as by Professor James Nolan and colleagues. Forming a link to the academic/research community would be a useful means of doing this.
- **Communicate** the vision, value, and potential of the LCSP model i.e., why such a model is worth investing in and the benefits it will bring in terms of the sum of the parts and other outcomes. Communicate the opportunity that the LCSP presents to do things differently within a community or location, to bring people in and encourage them to become involved. Tell the story of where the LCSP fits in an integrated way within other governments polices such as public health, community development, active citizenship, mental health, wellbeing, and safety. Tell the story of what is working well and the learnings. Show and convince relevant stakeholders of the value of the work and inspire people to make the leap of faith that will cultivate trust in the LCSP model. There is an opportunity to work differently and to “inculcate the practice of partnership-working and the habit of looking beyond their own domain”.
- **Leadership** at all levels local, regional, and national. This includes national leadership in championing and communicating the LCSP model and the pilot phase. It is important to communicate the next steps to transition to the roll out and ensure clarity about the form that this will take as set out in policy documents such as the *draft Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill* (Parliamentary Counsel to the Government, 2022). While the primary focus should be the local level, what cannot be resolved and addressed at that level should be elevated in a coherent and effective way.
- **Data** – continue to advance evidence informed approaches to decision making and set out clearly what this will look like. Define and measure what matters. It is important to note that what matters may vary across different LCSP locations and communities. There is a need to define and measure what it is to feel safe and prevention of the breakdown of safety and citizens’ sense of safety within their communities. One option is to create a central profiling arrangement for a county or an area, one that all services, structures and partnerships could draw from. This includes the CYPSCs, LCDCs, Primary Care, Healthy Ireland, the Sports Partnerships, amongst others. Given that community safety is a complex concept, we need to be imaginative and innovative in terms of how we measure it and share stories about how it works in practice.
- **Support** including the provision of strong support, from the centre through the setting up of the National Office for Community Safety, preparation of the National Strategy Community Safety and through strategic communication, workshops and discussions involving all stakeholders. The end phase of the pilot offers a golden opportunity to consult, prepare and transition in a steady-fast way to a national roll-out.
- **Capacity building** including resources, guidance, handbooks (such as the Scottish Community Safety Networks guidance documents<sup>27</sup>, briefing, training, and continuous professional development. This includes job/role descriptions and recruitment and selection processes. It also includes building specific capacity to gather, collate, analyse, and interpret data that is useful to support the work of the LCSPs. It also includes specific training and

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.safercommunitiesscotland.org/>

development of competency in facilitation, running effective meetings, group dynamics, conflict resolution and working well with diversity, to support working well in partnership.

- **Reflective practice processes** and events, locally and nationally, to support discussion, deliberation and shared decision making for the future vision, direction, structures, and processes. It is good practice to create a feedback loop so that the impact on policy is witnessed and experienced locally.
- **Be open to learning** and share information deliberately and openly to inform the practice of partnership across different sites.
- **Strengthen community development** approaches to inform and support the LCSP. This includes drawing on resources to support capacity building and engagement (e.g., A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making).<sup>28</sup>
- **Time** is an important ingredient as the process of partnership takes time, intention, and purposeful work. It cannot be hurried along. The learning suggests taking things slowly and steadily to create a culture of working together that strengthens responses to community safety.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.pobal.ie/resources/a-guide-for-inclusive-community-engagement-in-local-planning-and-decision-making/>

## 5. Learning

### 5.1. Introduction

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This section draws out the learning that has accrued from the LCSP pilots to date based on the analysis of the findings reported in the previous sections. The learning is presented to inform deliberations and decision making for the end phase of the pilot phase and preparations for wider implementation of the LCSP model.

This section sets out a summary of progress since baseline, the challenges encountered and what we are learning, through the pilot, about the enablers that facilitate the process and work of partnership within the LCSPs.

### 5.2. Context and Progress

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#### Context

The context for an LCSP is an important determinant of the success of the partnership's work. The literature suggests that the optimal context for an LCSP is one that is supportive, has adequate resources and a history of good collaborative partnerships.

There are similarities in the context in which each LCSP pilot site is operating, and yet ultimately each context is unique. This is notwithstanding the fact that each LCSP is working to a very similar terms of reference. Eight contextual factors were identified at mid-point including the number of partnership structures that already exist in an area, the absence of a clear statutory obligation compelling engagement by state agencies in the LCSP, the legacy of previous JPC structures and the resourcing of organisations and capacity of LCSP members.

The influence of each factor will vary in each location. It is important that future LCSP sites consider the extent to which these and other contextual factors are present in their area. From the outset, particularly at formation stage, it is important for an LCSP to identify ways to mitigate the negative effects and work with and enhance the positive effects of known contextual features.

#### Progress Markers

The results indicate that considerable groundwork has been completed across the pilot sites. Progress has been made since the Baseline Report, as evidenced through:

- LCSP meetings held.
- Working groups set up.
- Office space, presence, and growing visibility of the LCSPs.
- Consultations within the community.
- Preparation and launch of Community Safety Plans.

- Sponsors' Group for the Waterford and Longford LCSP. This is an addition to the LCSP governance structures. The Sponsors' Group for the Dublin NIC was set up at the beginning of the pilot.
- Investment of exchequer funding of just over €1.3 million to date across the LCSP sites<sup>29</sup>.
- Community Innovation Fund grants of a total of €353,903 awarded across the LCSP sites to date (included in the above total).
- First national conference on Community Safety in Ireland - Beyond Borders – All Island Community Safety Conference, November 2022<sup>30</sup>.
- Engagement with the evaluation process and commitment to learning to inform future decision making for the national rollout of the LCSP.

### 5.3. Challenges

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The results indicate that the main challenges encountered to date relate to building the partnership structures and processes. These include achieving the optimal makeup of the LCSP, engaging meaningfully with the community, encouraging attendance and participation at LCSP meetings and working well with the dynamics of a large group to advance decision making and planning for community safety.

The value of partnership working is that it brings people and organisations together to be greater than the sum of their parts. The nature of partnership working is that it also brings diversity of thought and attitudes out into the open and it is natural that there will be differences of opinion, energetic discourse and at times conflict or clashes of personalities, views, and positions.

Each LCSP is working within its own context and reality and at its own pace. This is the nature and value of the local response to community safety and the capacity to work within the context and culture of the local community as it evolves. Each site has experienced challenges, some common and others unique to a specific area.

The challenges draw attention to what is necessary to prepare for during roll-out and implementation of the LCSP, post pilot. The main challenges include:

- **Staffing** and ensuring the full suite of competencies to effectively manage and advance the work of the LCSP. There is a need for additional dedicated resources and competency to meet the administrative, research, data gathering and monitoring tasks of the LCSP.
- **Data gathering** and analysis is necessary to track and capture the progress of the LCSP and yet it is challenging for the LCSP. The learning to date, from trialing the Activity Tracker as a monitoring system for the LCSP, is that to gather, analyze and interpret data sets requires dedicated staff with specific competencies, time, and responsibility. This includes competencies in the gathering and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and the sharing of stories of the work of the partnership. There is more to be learned about gathering, analysing and using data to inform, support and track community safety work. The learning

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<sup>29</sup> This includes €76,277.50 from the Crime Prevention Budget of the Department of Justice,.

<sup>30</sup> The first cross-border community conference, aimed at sharing ideas on how to make communities across Ireland safer, took place in Dundalk, County Louth in November 2022. The conference brought together over 300 representatives from the public, local government, policing, business, charity and community sectors to explore safety challenges faced across the island of Ireland, to share ideas on how these can most effectively be addressed.

from trialing the Activity Tracker confirms this finding and warrants specific attention at endpoint and preparation for a national roll out.

- **Managing expectations** of and attitudes towards the size and makeup of the LCSP board is challenging and there are mixed views as to the optimal size of the partnership structure. This warrants further exploration through the evaluation, at endpoint by exploring the beliefs about the size of the partnership structure and how this affects engagement and participation. There are other factors at play, beyond the size of the group, that encourage inclusion and participation of the full range of stakeholder groups. These include leadership and purposeful formation and facilitation of the LCSP.
- **Drawing in the full range of statutory agencies** and maintaining consistency and momentum of engagement with the LCSP. The results show mixed experience of involvement and action. There is a need for further exploration of the role and responsibility of the statutory agencies and optimal ways, nationally and locally, to engage the full suite of organisations in the work of the LCSP. A statutory obligation for statutory bodies to cooperate with each other, as mentioned in the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill will be helpful in this regard.
- **Facilitating the diversity of voices** to be and feel informed, invited, included, and heard in service to advancing community safety for all. There are examples of working well with the PPN structures and drawing in local community organisations, such as Family Resource Centres (FRCs), to support the work of the LCSPs. There are also gaps in membership and involvement that must be addressed.
- **Proactively encouraging meaningful engagement** of partnership members through clarity of roles, managing expectations, meeting types, sequencing, and schedules, providing support and mentoring and facilitation processes.
- **Capacity** to work well with conflict and tensions that arise in the course of the work and working through these in ways that are respectful, constructive and solution focused. There is a need for briefing, training and development and mentoring to support the facilitative skills required to support and progress the work of partnership and the dynamics of the group.

## 5.4. Pointers for Consideration

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The results of the triangulated analysis of all data tell us that:

- Work is progressing steadily across the LCSP sites as evidenced by the number of meetings, working groups, the identification of community safety needs and priorities, and the production of Community Safety Plans. The work has been supported by expertise from external consultants to facilitate workshops and drafting of community safety plans. There is variation across the sites which is natural given that the LCSP is responding to local context and needs. This is notwithstanding that each LCSP has similar terms of reference. The learning is that variation and versatility is to be expected in different locations and at the same time guidance and governance is important.
- Community safety is moving from concept to practice through the formation and work of the LCSPs building and progressing towards their community safety plans. This has been further supplemented financially by the introduction of the Community Innovation Fund. A total of €353,903 has been awarded to community safety initiatives across the LCSP sites, under the CSIF in 2022, with potential for further funding in 2023.

- Governance structures are developing with the setting up of a second Sponsors' Group for the Waterford and Longford Partnership. There is a call for more structure and support from the Department of Justice indicating that it is timely to begin creating the national structures as outlined in the *Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill (2022)*.
- The work of partnership is happening and the reality of this as a specific way of working that takes time, skills and purposeful effort is being experienced in different ways across the pilot sites. The process of identifying community safety priorities and producing the Community Safety plan has brought a sense of reality to the work. It also reveals where the trust and the areas of tension are and the reality that the bulk of the work is often undertaken by a small few. This may be a feature of the phase of the pilot and the stage of evolution of the partnership process. This warrants further attention and examination through the evaluation at end point.
- The results of the survey of LCSP members show a shared belief that there is a need for the LCSPs to improve community safety and a positive shift in buy-in to the LCSP on the part of LCSP members. There are positive shifts in understanding of the LCSP model and its objectives, signs of growing confidence that the goals of the LCSP can be achieved and a belief that the LCSP has improved working relationships between different agencies and organisations in the community. A relatively high proportion of members believe their LCSP is improving the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues, and the involvement of communities in that process.
- The survey results show a downward shift in commitment to the LCSP on the part of members with a call for more active engagement and involvement of the representatives from statutory agencies. This fits with the learning around the importance of leadership and governance including a shared vision across departments for initiatives such as the LCSP.
- There are early signs of increased sharing of responsibilities beyond what was experienced in the JPC with scope for even greater involvement and sharing of tasks within the LCSP model. The LCSP plan brings together a wider variety of stakeholders with greater sharing of the responsibilities for community safety actions. It significantly reduces the number and proportion of community safety responsibilities assigned to An Garda Síochána, broadening out to the local authority mainly at this point. Other agencies, including the HSE and Tusla, are involved to different extents in each location.
- The results confirm that time matters and partnership working requires an open mindset and purposeful attention with time for relationship building, cultivation of trust through respectful discussion, working through tensions and conflict, and shared decision-making, particularly around the focus of the work and the Community Safety Plan. The results indicate that the time invested in discussing the work and plans in smaller groups supports relationship building and creates the foundations of good partnership working. Working together in groups is a feature of partnership working that relies on specific competencies, attitudes, and supports, as well as skilled facilitation.
- The evaluation results confirm that people matter greatly to the work of a partnership and collaboration. People being and feeling involved in the LCSP, in their various roles, is central to the model and trust cultivation. The feelings of inclusion and psychological safety to speak and contribute is vital to the process of successful partnership particularly a partnership devoted to community safety. This includes everyone across the full range of stakeholders. The results indicate that there is further work necessary to draw in the full engagement of all stakeholders, both community and statutory. This work includes communication, briefings, working groups, consultations, and capacity building.
- The results draw attention to the roles and responsibilities within the LCSP model and the necessary recruitment, selection, and communication. There is a need for clear guidelines

and communication of the expectations, job descriptions and full scope of all roles, both paid and volunteer.

- The role of the Coordinator is pivotal to driving, and doing, the work of the LCSP, as it is currently constituted. The results point to overload in this role, and this requires attention, particularly given the full suite of competencies and tasks necessary for a successful LCSP. The results point to the need for dedicated administrative and research support within the complement of LCSP staff. Factors that support the Coordinator in their work include being hosted by the Local Authority, good quality office space, active working groups, strong links and good relationships with other complementary partnership structures and initiatives that serve the local community. These include Healthy Ireland, the Sports Partnership, CYPSC, and LCDC.
- The role of the Chairperson is important to championing the LCSP model, providing independent leadership and facilitating the values and behaviours of collaboration across the range of stakeholders. The results indicate that experience of working with diverse groups and situations and a breadth of competencies, including leadership and facilitation are key enablers of effective chairing of the LCSP structure. The process of recruiting and selecting the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson warrants consideration during rollout phase.
- There is heavy reliance within the LCSP on volunteering which requires a strong governance and support structure. It also requires good leadership, volunteer management and a firm commitment to the principles and values of community development and active citizenship. The role of the voluntary members of the LCSP is fundamental to the LCSP model and it is through active engagement and involvement of all members that the work of partnership advances.
- Resourcing matters and each site received a boost in morale following successful application for additional funding under the Community Safety Innovation Fund 2022.
- Consultations within local communities is necessary for the identification of community safety needs and priorities in specific local areas and working to develop targeted plans and actions to improve safety. There are a range of examples of consultations within the community including with Comhairle na nOg, community groups and town hall type meetings. Awareness of the LCSP is at early stages with further work necessary to advance local community interest and involvement.
- Community safety priorities vary from location to location as is natural in a community initiative that is grounded in responding to a specific location. It will be timely at the end phase of the evaluation to explore community safety priorities in more depth across each location.

## 5.5. Enablers of Partnership

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This Interim Report confirms that the findings arising from the LCSP pilot are consistent with the learning from elsewhere. The results align with the enablers of partnership and reaffirm the reality of partnership work.

The most notable enablers, relevant, at this interim point, and at a national level, are vision and leadership and the setting up of national structures and processes for implementation of the rollout. The findings focus on areas that need attention during the final phase of the pilot. These include the following actions in preparation for wider implementation:



- Restate and continue to communicate the plan for the LCSPs as set out in the *Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill (2022)*.
- Progress the setting up the national structures in time for rollout of the LCSP nationwide. This will involve the development of a national strategy, oversight and implementation structures, including a designated Cabinet Committee, a steering group and a national office. The National Office for Community Safety could be tasked with preparing guidance materials, processes and resources including:
  - Role descriptions for LCSP members to provide clarity on their role and help organisations to identify the most appropriate representative for the partnership.
  - Process to advance the statutory obligation for public service organisations to cooperate with each other.
  - Good practice meeting procedures and engagement.
  - Structures to ensure greater coordination of national programmes and partnerships to maximise an integrated response to local needs and minimise duplication of effort and resources.
  - National-level data-sharing agreements and templates. This could also include expectations and guidance in relation to data-sharing.
  - Good practice community engagement and participation.

The early enablers to facilitate the process and tasks of the work of the LCSPs at local level are set out below.

## Optimising the early implementation of LCSPs

The context, pace and patterns of progress vary across the three pilot sites. That said, the findings from both baseline and midpoint suggest that early buy-in, relationship and trust building, progress and momentum, can be enhanced if the implementation follows a purposeful route for (roughly) the first 6-8 months.

The results indicate that future LCSPs may be able to get off on the right foot and increase their chances of future success by:

- Considering the context and the history and culture of partnership in their location.
- Paying careful attention to the recruitment and selection of the LCSP roles of Chairperson and Coordinator. Ensure the optimal staffing complement and skill set are present including research and evaluation skills.
- Making provision for administrative support.
- Providing leadership skills and development and capacity building interventions for LCSP members.
- Holding in-person meetings roughly every 6-8 weeks (rather than every 12 weeks) for the first 6-8 months of the existence of the partnership. This increases the number of times LCSP members will meet each other in-person from 2-3 times within the first 6-8 months, to roughly 3-6 times. These early meetings should include a focus on:
  - Building a shared vision and understanding of community safety, the goals and objectives of LCSPs, and member's roles, responsibilities and expectations.
  - Co-producing shared ground rules and ways of working together that honour the values and principles of partnership. This could include an agreed process for working well with conflict if and as it arises.
  - Collaboratively identifying and prioritising an interim set of community safety priorities that can be tackled while the full community safety plan is under development.

- Establishing smaller working groups with relevant representation to coordinate and progress actions to address the interim set of community safety priorities.
- Agreeing what data matters and how best to track the work of the partnership and setting down the required data and the way it will be gathered and analysed to inform and support the work of the LCSP.
- Agreeing data sharing protocols within the LCSP.
- Providing opportunities for members to interact informally before and after meetings and utilising facilitation processes that encourage interaction, trust and relationship building.

The above steps will help maximise opportunities for LCSP members to learn about each other and the LCSP, build trusting relationships, develop shared goals, and increase perceptions of progress and momentum in the partnership.

The steps can be carried out either before or in parallel with early work on developing a community safety plan and could potentially be enhanced further with opportunities for members to spend an extended period of time together in a setting that allows social interaction while focusing on community safety (e.g., by visiting and learning from other community safety partnerships).

After the initial 6-8 months or the establishment of working groups -- whichever comes first -- it may be appropriate to return the frequency of LCSP meetings to roughly every 12 weeks.

## 5.6. Implications for final stages of the pilot and roll out of the LCSP

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This Interim Report reflects findings at a given point in time in the lifecycle of the LCSP pilot. The findings raise awareness of the learning along with the challenges that are arising in the implementation of the LCSP. This awareness enabled us to pinpoint the areas that warrant specific attention and examination through the evaluation field research at endpoint, including:

- Vision for the LCSP, post pilot and bringing to life the concept of community safety and its implementation in support of safer communities.
- Sponsors' Groups and other governance structures to support the national roll out of the LCSP.
- Optimal membership of the LCSPs and options to facilitate representation that is active and inclusive.
- Statutory agencies involvement in the LCSP and cooperation with each other in service to creating safer communities.
- Community engagement and participation within the unique context of each LCSP location.
- Implementation of the Community Safety Plans including community safety priorities.
- Data gathering and sharing and commitment and competency to advance the optimal use of information to inform, progress and monitor community safety work.
- Activity tracker and the further learning this will bring about the reality of data gathering and analysis to monitor and evaluate the early impact of the LCSP.
- Developing a process for measuring community safety outcomes in collaboration with relevant research partners and drawing on best practice internationally.

- Links to other community development initiatives, community education and social justice as the LCSP fits within the [sustainable development](#) goal 16 – peace, justice and strong societies in which people feel safe as they go about their lives whatever their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation.

The movement towards the endpoint of the pilot brings to the fore the need for careful preparation for the transition to the next stage of roll-out of the LCSP model. The Final Evaluation Report will mark the formal closure/end of the pilot and transition to full implementation. Using this Interim Report as a live document, open for discussion and feedback, will maintain focus on the immediacy of the learning that is unfolding, and inform decision making for roll out of the LCSP.

## 6. Next steps

This section lays out the final phase of the evaluation moving towards end-point data gathering (May – July 2023) which will culminate in a Final Evaluation Report of the LCSP pilot by the end of 2023.

The following are the proposed next steps as we move to endpoint:

1. **Consider and reflect** upon this Interim Report particularly the pointers to inform the final phase of the pilot and transitioning to roll-out of the LCSP.
2. **Prepare a dissemination and communication plan** for sharing the learning with all stakeholders, in partnership with the Department of Justice, in advance of endpoint data gathering scheduled to start in May 2023. This will communicate and facilitate completion of the final evaluation report by the end of 2023, tying in with the end of the LCSP pilot.
3. **Disseminate the findings and share the learning** to date across the full range of stakeholders through a national workshop, hosted by the Department of Justice, in April 2023. This will provide an open space and time to facilitate people from the LCSP pilot sites, and wider stakeholders, to come together, reflect, and prepare for endpoint data gathering, with the support of the evaluation team.
4. **Seek continued commitment to learning** from the pilot initiative by working towards greater involvement, of all stakeholders, in the evaluation data gathering across the three sites at endpoint.
5. **Prepare to conduct end-point data gathering from May through July 2023.** This will involve the final round of data gathering across the three pilot sites. The purpose will be to explore how the LCSPs have progressed their work during year two of the pilot and will incorporate the following activities:
  - Final round of surveys, interviews, and focus groups with LCSP stakeholders including the statutory agencies and the original high level working group that developed the LCSP concept.
  - Return to the theory of change and the contribution analysis to refine as necessary in preparation for endpoint data gathering and final report.
  - Review relevant documents including minutes of LCSP meetings, and the Local Community Safety Plans produced by each pilot site.
  - Consultation with the Sponsors Group in each site.
  - Monitoring the return of data in response to the Activity Tracker, to inform the final stage of developing a monitoring system for the LCSP.
6. **Prepare** Final Evaluation Report by end of 2023.

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Example of data collected as part of a monitoring system in Derry and Strabane Policing & Community Safety Partnership



# Appendices

## Appendix A: Local Community Safety Partnership Evaluation Questions

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The evaluation questions and sub-questions are:

### 1. How well did the Local Community Safety Partnerships identify priorities?

- a. How well did the Local Community Safety Partnership programme of work and priorities align to the concerns of the local community on safety issues?
- b. How did the Local Community Safety Partnerships identify 'success' criteria and measure them?

### 2. How did the Local Community Safety Partnerships conduct its work?

- a. Who was represented on the Local Community Safety Partnership?
- b. How did the Local Community Safety Partnerships and partners work together in tackling local community safety problems?
- c. Is the Local Community Safety Partnership able to make timely decisions? And relatedly, are the service providers represented by staff at the right grade/level?
- d. Does the Local Community Safety Partnership engage with a broad cross-section of the community?
- e. How did the partners on the Local Community Safety Partnerships work together in addressing local priorities? Did opportunities arise for innovative problem solving of local issues, drawing on multiple partners in the Local Community Safety Partnerships?
- f. How were resources used (for example, financial, human, information) by the Local Community Safety Partnerships to manage local problems?
- g. Did the pilot have sufficient staff/funding/other resources?
- h. Did the Local Community Safety Partnerships feel that it had all the relevant skills and training to undertake its work?
- i. Were the actions in the Local Community Safety Plan implemented on time, and if not, why not?
- j. What were seen as the strengths and weaknesses of the Local Community Safety Partnerships amongst the partners? Did the partners feel that the Local Community Safety Partnerships added value in the management of local issues beyond existing pre-existing arrangements?
- k. What improvements did members of the Local Community Safety Partnerships feel could be made to how they operated?
- l. What were the governance and accountability mechanisms? How effective were these?

**3. What was the engagement, relationship, and impact on the local community?**

- a. Did the Local Community Safety Partnerships engage with the local community? If so, how?
- b. What are the concerns/priorities of the local community?
- c. Did these align with the priorities identified by the Local Community Safety Partnerships?
- d. How aware was the local community of the Local Community Safety Partnerships and their work in the local area?
- e. Did the local community have trust and confidence in the Local Community Safety Partnerships?
- f. How relevant did the local community see the Local Community Safety Partnerships in managing local problems?
- g. Did the local community feel involved in the Local Community Safety Partnerships?
- h. Did the Local Community Safety Partnerships work with local communities to design and implement local solutions? Was there 'co-production'? Did the community feel involved in the development of solutions to local problems?
- i. Was there any impact on levels of community safety?

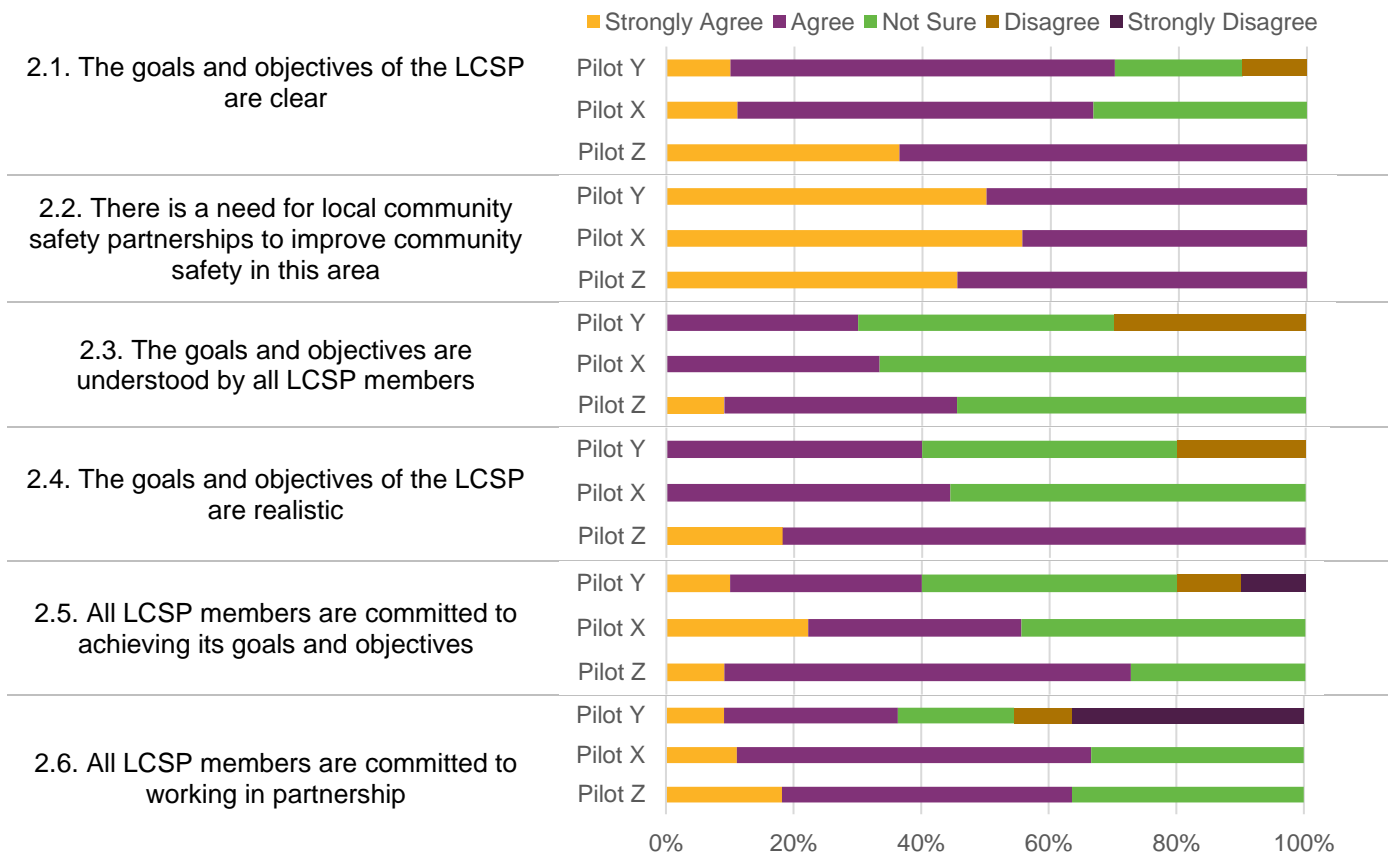


## Appendix B: Distribution of Community Safety Innovation Funding (2022)

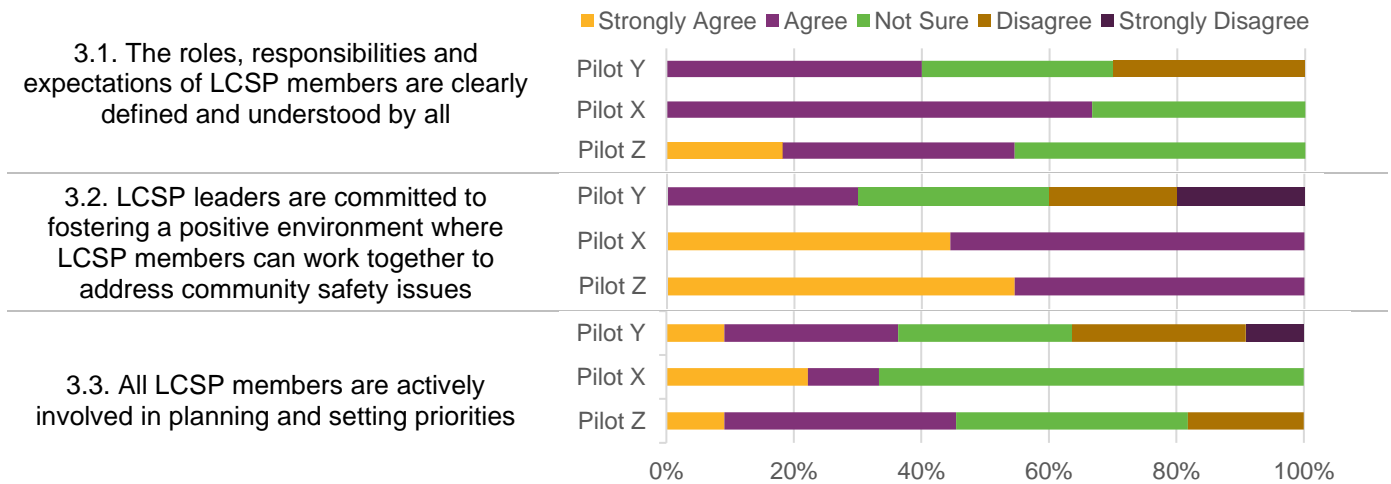
#	Applicant	Project	Rec. Funding
1	Longford LCSP	Cornerstone initiatives	€137,500
2	Meath Travellers Workshop	Positive Ripple Effect Within the Traveller Community	€99,831
3	Dublin LCSP, Dublin Town, DCC	Dublin North Inner City Community Safety Warden Scheme	€150,000
4	Waterford LCSP (Application 1)	Dungarvan Community Project	€41,403
5	Waterford LCSP (Application 4)	North West Suburbs Community Action Plan	€25,000
6	Outcomers (Dundalk with potential national reach)	App Happy (Discussing online dating safety with young gay and bisexual men)	€36,800
7	Longford Women's Link	Responding to the risk of Domestic Violence Homicide in Rural Ireland	€20,686
8	Monaghan Fire and Civil Protection	Personal & Community Resilience Booklet	€58,429
9	Monaghan JPC	Advancing Community Safety in Monaghan	€65,000
10	Red Door Project (Drogheda)	Prison Link Worker	€98,014
11	Meath Community Drug Alcohol Response	MCDAR Community Prison Links Worker	€49,711
12	Empower (Balbriggan, Co. Dublin)	Balbriggan Intercultural Youth Hub	€150,000
13	Foroige New Choices Project (Drogheda, Meath/Louth)	New Choices	€150,000
14	Roscommon CoCo & JPC	Four Projects	€5,000
15	Walkinstown Greenhills Resource Centre (Dublin)	Building Community Resilience Project	€135,770
16	Bedford Row Family Project (Clare)	Bedford Row in Clare	€148,000
17	Omeath District Development CLG (Louth)	Steering and Sparring	€118,167
18	Gorey Youth Needs Group (Wexford)	Discovery Project	€28,940
19	Ballymun Local DATF (Dublin)	'Base Bus Ballymun':Community Mobile Access Project	€120,000
20	Familibase (Ballyfermot, Dublin)	FamiliBase "That's a WRAP"	€136,414
21	Dublin City University (LSCP Pilot areas - North Inner City Dublin, Waterford & Longford)	Moving Well Being Well	€103,546
22	Sligo Business Improvement District	Sligo Street Ambassador Programme	€121,789
		<b>Total</b>	<b>€2,000,000</b>

## Appendix C: Results of the Midpoint Survey of LCSP Members, by Pilot Site

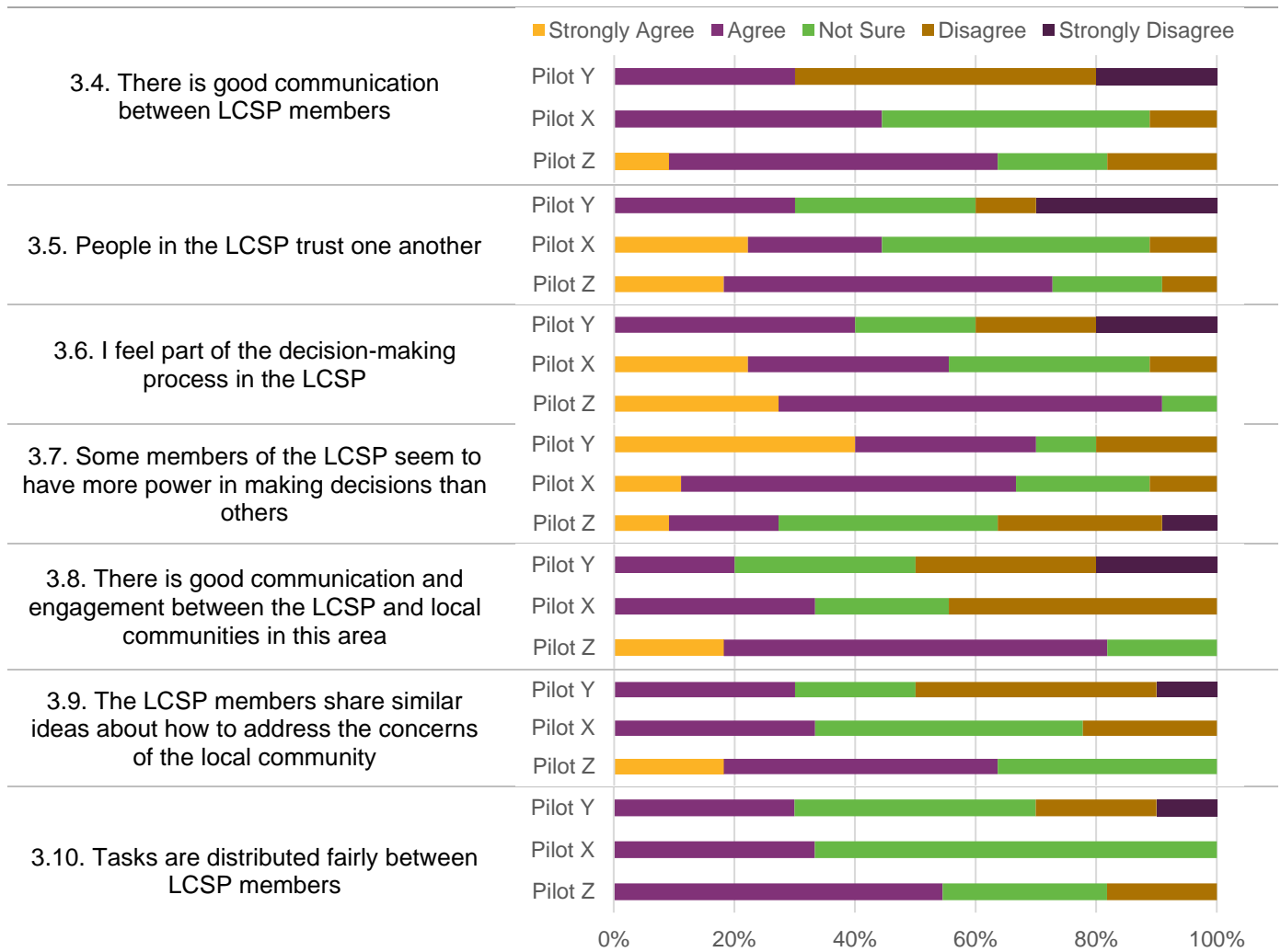
### Section 2: Purpose and vision of the LCSP



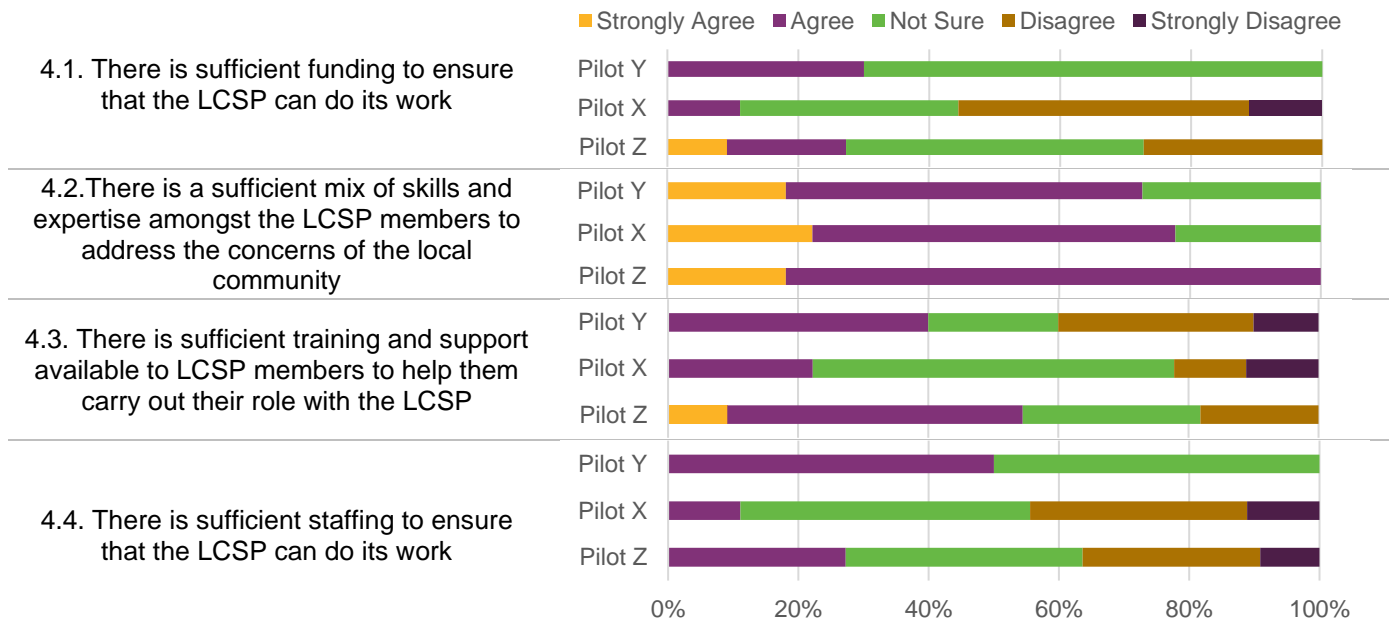
### Section 3: LCSP Membership and Participation

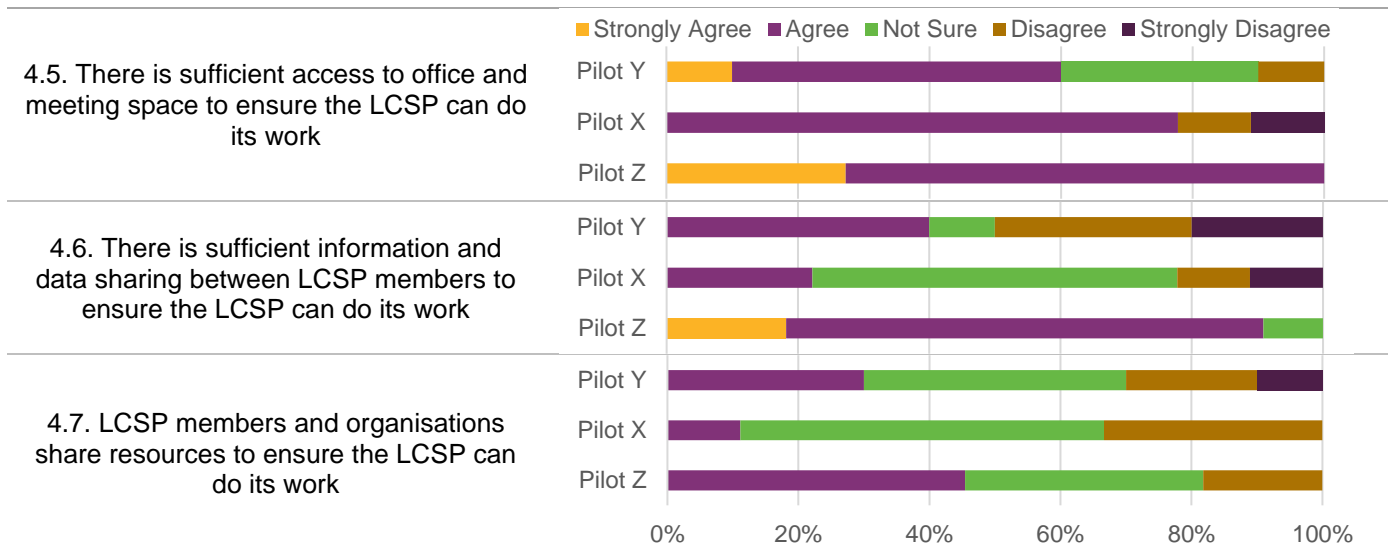


## Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot - Interim Evaluation Report (April 2023)

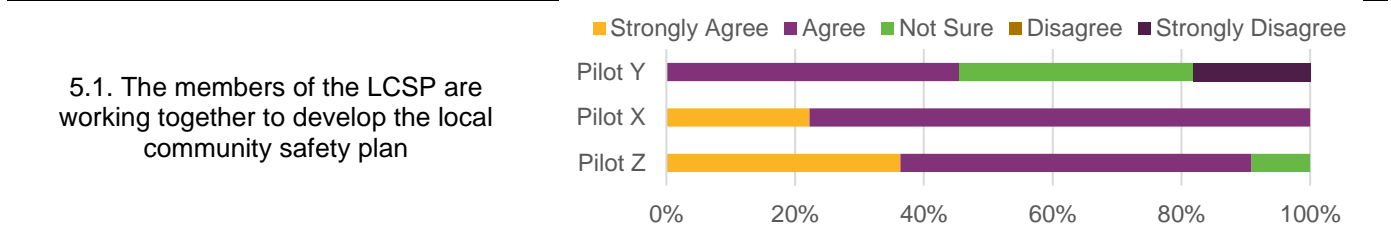


### Section 4: Resources

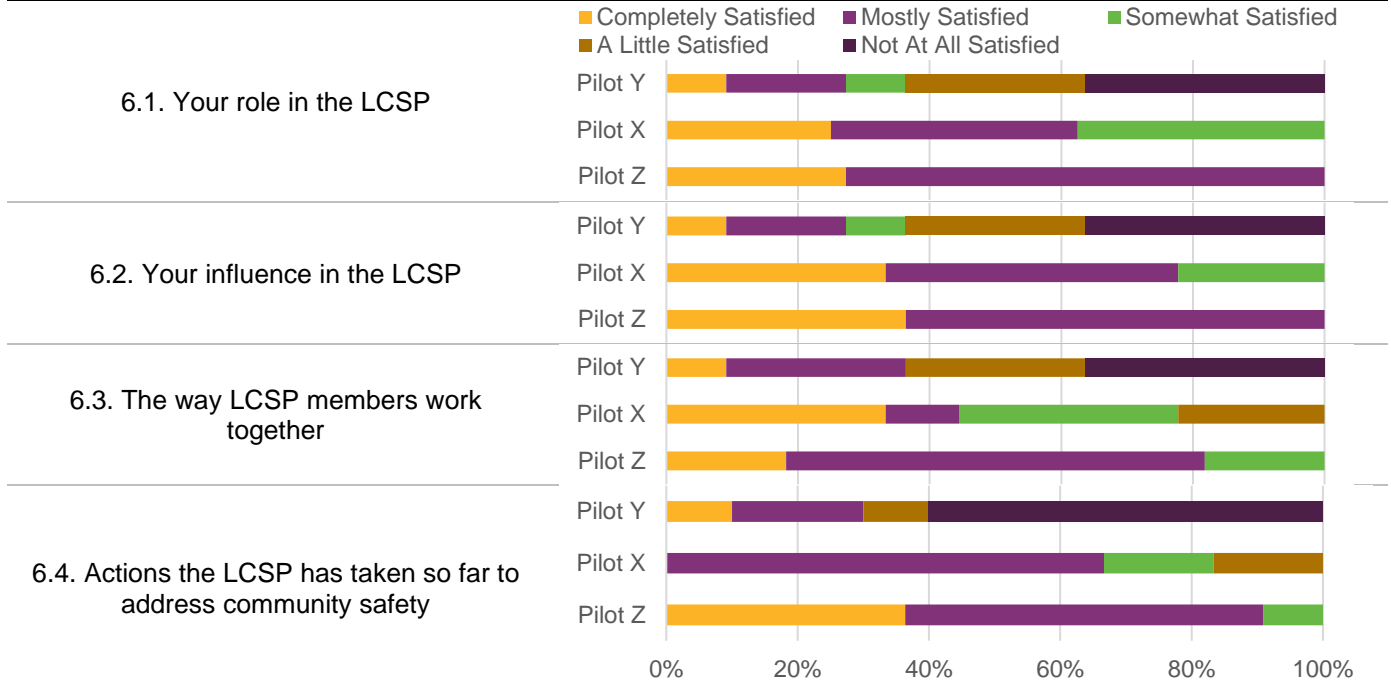




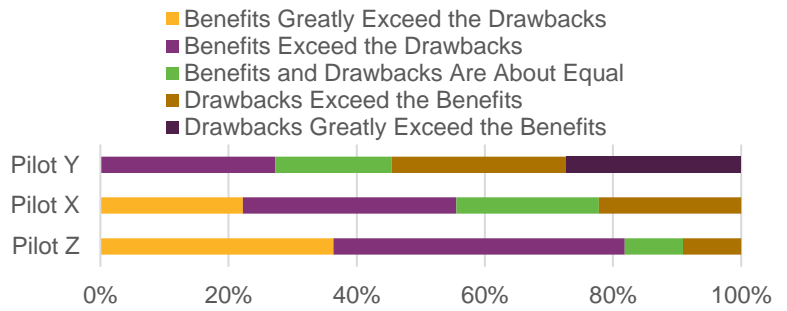
**Section 5: Developing the local community safety plan**



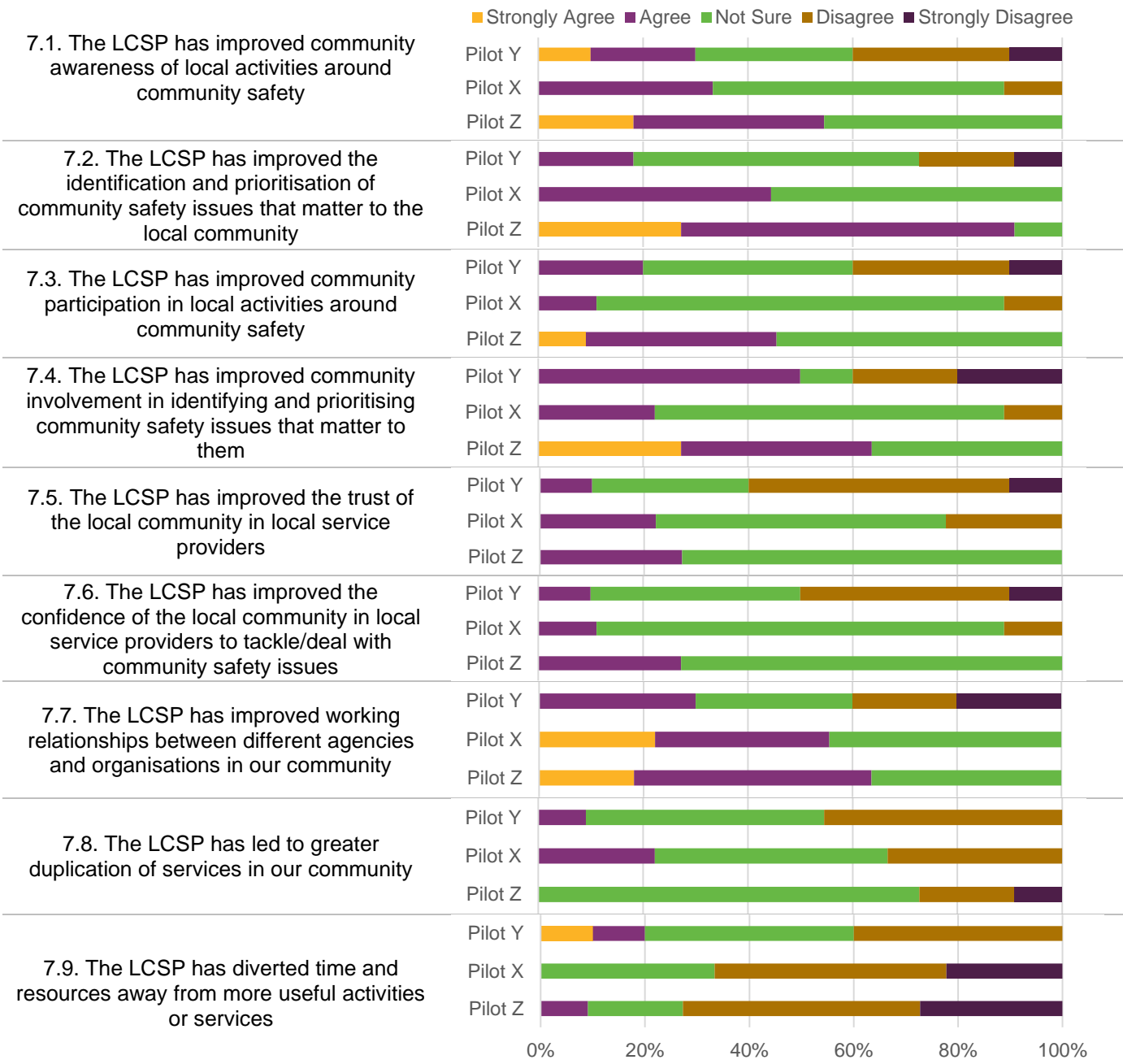
**Section 6: Satisfaction with the LCSP**



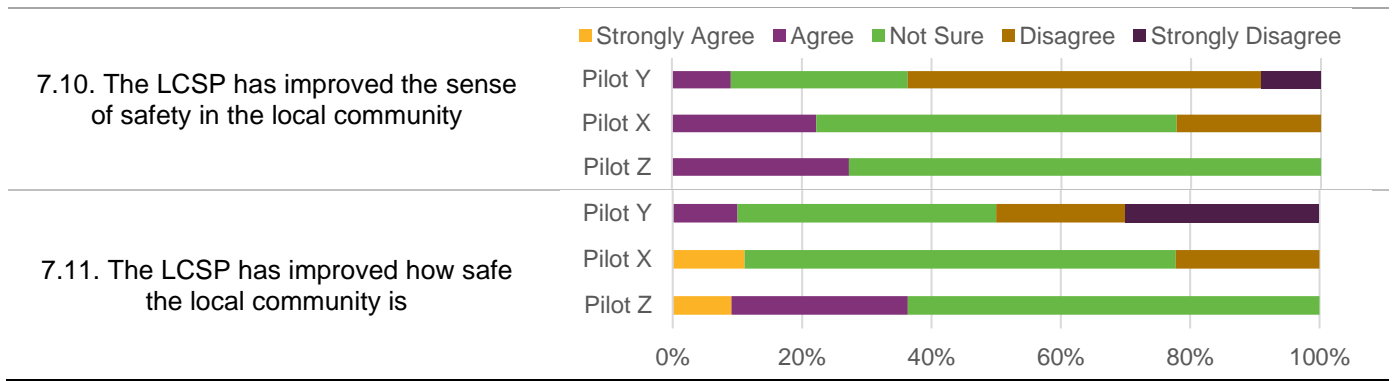
6.5. So far, how have the benefits of participating in the LCSP compared with the drawbacks for you?



**Section 7: Impact of the LCSP**



Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot - Interim Evaluation Report (April 2023)



## Appendix D: Detailed findings from observations of factors influencing engagement of attendees at LCSP meetings

Factors	Observed influence on attendee engagement	Other Considerations
	<p>↗ = helpful</p> <p>→ = somewhat helpful</p> <p>↘ = hindering</p> <p>✘ = mixed</p>	
<b>Meeting Size, Length and Purpose</b>		
<b>Meeting Size and Attendance</b>	<p>↗ <b>Smaller meeting group sizes</b> appear to improve meeting efficiency and engagement by allowing more time and opportunity per attendee to contribute and interact. Meeting procedures don't necessarily need to be as formal or procedural as for larger meetings. Fewer 'voices' are easier to coordinate and the probability of 'social loafing' (the tendency to reduce effort and motivation when working in a collective, akin to 'hiding in a crowd') also decreases <b>[Obs-701]</b>.</p> <p>↘ <b>Larger meeting group sizes</b> tend to be less efficient as they reduce the time and opportunity per attendee to contribute and interact, and usually require formal procedures to effectively manage them so that all attendees have equal opportunities to contribute. The additional 'voices' can make a meeting harder to coordinate and increase the probability of social loafing <b>[Obs-931; Obs-682]</b>.</p>	Larger meeting group sizes are unavoidable for full LCSP partnership meetings (assuming good attendance), but help increase attendee representativeness and diversity.
<b>Meeting Length</b>	<p>↘ <b>Relatively short meetings (roughly 75 minutes or less)</b>, are unlikely to provide enough time for meaningful engagement in meetings of the full LCSP partnership, especially if there are many items on the agenda <b>[Obs-682]</b>.</p> <p>↗ <b>Relatively longer meetings (roughly 90 - 180 minutes)</b>, can provide the Chair with more scope to utilise methods and processes that facilitate better engagement and provide members with more time for discussion <b>[Obs-931]</b>.</p>	Time pressures amongst members are a major barrier to longer meeting times. Shorter meeting times could be utilised without reducing engagement in sub-group meetings because of the smaller number of attendees and more specific, limited focus of discussion.
<b>Clarity of purpose and role</b>	<p>↗ <b>When attendees are clear about the purpose/focus of the meeting and their role/reason for attending</b>, this appears to enable more confident and decisive engagement from attendees.</p>	
<b>Meeting Methods and Processes</b>		
<b>Meeting formats</b>	<p>✘ <b>Large procedural-style meetings</b> (characterised by large-group discussions strictly following an agenda and with procedures managing how members engage and make decisions) help to focus discussions and keep a meeting moving. This appears to come at the expense of limiting opportunities for engagement and might create an atmosphere that is less interesting or that is 'intimidating' for less confident/vocal members who are unfamiliar with procedural-style meetings, lack the confidence to speak in large groups and are still getting to know other members on the partnership <b>[Obs-931; Obs-682]</b>.</p> <p>↗ <b>Face-to-face and hybrid meetings</b> appear to increase engagement compared to virtual meetings because the opportunities for attendees to socially interact before and after meetings help members gain greater familiarity, knowledge and understanding of each other, and appear to help set a more informal atmosphere that more members feel comfortable participating in <b>[Obs-701; Obs-620; Obs-978]</b>.</p>	Large procedural-style meetings are a more efficient way of managing large-group meetings and reducing meeting length <b>[Obs-682]</b> . The benefits of face-to-face meetings may come at the cost of reduced attendance if members don't have the time or capability to attend <b>[Obs-978]</b> .

<p><b>Group discussion methods</b></p>	<p>↘ <b>Full/larger-group discussions</b> compared to breakout/smaller-group discussions, appeared to reduce opportunities for attendees to interact and could limit engagement to mainly from 'more vocal' members who are experienced and confident in committee-type meetings [Obs-931; Obs-682].</p> <p>↗ <b>Breakout/smaller-group discussions (followed by feedback to the full-group and full-group discussion)</b>, compared only to full-group discussions, create more opportunities for attendees to interact, build relations, discuss ideas and solutions, and provide a safer space for 'quieter' members to contribute [Obs-931].</p>	<p>Full/large-group discussions are a more efficient way of delivering information to a large group and can reduce meeting length [Obs-682]. Breakout/smaller-group discussions may require longer meeting times to allow time for group-discussion and feedback [Obs-931].</p>
<p><b>Facilitation styles</b></p>	<p>→ <b>When Chairs allow time and space for comments, questions and discussion</b> from members during full-group discussions, there are more opportunities for members to contribute, though only a small number of members who seem to be more experienced/confident/vocal tend to contribute [Obs-931; Obs-682].</p> <p>→ <b>When Chairs invite specific, relevant attendees for their view</b>, this might help to broaden the diversity of voices in a discussion, as long as it is 'quieter' members needing support or prompts from the Chairperson that are invited [Obs-620].</p> <p>↗ <b>When the Chair treats attendees in a respectful and collegial manner at all times</b>, this appears to help attendees feel respected and valued, reduce tensions, and create an atmosphere of collegiality [Obs-931; Obs-701; Obs-620; Obs-978].</p> <p>↘ <b>When the role of Chair is blurred between 'meeting facilitator' and 'meeting participant'</b>, this can reduce the speaking time available for attendees [Obs-978].</p>	<p>Providing time and space for comments and questions may not be enough on its own to encourage engagement from less confident or vocal members.</p>
<p><b>Seating arrangements</b></p>	<p>→ <b>Circular seating arrangements with attendees seated close together</b> seem to have a more communal/team atmosphere and may be easier for members to see the body language of others and better time their interjections into discussions [Obs-620; Obs-701].</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Content</b></p>		
<p><b>Updates on LCSP work and activities</b></p>	<p>↘ <b>When solely delivered by the Chair and/or Coordinator</b>, engagement tends to be limited to members asking questions and clarifications [Obs-682; Obs-978].</p> <p>→ <b>When also delivered by members</b>, there is more opportunity for a small number of members to speak. Engagement from other members still tends to be limited though [Obs-931; Obs-620].</p>	<p>Members should ideally be notified in advance if delivering an update so that they can prepare. Not all members may be comfortable speaking to a large group [Obs-620].</p>
<p><b>Attendee Characteristics and Relationships</b></p>		
<p><b>Experience and confidence of attendees in large procedural-type meetings</b></p>	<p>↗ <b>Members more experienced and confident in committee/procedural-type meetings</b>, appear to be more vocal during full-group discussions, which could be resulting in low-level power differences, as more vocal members appear to have greater speaking time and influence on decisions than less vocal members [Obs-682; Obs-701; Obs-978].</p> <p>↘ <b>Members who are unfamiliar with and lack confidence in committee/procedural-type meetings</b>, appear to be less vocal during full-group discussions [Obs-682; Obs-620].</p>	<p>Creative meeting processes could facilitate more engagement from less confident/vocal members, but might require longer meeting times [Obs-931]. Training for members was suggested in interviews and focus groups, though motivation and capacity of members for training were also identified as barriers.</p>
<p><b>Familiarity and relations between members</b></p>	<p>↗ <b>Familiarity with other members, trusting relationships, camaraderie, respectfully interacting with other members as equals and in a collaborative spirit</b>, all help to create an atmosphere where attendees can more readily contribute to a meeting without needing encouragement; can challenge each</p>	<p>While an 'Us vs. Them' dynamic was observed to facilitate engagement in one meeting, this dynamic is likely more harmful than beneficial to a partnership and may actually reduce</p>



other respectfully without causing/taking offence; and can better identify and problem-solve issues [Obs-701; Obs-620].

**X Where there is an 'Us vs. Them' dynamic between different stakeholder groups**, this appears to have had the unexpected effect of encouraging engagement, though the tone of the engagement was more combative and less collaborative. The increased engagement is potentially explained by two factors: (1) an increased motivation from attendees to engage so as to prevent attendees from an out-group dominating discussions; and (2) attendees feeling strongly enough supported by a sufficient number of other attendees (i.e. those within their in-group), which could in turn provide enough 'psychological safety' for members to contribute, knowing that others in their in-group will value and respect their contribution even if members of the out-group disagree with them [Obs-978].

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meeting engagement in the long-term if the issues underlying this dynamic go unresolved.

## Appendix E: Summary of a Snapshot of Community Voices

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### **Summary Analysis of a Sample of Community Voices in one LCSP location**

**The following is a summary analysis of a snapshot of community voices in one LCSP area. The sample is small and yet, as a microcosm of the community, the results give early indications of the beginnings of awareness and appreciation of the LCSP.**

**The majority of respondents were aware of the LCSP, and all agreed that setting up a local community safety partnership is a good way to deal with community safety issues. While awareness was high none had attended any LCSP events or meetings. Three were aware that a community safety plan is being prepared for their area and all were unsure of the detail of the plan. Overall, the results suggest that awareness of the LCSP is good, people believe it to be a good idea. There is more work to be done to draw in people from the community and keep them informed, engaged and actively involved in the community safety planning and implementation process.**

The sample comprised of 3 residents, 5 were non-residents who work in the LCSP area and 2 non-residents who avail of services in the area.

Of the ten, the majority (6) were aware of the LCSP in their area.

Of the six who were aware of the LCSP, 3 had heard about it through their group or club, 2 from a neighbour or friend and 1 from a local politician.

All six respondents agreed that setting up a local community safety partnership (LCSP) is a good way to deal with local community safety issues.

None had attended a community safety partnership event or meeting organised by the LCSP.

Three were aware that a community safety plan is being prepared for their area.

Four believe that the local community safety partnership is working in the best interests of people living in their area.

Two believed that the local community safety partnership is improving community safety in their area, 3 were unsure and one disagreed.

Two know who is involved in the local community safety partnership for their area, two were unsure and two did not know.

Two respondents believe that local people have a say in how the local community safety partnership tackles local community safety issues, three were unsure and one disagreed.

Three indicated that they do not feel involved in their local community safety partnership and three were unsure.

One respondent believes that the LCSP is keeping local people up to date with its work, one was unsure and 4 disagreed.

Three believe that the community safety plan is being developed in consultation with people from the area.

The majority (6) were unsure whether the community safety plan focuses on the main community safety issues in their area.

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