



Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot Baseline Evaluation Report

Final Report: June 2022

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CES/UL Evaluation Team

June 2022

1. Introduction

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

The LCSP pilot is being accompanied by an independent formative evaluation¹ purposefully designed to capture the learning arising from the pilot. This learning will inform the roll out of Local Community Safety Partnerships in local authority areas across Ireland and will further the development of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill.

This Baseline Report is the first in a series of three reports documenting the results of the external evaluation of the pilot initiative. This report describes the context for the pilot and sets out findings and learning arising from the evaluation at the early setup stage of the three pilot sites, including the experiences and perspectives of LCSP stakeholders.

A second evaluation report will be published later in 2022. This will be an Interim Report describing implementation progress, i.e., enablers and challenges to implementing the LCSPs and the associated community safety plans. It will share learning about the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders in cocreating and implementing the local community safety plan in each of the pilot sites.

A third and final summative evaluation report will be prepared by the end of 2023 and will set out the learning about outcomes and implementation as the LCSP pilot phase ends.

The audience for the evaluation reports is all those who are interested in and charged with advancing the vision for community safety in Ireland in which organisations, agencies and communities work together to ensure that people are safe and feel safe.

It is intended that the three reports will demonstrate the contribution that the LCSPs make to our understanding of community safety, how community safety initiatives are best operationalised, and the range of outcomes that can be achieved through the implementation of community-based

¹ Formative evaluation is usually undertaken during the development or early implementation stage of an initiative with a view to learning about how the initiative is unfolding. Formative evaluation is purposefully intended to facilitate learning to inform future decision making for the final design and roll out of the initiative.

responses to community safety issues. The evaluation is intended to inform decision making regarding the national roll-out of the community safety initiative and of national policy and legislation informing developments in community safety and community policing.

2. Background to the Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot

This section presents a summary of the history and context for the development of the LCSP pilot. As recommended by the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI), 2018, the Government approved the development of a Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill to replace the Garda Síochána Act 2005. It is intended that the Bill will redefine the functions of An Garda Síochána to include community safety. The proposed legislation will place an obligation on relevant departments, State agencies and local authorities to cooperate with An Garda Síochána in delivering community safety.

A key finding of CoFPI was that much of the work of the Gardaí is prevention-of-harm work, as distinct from crime-related work, and as such community safety cannot be the sole responsibility of An Garda Síochána. The Bill will redefine the functions of An Garda Síochána to include community safety and to place an obligation on relevant departments, state agencies and local authorities to cooperate with An Garda Síochána in relation to carrying out this function.

Timeline for Development of the LCSP

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

For community safety to be effective, it requires multi-agency partnership working, consultation with the local community, and a flatter police structure and organisation with a high degree of delegated authority. The following timeline depicts the main policy developments and changes that have moved policing and community safety towards a more multi-agency and local, place-based model that characterises the LCSP pilot:

Table 1: Timeline for Development of the LCSP

Decade	Event
1980s	The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme was established in urban areas and the Community Alert Scheme was established in rural areas.
1990s	Local Drugs Task Forces brought together health services, local authorities, An Garda Síochána, local development companies, and vocational training and education agencies, along with organisations and local activists in communities, in response to the heroin crisis. The task forces focused on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, and supply reduction.
	The Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1997, gave the power to local authorities to evict tenants engaged in anti-social behaviour, including drug dealing.
	The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (The Patten Report) was published leading to significant reform of policing. This included recommendations on changes to local policing and community safety and led to the establishment of District Policing Partnerships (now Policing and Community Safety Partnerships).
	The Community Policing and Estate Management Forum (CPF) was established in Dublin's north inner city in response to the illicit drug problem and to improve relations between the local community, An Garda Síochána and the local authority. Similar fora were established in other areas in Dublin.
2000s	The National Drugs Strategy, 2001-2008, <i>Building on Experience</i> , included a commitment to increase the level of Garda resources in Local Drugs Task Force areas by the end of 2001, building on lessons emanating from The Community Policing Forum Model.

	The Children Act 2001 established the Garda Youth Diversion Programme on a statutory basis and introduced a range of restorative preventative mechanisms with an emphasis on community-based approaches.
	City and County Development Boards (CDBs) were established, and their remit included implementing RAPID (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development). Key themes to be addressed in socially and economically disadvantaged communities were anti-social behaviour and community safety.
	The Garda Síochána Bill included a commitment to establish Joint Policing Committees and Local Policing Fora. The Oireachtas Justice Committee invited submissions and held a series of discussions on Community Policing with inputs also from Northern Ireland.
	The Garda Síochána Act 2005 established Joint Policing Committees in local authority areas and included provisions for establishing Local Policing Fora, to govern local crime prevention and community safety.
	The Ballymun Community Safety strategy was initiated.
	The Criminal Justice Act 2006 was published, providing for behaviour warnings and behaviour orders for anti-social behaviour.
	Guidelines for Joint Policing Committees were published. JPCs extended to each local authority area.
	The Tallaght West Child Development Initiative (CDI) developed a Community Safety initiative, including community safety contracts.
	Community Policing Model and Guidelines for Local Policing Fora were published.

2010s	Public Services Reform – the government’s plan and related statement on public service reform envisaged greater integration of structures and services across all levels of government.
	The Limerick Community Safety Partnership was initiated as part of a wider process of regeneration to increase community safety, improve the environment and promote community spirit. Partners included the HSE, the local authority, An Garda Síochána, and the local community.
	The Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) was published.
	A Policing Service for the Future: Implementing the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland - This report of the Implementation Group is the Government’s agreed approach to implementing CoFPI.
	The Interdepartmental Working Group on Community Safety was brought together by the Department of Justice, facilitated by the Department of An Taoiseach.
Year	Event
2020	The Local Community Safety Pilot was announced by the Minister for Justice.
2021	The general scheme for the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill was published by the Department of Justice indicating the National Community Safety Strategy to serve as an overarching policy framework and programme of actions to underpin a whole of government approach to enhancing community safety (Heads of Bill 84-85).
	Department of Justice Strategy Statement 2021-2023 – A safe, fair, and inclusive Ireland. The Department then issued the Justice Plan 2021.
	The Department of Justice Community Safety Policy was published.

	The Drogheda Implementation Plan for Building a Bridge to a Better Future report was launched by the Minister for Justice.
	The Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) pilot initiative was announced for Limerick city, bringing together Gardaí, mental health workers and other professionals as a multi-agency response to crisis situations.
	LCSP pilot sites were set up in Dublin North Inner City, Longford and Waterford.
2022	The Community Safety Innovation Fund was launched by the Minister for Justice to support the work of the LCSPs and other policy initiatives relevant to community safety and youth justice. There are specific application criteria and LCSPs and other organisations can apply for financial support for measures to protect their community. The initial outlay of the fund will be €2 million in 2022 and is expected to increase in subsequent years.
	The Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) was launched and will identify a number of areas experiencing concentrated social exclusion and disadvantage and will focus on capacity building within the community. In part this stems from a Programme for Government commitment to expand the Dublin North Inner City model and will support communities to develop and implement tailored solutions to specific local challenges.
	The Place Based Leadership Programme was launched as a pilot in Darndale and Drogheda and is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. The Programme is an investment in local leaders to help them address the challenges experienced in their communities. The intention is to strengthen the capacity of those already working to improve quality of life and to ensure that local leaders develop the collaboration skills needed to address the challenges their communities face.

Community Safety

Community safety is a broad term which 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 safe and feeling safe in their own community (Department of Justice, 2021). It involves creating structures and oversight to support and enable state and civic society to work effectively within their respective remits to create communities that feel safe. It is about devising clear oversight arrangements that align strategically and functionally with the statutory remits of agencies. According to the OSCE,² 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 aim of the partnership approach to community safety is 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 causes of crime and criminality are a complex mix of social and economic deprivation and the breakdown of local communities. These outcomes require multi-faceted, co-operative and coordinated responses. They also fit alongside other community development 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, which focus on capacity building within the community and are funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

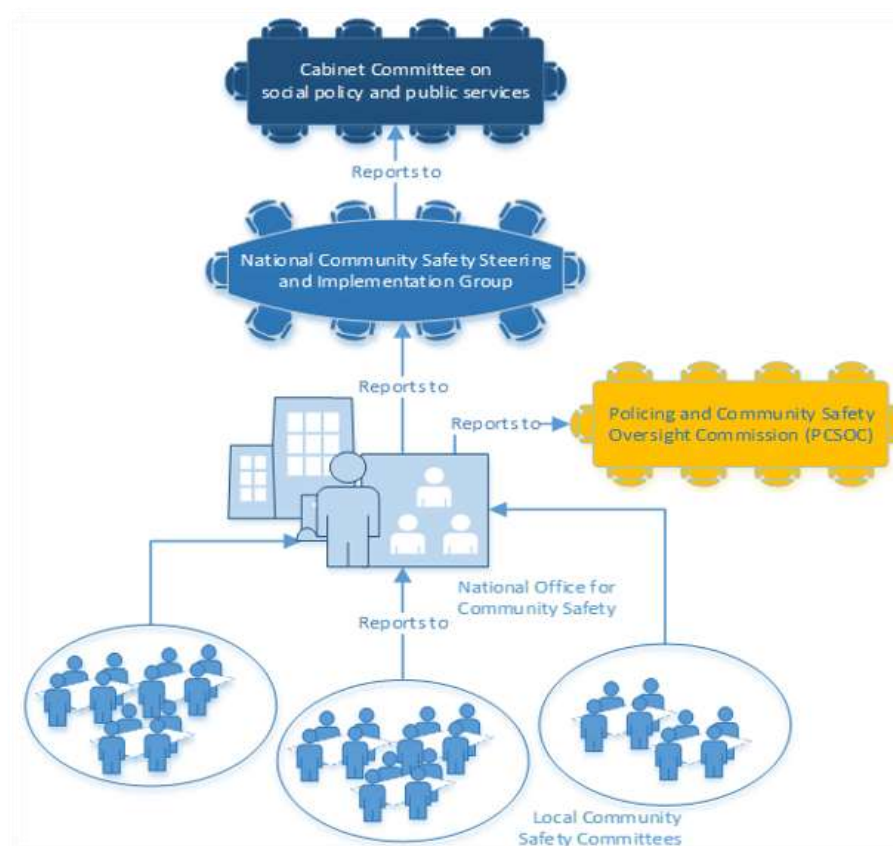
Structures and Governance for the LCSP

The establishment of the LCSP pilot was announced by the Minister in November 2020 as a first step towards strengthening community safety nationwide. There are three pilot sites: Dublin North Inner City, Longford, and Waterford City and County. Each site is working to develop partnership

² 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>

structures and processes to prepare a tailored community safety plan in collaboration with local community and public services. Figure 1 below sets out the proposed governance structure for the LCSP.

Figure 1: Proposed oversight structure for Local Community Safety Partnerships



Source: Department of Justice, 2020 (power point presentation about the LCSP pilot initiative).

The pilot sites were selected based on a matrix of six criteria, devised by the Department of Justice, including regional distribution, degree of urbanisation, population density, crime rates, deprivation,³ and the capacity of a given local authority to implement the pilot scheme. Each community is unique and will face different challenges; therefore, their Community Safety Plan will require solutions tailored to the needs and priorities of that community as identified by that community.

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. The partnership

³ Use of 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index to identify local authority administrative units with significant levels of relative deprivation.

meets on the last Thursday of October, January, April, and July annually with the final meeting set for 27th July 2023.

Longford LCSP was set up in early summer 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in June 2021, and the inaugural meeting of the partnership was held on 20th September 2021. The partnership has agreed to meet quarterly over the duration of its two-year term.

Waterford LCSP was set up in early summer 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in June 2021, and the inaugural meeting of the partnership was held on 2nd July 2021. The partnership meets at least four times per annum over the duration of its two-year term.

Figure 2 sets out the proposed structure for the Local Community Safety Partnerships incorporating representation from statutory, business, local residents, and community organisations.

Figure 2: Proposed structure of the LCSPs



Source: Department of Justice, 2021.

Overview of the LCSP Pilot Sites

Each LCSP site operates according to agreed Terms of Reference which set out the oversight, governance, staffing, roles, responsibilities, and membership details for the LCSP. The oversight of each pilot is led by a Sponsors Group comprised of officials from the Department of Justice and the local City and/or County Council. There are also terms committing to training and development support for LCSP members and cooperation with the evaluation process through engagement with surveys, workshops and other activities as requested by the independent evaluator.

Each pilot site is supported by the Department of Justice through a dedicated budget as well as information and guidance from the Criminal Justice Policy section within the Department.

The funding agreement for the LCSP is for the twenty-four-month duration of the pilot. The funding agreement for Waterford and Longford is €270,600 each. The funding agreement for North Inner City Dublin is €370,670 and this figure includes support under the Dormant Accounts Funding (€150,000) and funding from the Department of Justice Crime Prevention Budget (€50,000).⁴

A total of €143,235 was spent across the pilot sites by early 2022. This expenditure includes salaries of LCSP Coordinators and one administrator in the NIC LCSP, cost of community events, consultancy, and equipment. There had been no drawdown of funding for training for LCSP members at the time of the baseline data-gathering.

⁴ Source: Department of Justice. May 2022.

3. Literature Review

This section presents a summary of a review of literature to inform the evaluation of the LCSP pilot.

Collaboration and partnership are considered optimal ways of working in the contemporary global world (Wildridge et al., 2004). The literature on partnership working is growing, with a small portion specifically about community safety partnerships. Much of the literature focuses on what works to facilitate effective partnership and highlights that partnership working, while challenging, can be particularly beneficial and successful in the areas of health and community safety, and when tackling certain societal issues including regeneration, poverty, and social inclusion (Taylor et al., 2014).

A recurring message from the literature is that community safety partnerships have broad appeal with many examples of community safety partnerships that have been implemented well through careful planning and resourcing (Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012). While each partnership is unique, the common features and factors that support effectiveness include a supportive start-up environment with adequate funding and preferably a history of collaborative partnerships and coalitions; a common purpose or mission that unifies all participating stakeholders; a lead agency that is respected and can champion the cause; and a formalised structure, including steering and working groups. The most effective partnerships are those committed to evidence-informed practices and provide access to the training and technical assistance needed to build competency at the individual, organisational, programmatic, and relational levels. Community involvement is considered pivotal to establish legitimacy for interventions, strategies, and agencies. There are significant challenges to community engagement, however, including representativeness and differential power in decision making and funding.

In Ireland, there are examples of partnership structures and partnership-working dating back to the formation of the Area-based Partnerships in the late 1980s and more recent examples including the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs).

The effectiveness of partnerships or coalitions geared towards crime prevention and community safety has been difficult to assess in an Irish context due to limited robust evaluation (Bowden & Topping, 2016).

Community safety initiatives were piloted in Ireland under the original RAPID programme⁵ (2001-2011). The overall conclusion of a review of one such initiative in Tallaght West found no significant level of improvement in community safety in terms of meeting long term goals. The review presented recommendations based on the learning to support effectiveness and impact. These included increasing clarity of purpose, roles, and responsibilities; designing a clear implementation pathway; sourcing adequate local input and support for people to engage; managing complex relationships; fostering trust so that value is added through the partnership process; and practicing community development principles in planning and implementation so that all stakeholders contribute equally (Kearns, Reddy, and Canavan, 2013).

An evaluation of the Limerick City Community Safety Partnership (CSP) concluded that, under the right conditions and with appropriate supports, multi-agency community safety partnerships can improve both public services for service users and the effectiveness of interventions by public agencies (Cunneen, 2012). International research concurs that, while community safety partnerships can improve community safety and collaborative working, there is no guarantee that these benefits will happen (Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012). Implementation is complex, and often the assumptions and expectations about how community safety partnerships will work and benefit community safety do not hold up in reality (Crawford & Cunningham, 2015).

In summary, the research indicates that when community safety partnerships do improve collaborative-working and community safety, the size and quality of impact is determined by how well the partnerships function and implement their work, the use of research to inform the design of best practice interventions and programmes, and thorough evaluation and tracking of impact (Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012).

Assumptions about Community Safety Partnerships

Partnership approaches to community safety are built on assumptions about the complex nature of crime and community safety, and the optimal ways to address them.

One assumption is that multiple factors contribute to crime and community safety and it is generally assumed that most crime and community safety problems are too complex to be dealt with by a single agency or intervention (Rosenbaum, 2002). This leads to a second assumption: that

⁵ Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) areas were defined by Government as being the most concentrated areas of disadvantage.

partnership, shared responsibility, and a combined effort are better suited to address most crime and community safety issues than relying on individual agencies (Rosenbaum, 2002; Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012).

These assumptions align very closely with those underpinning the rationale for setting up Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs). In 2018, the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland recommended that policing and community safety should not be the sole responsibility of the police. Rather:

“To be effective in preventing crime and protecting people from harm, police must work in partnerships with other entities, including schools, community and volunteer organisations, businesses, human rights NGOs, youth groups, faith-based groups and others” (Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, 2018, pp. ix–x).

Similarly, in their Community Safety Policy Paper (2021) outlining the objectives and proposed structure of LCSPs, the Department of Justice states that the partnership approach is based on the premise that every community is unique and faces different problems, and therefore, the response requires a range of inputs from across government, local services, the voluntary sector and the community (Department of Justice, 2021).

Community safety partnerships are assumed to bring a range of benefits over single agency-working that make them better suited to improving community safety. These benefits include being more inclusive and responsive to community priorities; enabling more effective problem-solving and more creative, diverse, comprehensive strategies; improved efficiencies and less duplication of services through better coordination of strategies and resources across agencies; increased agency accountability; strengthened local community organisations; and the development of collaborative skills and collective intelligence that contribute to transforming organisational cultures from inward-looking to be more outward-looking and open-minded (Rosenbaum, 2002; Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012).

Effectiveness of Community Safety Partnerships

The wide range of potential benefits from community safety partnerships highlights the possible outcomes to work towards. Community safety partnerships, when implemented and functioning well, can contribute to improved community safety and the delivery effective interventions (Morgan et al., 2012). Berry et al. (2011) completed a rapid review of nine evaluations of partnerships in the United

States between 2001 and 2009, with a focus on violent crime and collaborative provision of services to achieve specific crime related outcomes (e.g., reduction in gang crime). The effectiveness of these partnerships for achieving crime-related outcomes showed mixed yet many positive findings. While these findings are certainly relevant to LCSPs, their generalisability from the US to the Irish context needs to be carefully considered. The Irish model is distinctive as a response to the Irish societal context and each LCSP site is unique in terms of the profile and needs of the community in which it operates. The LCSPs require 51% community representation in their membership, which highlights the emphasis on drawing in the community in purposeful ways. This is a central premise of good practice community-oriented policing whereby the level of community participation and involvement in creating solutions to ensure community safety is raised, since the police cannot carry out this task on their own (OSCE, 2008).

The Barriers and Enablers of Effective Community Safety Partnerships

Crawford and Cunningham (2015) suggest the main barriers to successful partnerships include: reluctance of some agencies to participate; dominance of a policing agenda; over-reliance on informal contacts and networks which lapse if key individuals move on; conflicting interests, priorities, or ideologies; a lack of trust between different agencies or partners; local political differences; a desire to protect budgets; and a lack of capacity and expertise. All these barriers point to the areas that require careful attention when implementing a partnership approach. Furthermore, they identify the reluctance to share information as a significant and contentious challenge for community safety practice. Concerns over confidentiality often hinder partnership-working and hamper the building of vital trust between partners.

A key theme of collaborative community initiatives is the intention to be an inclusive, representative, and empowering mechanism for the community. Rosenbaum and Schuck (2012) highlight that community involvement is critical to the impact of community safety partnerships. However, they also draw attention to the significant challenges of community engagement, including giving community members a voice in the process; achieving representativeness; being sensitive to differential power in decision making and resources; and in some communities, overcoming historical distrust of criminal justice agencies.

The research highlights characteristics and conditions that enable effective community safety partnerships to be created and sustained (Berry et al., 2011; Morgan et al., 2012; Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012). These enablers of effective partnerships are set out in Table 2 below and serve as

a checklist to assess and ascertain both the extent to which favorable conditions exist and the work required for a partnership to work effectively. They have informed the theory of change and will be tracked as the evaluation unfolds and the community safety plans in each pilot site become operationalised.

Table 2: Enablers of effective community safety partnerships

Enablers of effective community safety partnerships	
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
Vision, Leaders, Champions	Clear vision, mission, and aims that unify and are agreed upon by all participating stakeholders
	Full integration of project aims into partner organisations' aims
	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
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
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
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
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
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.

Morgan et al. (2012) shared lessons learned for developing and maintaining effective partnerships which appear to align with how the LCSPs are intended to function. For instance, where partnerships involve multiple interventions with input from a range of different stakeholders, Morgan et al. suggest a committee with representatives from the various parties be established early to oversee the development, implementation, and ongoing review of the partnership. This helps ensure strong partnerships between key partners and provides a process whereby all parties can be held accountable for delivering different aspects of the programme. It is also a forum for sharing ideas and potential solutions as problems arise. Ideally, this group should be either led or supported by a dedicated project coordinator. Membership stability among representatives involved is important, though some turnover will be inevitable, and processes should be in place to deal with this.

The research indicates that multicomponent strategies should be supported by a comprehensive plan that describes the key stages in a project's implementation and the interrelationships between

different but complementary interventions. Having a clear plan assists project implementation and sets out the relevant roles and responsibilities. Progress against the plan can then be recorded and monitored by the stakeholder committee to ensure that key information and lessons are passed on to new staff and representatives (Morgan et al., 2012).

Learning from Elsewhere

Based on a brisk review of what is happening around community safety elsewhere we know that the concept of community safety is of interest globally in contemporary society. Initiatives to advance optimal ways of addressing community safety are widespread, including in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand. The results indicate that, while each country operates a different model and formation, in general community safety involves collaborative partnerships whereby different sectors within the community work together to ensure that residents feel and are safe to work, live, travel, and thrive in their communities. The themes and issues that partnerships are working to address vary across the different locations, with anti-social behaviour, alcohol and drug misuse, and domestic violence noticeably prevalent. The learning from elsewhere tells us that representation on the partnerships involves a mix of organisations across the private and public sectors including government departments, statutory agencies, community associations, and local councillors. The oversight function of community safety partnerships tends to be based in government departments and rests with agencies and/or statutory agencies with a remit for security, safety, and civic responsibility. Examples include The Police Force, District Councils, Policing Boards, and government departments with responsibility for justice.

The LCSP pilot model is informed by and closely aligned with the Northern Ireland model of community safety. The opportunity for cross-border cooperation is important given the geopolitical context for both jurisdictions.

4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

This section describes the independent evaluation process being conducted by the Centre for Effective Services and the University of Limerick over the lifetime of the Local Community Safety Partnership pilot (2021-2023).

The Local Community Safety Partnership is a pilot initiative purposefully designed to test the implementation of the local community safety partnership model in three different sites in Ireland. The evaluation is integral to the pilot and part of a wider commitment to inform the development of effective partnership approaches to community safety. The independent evaluation process enables the gathering of data to facilitate evidence-informed learning for implementation guidance and governance and to support decision making about the future transferability of the LCSP initiative across a wider range of communities. The evaluation is designed to consider local contextual factors, the implementation of each LCSP, the co-creation of the local community safety plan, and progress towards the achievement of community safety outcomes in the pilot communities. The intention is to gather the learning about implementation approaches and processes that are effective across and within communities.

The evaluation process is accompanying the LCSP pilot in real time, and the evaluation team meet monthly with an Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG) convened by the Department of Justice to share updates on evaluation progress and policy developments. The first meeting of the EAG was on 17th May 2021. The group has met seven times since the commencement of the LCSP pilot in 2021 and will continue to meet throughout the lifecycle of the pilot.

Evaluation Design

A formative evaluation was designed to share the learning at different time points across the lifetime of the pilot LCSP initiative. Formative evaluations focus on implementation processes and stakeholder experiences and attitudes (Braden, 1992) and are typically conducted in parallel to policy or intervention roll-out, with the intention of providing contemporaneous learning to support decision making, improve policy/intervention implementation and strengthen the potential for the achievement of intended outcomes (Henry et al., 2013).

The evaluation design is underpinned by a systems initiative conceptual framework (Coffman, 2007) applying contribution analysis (Mayne, 2012) as the methodology to describe the enabling conditions

for the effective implementation and the scaling-up of the Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs), as well as exploring the contribution of LCSPs to community safety outcomes.

Coffman's (2007) conceptual framework for evaluating system-change initiatives works through five components, outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Coffman's (2007) conceptual framework for evaluating system-change initiatives

Component	Definition
Context	The policy making and funding environment, local and national, that surrounds the change initiative
Components	The intervention and service responses that contribute to positive changes for the beneficiaries or users of the system
Connections	The collaborations, partnerships, and interagency working arrangements across the system
Infrastructure	The support systems needed to function effectively and achieve outcomes for system beneficiaries
Scale	The ways in which an initiative is made widely available

The framework enables us to clarify the activities, intentions, and implementation practices associated with, and the objectives of, complex systems initiatives such as the LCSP.

A key feature of the evaluation is the use of theories of change⁶ to articulate the ways in which change is expected to occur and the role of the change initiative in generating change and achieving outcomes. Theories of change are useful for complex initiatives where there are a range of strategies at play (Mayne, 2015; Patton, 2008; Wimbush et al., 2012).

A Theory of Change for Local Community Safety Partnerships

A theory of change is a theory of how an initiative, such as the LCSP pilot, could be expected to work and produce outcomes. This is usually developed during the early stage of an initiative and then tested and refined over the course of an evaluation. Through this process of testing and refining

⁶ A wide range of terms are used to describe the ways in which interventions are designed and intended to achieve outcomes, including programme theory, logic model, theory of change, results chain, outcome pathway, action theory, and implementation theory (Mayne, 2015).

the theory of change, the evaluation will seek to generate plausible evidence of how the work of the LCSPs contributes to outcomes and to describe the enabling conditions for the effective implementation and the scaling-up of the LCSPs.

Figure 3 provides a graphic overview of key components of the LCSP theory of change relevant to baseline, including:

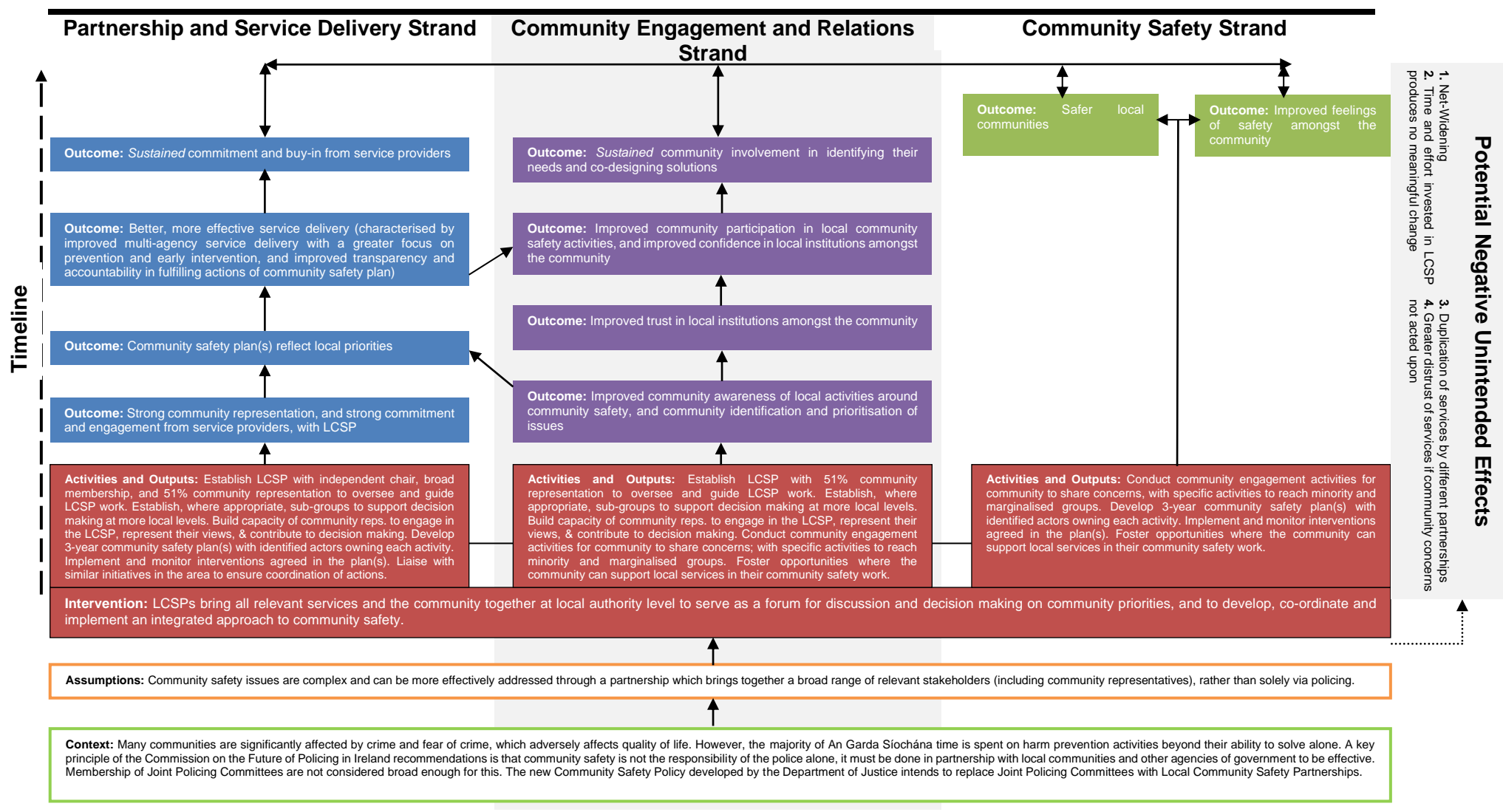
- Context
- Assumptions
- Intervention, activities, and outputs
- Outcomes
- Potential unintended negative effects
- Timeline.

This is the first iteration of the theory of change for LCSPs. It is based almost exclusively on Department of Justice documentation that has informed the design of the pilot. It will evolve over the lifetime of the evaluation to incorporate data from other sources and as new learning arises from the pilot sites.

There will be further iterations of the theory of change co-produced for the LCSP initiative at interim and end points. This will offer an opportunity to reality-check the theory of change and to reflect the complexities and challenges that may arise as the work of each LCSP unfolds. Possible challenges include the process of decision making around who to involve in the LCSP and whether to mandate this; service delivery; the co-production of the community safety plan; obtaining optimal community involvement; and the process of working together in partnership.

The first iteration of the theory of change in Figure 3 starts with a brief description of the context at the bottom of the diagram and moves its way upwards with descriptions of the assumptions of or rationale for LCSPs and their intended activities, outputs, and outcomes. There are a series of arrows in the diagram which indicate the order in which activities, outputs, and outcomes are thought by the evaluation team most likely to be carried out and achieved at this point of the evaluation.

Figure 3: Overview of the first iteration of a Theory of Change for Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs)



The activities, outputs, and outcomes are organised into three strands in line with the evaluation questions and appropriate to the phases of development of the LCSPs over the two-year lifecycle.

These strands are:

- Partnership and service delivery
- Community engagement and relations
- Community safety.

The **partnership and service delivery** strand hypothesises that bringing together a broad range of community and public service representatives (with the community as the majority voice) to develop and implement a community safety plan will lead to more effective service delivery in addressing local community safety concerns; and in turn will lead to sustained commitment from service providers to the community safety partnership and to a partnership-approach.

The **community engagement and relations** strand hypothesises that giving the community the majority voice on the partnership, building the capacity of community representatives, and actively engaging with the local community will, over time, allow the community to identify and prioritise their community safety concerns; increase their trust and confidence in local institutions; increase their awareness and participation in community safety activities; and in turn lead to sustained community involvement in identifying and solving community safety issues in their locality.

Finally, the **community safety** strand hypothesises that as interventions from the community safety plan are being delivered and outcomes from the other two strands are being achieved, objective improvements in local community safety and subjective improvements in feelings of safety amongst people in the local community will be produced. These improvements are expected to create a positive feedback loop, helping to further improve and reinforce the outcomes from the other two strands.

The evaluation will return to the above three strands, and what they hypothesise, at the mid and end points to determine what has worked, what has not, the learning arising, outcomes, and impact.

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 1):

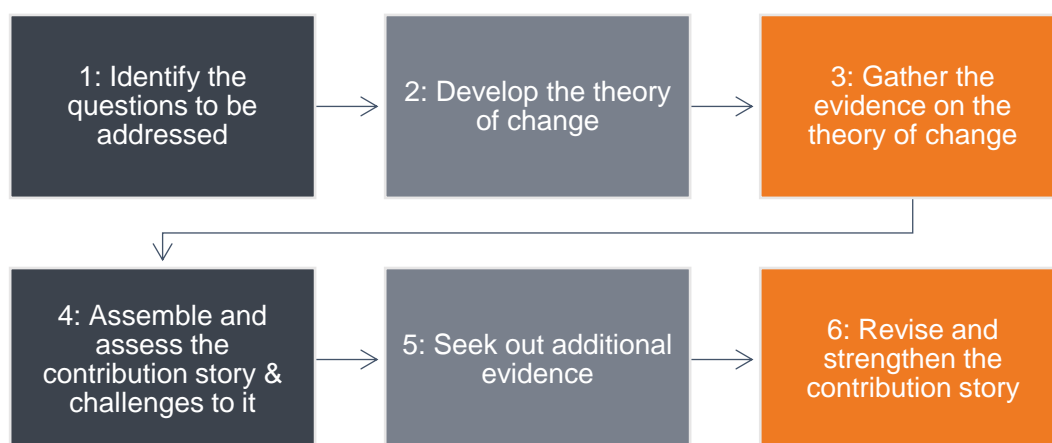
1. How well did the Local Community Safety Partnerships identify priorities?
2. How did the Local Community Safety Partnerships conduct their work?
3. What was the engagement, relationship, and impact on the local community?

Evaluation Methodology

The conceptual framework and evaluation methodology take account of the challenges of evaluating complex systems initiatives in real world settings. Attributing change to a single policy initiative taking place within a wider interconnected system is challenging for the evaluation of social policy initiatives. Contribution analysis provides plausible evidence of impact in organisational and community settings where there are many moving parts and it is difficult to disentangle individual or collective contributions (Wimbush et al., 2012).

The evaluation team prepared a programme-theory evaluation design using the six steps of the contribution analysis methodology (Mayne, 2008, 2012). This is designed to operate across the lifecycle of the pilot with baseline being the first stage of application.

Figure 4: Steps in the Contribution Analysis methodology



Evaluation Methods at Baseline

The evaluation integrates a blend of quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods to generate a comprehensive set of data (Patton, 2008). The mixed method approach draws on existing and

available secondary and documentary data as well as primary quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

The baseline establishes the starting point and pace at which the desired change is expected to progress. Baseline refers to the beginning stage of the pilot, ideally the first six months. Baseline data gathering methods are set out in Table 4 below. These methods will be replicated at the mid and end points of the evaluation. They will also be supplemented by additional methods that apply at these time points, including a wider community survey and comparison with examples of other partnership and community safety initiatives currently underway in Ireland. This will provide insights into how collaboration works in other areas and to assess the contribution to community safety outcomes.

A real-time activity tracker has been developed to collect real time data in a consistent and continuous way on selected activities, outputs, and outcomes in each of the three pilots. This will be tested across the pilot sites in the lead up to mid-point data gathering in summer 2022. This is part of the monitoring system which is a vital component of the evaluation. Monitoring is a continuous function that uses systematic collection and analysis of data on specified indicators to provide information on the extent of progress and to support decision making (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2002).

Stories of change will be gathered in each site at mid and end points. These stories will 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.

Baseline data was collected from June 2021 through February 2022. It was initially planned that the main window of baseline data collection would be during October and November 2021, with a small number of data collection activities conducted outside this window as necessary. However, as the planning and scheduling of the pilot and data collection progressed, it became clear that this was not possible, and the timeline was extended to facilitate involvement of each LCSP site to contribute to the evaluation at baseline.

There will be two further data collection time points planned at interim (June – September 2022) and final (June-September 2023) stages of the LCSP pilot initiative.

Table 4: Overview of baseline data collection methods

Method		Description, Purpose, and Baseline responses
Qualitative	1. <i>Focus groups with members of the LCSPs</i>	Focus groups with members of the LCSPs.
		The purpose of the focus groups is to explore and understand how the LCSP conducts its work.
		Focus groups to at baseline, midpoint, and final points.
		Baseline focus groups (5) involving LCSP members (18)
Qualitative	2. <i>Interviews with local and national stakeholders</i>	One-to-one interviews with local and national stakeholders.
		The purpose of the interviews is to understand how the LCSP pilot is unfolding and how LCSPs are conducting their work.
		Local stakeholder interviews at baseline, interim and final points.
		Baseline interviews with LCSP Chairpersons, coordinators, administrator and An Garda Síochána representatives across the three pilot sites (11)
		Baseline interviews with national stakeholders (8)
Qualitative	3. <i>Observations of LCSP events</i>	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
		Baseline observation of two events with participants (61)
Qualitative	4. <i>Stories of Change</i>	Qualitative indicators as part of the Activity Tracker. They are short, structured descriptions of if, and how, the activities and outputs of LCSPs contributed to change.
		The purpose of stories of change is to supplement the quantitative indicators of the Activity Tracker, to show if and how a project or programme may have contributed to change. The method captures more qualitative data to answer the evaluation questions.
		Stories of change will be created quarterly by the pilot sites from June- 2022 onwards

Qualitative	5. <i>Comparator Sites</i>	Comparator sites will be selected for inclusion in the evaluation methodology once the Community Safety Plan for each pilot location has been drawn up.
		The purpose of researching comparator sites is to examine and learn from other partnership approaches to community safety currently underway in Ireland.
		Consultations with stakeholders in comparison sites will commence at midpoint data gathering later in 2022.
Qualitative	6. <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.
		National documents including background policy papers and notes from meetings/workshops that informed the development of the LCSP initiative were also reviewed at baseline.
		Baseline analysis of documents (43)
Quantitative	7. <i>Secondary data analysis</i>	Analysis of existing administrative and other research data, including, CSO Crime and Victimisation Surveys, demographic, socio-economic and other crime data for each of the LCSPs.
Quantitative	8. <i>Survey with 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 to be issued at baseline, interim and final points.
		The purpose is to gather information on the operation and implementation of the LCSP.
		Surveys (3) administered at baseline with thirty respondents.
Quantitative	9. <i>Community survey</i>	Online survey for the local community at mid and end points.
		The purpose is to gather the views and experience of community members of their local LCSP.

Quantitative	10. LCSP event attendee survey	Online survey to the attendees of LCSP public engagement events.
		The purpose is to gather the views and experience of people who attend LCSP events.
		Baseline survey responses (27)
Quantitative	11. Activity Tracker	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.
		The Activity Tracker is currently being tested across the three pilot sites with data to be collected quarterly beginning in June 2022.

Ethical Considerations

The study design and all instruments, consent forms, and information materials were approved by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) ethics committee at the University of Limerick. Participation in the evaluation is by informed consent. Where personal data is collected, 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.

Limitations and Challenges

As with all real-world research there are limitations and challenges to research design and implementation. The main challenges of note at this baseline point relate to time, sampling, and engagement. The setup of the LCSPs took place in challenging circumstances, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation called upon LCSP staff to supply data and give their time to the evaluation process which proved challenging at times particularly as the partnerships were finding their feet.

Active involvement of a critical mass of LCSP personnel and LCSP members is vital for the evaluation. The timeframe for baseline data gathering was extended into February 2022 to facilitate involvement of all three LCSPs. The return of consent forms was lower than originally anticipated, with the response rate varying from 30% - 55% across stakeholders, and this was partly due to the volume of work locally in setting up the LCSPs. The low response rate had a knock-on effect on the numbers participating in the evaluation, through interviews, surveys, and focus groups. The impact of COVID-19 slowed down processes and drove everything online which challenged the relationship building aspects of the work. The anonymous online community surveys require broadcasting out into the community and wide dissemination to reach as many people in the community as possible. There is learning to be gained for mid and end point data gathering to encourage a large and diverse number of participants to come forward to voice their views through the evaluation process.

5. Findings at Baseline

This section presents the thematic analysis of data gathered at the baseline stage of the LCSP pilot.

Baseline data gathering began in June 2021 and ended in March 2022. The baseline findings form a reference for comparison and validation at mid and end points of the evaluation of the LCSP pilot.

Data Collection and Response Rates

During the baseline phase, the following methods were used:

- Interviews with National Stakeholders (8)
- Interviews with local LCSP stakeholders (11)
- Focus Groups (5) with LCSP members (18)
- Survey of LCSP members (30)
- Survey of LCSP event attendees (27)
- Observations x 2 (61)
- Document analysis (43).

Table 5 below gives an overview of response rates for each of the above methods.

Twenty participants were interviewed in a total of nineteen one-to-one interviews, of which eight were with national stakeholders and eleven were with LCSP pilot-site stakeholders. All LCSP chairpersons, coordinators and administrator were interviewed, as well as An Garda Síochána members from two of the pilot sites.

A total of eighteen LCSP members participated in the five focus groups across the pilot sites, of which four were online and one was in-person. There were nine members (50%) from Longford LCSP, six members (33%) from Waterford LCSP, and three members (17%) from Dublin North Inner City LCSP.

The LCSP Event Attendee Survey was distributed online in two pilots with twenty-seven respondents in total. Of the twenty-seven respondents, 44% were from Waterford (n=12) and 56% from Longford (n=15). The vast majority (96%, n=26) were either living, working, or both, in either of the two pilot sites. Most respondents had lived in one of the pilot sites for eleven years or more (88%, n=21), were female (70%, n=19), and aged forty and over (81%, n=21). In addition, 50% (n=13) of the focus

group participants were from an urban area, compared to 38% from a rural area, and 12% from other areas.

The LCSP Member Survey was distributed online in all three pilots on one occasion each, with thirty respondents in total. Of the thirty respondents, half were from Longford LCSP (50%, n=15), with roughly one-quarter each from Waterford LCSP (23%, n=7) and Dublin North Inner City LCSP (27%, n=8). The respondents were roughly two-thirds community representatives (63%, n=19) and one-third public service/statutory representatives (37%, n=11). Across the three pilot sites, the average length of time a respondent had been an LCSP member was five months, however, this varied considerably by pilot site. In Longford the average length of time as an LCSP member was three months, compared to six months in Waterford, and almost nine months in Dublin North Inner City, at the time of survey completion.

One online observation was carried out in Longford LCSP and one in Waterford LCSP. In one area an online meeting of LCSP members was observed, and in the other an online public engagement event was observed.

A total of 43 documents were reviewed as part of the baseline document analysis, of which twenty-one were national stakeholder documents, ten documents were from Longford LCSP, four documents were from Waterford LCSP and eight documents were from Dublin North Inner City LCSP.

Baseline data collection was initially to take place during October and November 2021, with a small number of data collection activities conducted outside this window as necessary. However, as the planning and scheduling of data collection progressed, it became clear that this was not possible in all pilot sites. This means that certain data collection activities were carried out at different points of time in the pilot sites.

Table 5: Baseline data collection response rates

	<u>Pilot-Sites</u>			National Stakeholders	Total
	Longford	Waterford	Dublin North Inner City		
Interviews					
<i>Pilot-Site Interviews</i>					
LCSP Chairperson	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	-	3 (3)
LCSP Coordinator	1 (1)	1 (1)	3 (3)	-	5 (5)
LCSP Administrator	-	-	1 (1)	-	1 (1)
LCSP An Garda Síochána Member	1 (1)	1 (1)	0 (0)		2 (2)
<i>National Stakeholder Interviews</i>					
Dept. of Justice	-	-	-	2 (2)	2 (2)
Dept. of An Taoiseach	-	-	-	2 (2)	2 (2)
Dept. of Community & Rural Development	-	-	-	1 (1)	1 (1)
Policing Authority	-	-	-	1 (2)	1 (2)
Tusla	-	-	-	1 (1)	1 (1)
Garda Inspectorate				1 (1)	1 (1)
Total	3 (3)	3 (3)	5 (5)	8 (9)	19 (20)
Focus Groups					
LCSP Members	2 (9)	2 (6)	1 (3)	-	5 (18)
Surveys					
LCSP Members Survey	1 (15 / 68%)	1 (7 / 54%)	1 (8 / 88%)	-	3 (30 / 68%)
LCSP Event Attendee Survey	1 (15 / 22%)	1 (12 / ?)	0 (0)	-	2 (27 / ?)
Observations					
LCSP Public Engagement Event	1	0	0	-	1
LCSP Members Event	0	1	0	-	1
Documents					
<i>Pilot-Site Documents</i>					
Terms of Reference	3 (2)	1 (1)	2 (2)	-	6 (5)
Meeting Minutes	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	1 (1)
Other Documentation	6 (2)	3 (1)	6 (5)	-	13 (8)
<i>National Stakeholder Documents</i>				20 (1)	20 (1)
Total	10 (5)	4 (2)	8 (7)	20 (1)	43 (15 / 35%)

Note: **Interviews:** Numbers without brackets refer to number of interviews. Numbers inside brackets refer to number of participants.
Focus Groups: Numbers outside brackets refer to number of focus groups. Numbers inside brackets refer to number of participants.
Surveys: Numbers outside brackets refer to number of times survey was conducted. Numbers inside brackets refer to number of respondents and response rate.
Documents: Numbers outside brackets refer to number of documents received. Numbers inside brackets refer to number of draft documents received.

Findings of Consultations with National Stakeholders

Eight national stakeholders were interviewed towards the end of 2021 and in early 2022. These included representatives from the Department of Justice, the Department of An Taoiseach, the Department of Rural and Community Development, Tusla, the Garda Inspectorate, and the Policing Authority.

There was an intense period of high-level stakeholder involvement in preparation for and decision-making about the LCSP pilot through the Working Group on Community Safety, which met four times. This was facilitated by the Department of An Taoiseach late in 2019. This type and level of national stakeholder engagement has not happened since and there is an opportunity to reactivate interdepartmental discussions and deliberations at key points in the pilot lifecycle.

The results of thematic analysis of the consultations show varied levels of awareness of the detail of how the pilot is unfolding across the three sites. There is appreciation of community safety as a concept and a strong belief that cross departmental, collaborative, interagency, partnership working is the way forward to realise the vision in relation to community safety, through actioning the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (2018) as set out in 'A Policing Service for the Future'. There is firm acknowledgement of the challenges of operationalising the concept of community safety, creating oversight and consolidating the partnership structures and processes necessary to bring it to fruition.

The LCSP pilot is recognised as an opportunity to test out the model and to learn what works to inform the future roll out of community safety partnerships across Ireland. For those closer to the ground and the everyday operations of the pilot sites, the main challenges noted at baseline are operationalising community safety; setting up; bringing the right people together, particularly during the height of the pandemic; building and nurturing relationships within a large and diverse committee; activating and sustaining the necessary levels of stakeholder engagement across a large geographical area in the case of two of the pilots; and encouraging diverse and inclusive community engagement. There was a strong suggestion that membership of the LCSPs should be legislated for to ensure full engagement, capacity and commitment, given the level of decision making that will be necessary for success.

All those consulted noted the imperative of investing in the LCSP, creating the necessary governance structures, monitoring, information and data sharing protocols to support the work of the LCSPs to maximise impact.

Findings from the Pilot Sites

This section sets out the thematic analysis of baseline data triangulated across the various sources of data collection. This is presented thematically to honour the confidentiality of those who contributed to the evaluation process. Direct quotes from respondents are included to highlight the learning arising at this formative stage.

Three themes are explored as pertinent to the start-up phase of the LCSP pilot:

- Theme 1: Forming the Local Community Safety Partnerships
- Theme 2: Early patterns and approaches to community engagement and community safety
- Theme 3: Lessons learned and suggestions for moving forward

Theme 1: Forming Local Community Safety Partnerships

Description: This theme discusses the early efforts to set up and form LCSPs at a pilot-site level. It documents some of the progress that has been made in establishing the partnerships, the processes and activities that were followed, and the initial perceptions of LCSPs amongst the local stakeholders that participated in the baseline evaluation.

The theme has been broken into five sub-themes which discuss different aspects of the LCSPs and their formation:

- 1.1 Implementation progress and timing
- 1.2 Membership selection, recruitment, and representation
- 1.3 Supporting, resourcing, and guiding the setup of LCSPs
- 1.4 Roles, goals, and the need for local community safety partnerships
- 1.5 Engaging, relating, and working together.

Sub-Theme 1.1: Implementation Progress and Timing

Description: This sub-theme is intended to set the scene by giving a brief overview of how implementation progressed in each pilot site during the baseline phase of the evaluation. That is, what the major activities or milestones are that each pilot site has carried out during the baseline phase and when they occurred.

By the end of the baseline data collection phase (4th March 2022), progress had been made in the setup and implementation of all three pilot areas.

LCSP Chairpersons and Coordinators have been appointed in all three pilots as well as an Administrator in the Dublin North Inner City pilot. The rationale for an Administrator in the Dublin North Inner City pilot was based on the size and complexity of the area in terms of population density, deprivation, and prevalence of crime.

All three sites have held community engagement events and LCSP members meetings and have set up various sub-groups to progress implementation, community engagement, and/or community safety activities. All have held workshops with members to develop their vision, mission, and values and to arrive at a shared understanding of the purpose and goals of their respective LCSPs. Each site has set up a web presence with information and contact details available to the general public, and all have started preparations to co-produce a local community safety plan.

The pilots met with challenges during their setup and early implementation. Two pilots were slightly delayed in being set up and two experienced some turnover in staff and/or members since the beginning of the pilot which appeared to slow implementation progress in one area for a time.

Recruitment of membership to the LCSPs was challenging, particularly in terms of the time and energy required to raise awareness of the LCSP as a new initiative and to attract the right people, i.e., those that are committed to the concept of community safety and have decision-making capacity and power within the community or organisation that they represent.

At the time of report-writing (May 2022), two partnerships had reached at least 51% community representation and one pilot had recruited all thirty members to their partnership, while the remaining pilots continue to recruit and work towards full membership (see Table 6 below). Efforts were made to bring in diverse representation, including younger people (under twenty-five years of age), older people, members of the farming community, members of the Traveller community, and new communities.

Table 6 shows that all three pilots have held multiple meetings of their members. When considering ‘full members meetings’ (i.e., meetings where the full LCSP membership is expected to attend), two pilots had held three meetings each and one pilot had held five meetings by the beginning of March 2022.

The setup and formation of some of the partnerships began during summer 2021. Some participants suggested this may be one of the more difficult times of the year to establish a community safety partnership.

“Timing was an issue for us... summertime... is not the best time of the year to be establishing new community engagement arrangements... very little point in engaging in public consultation when people are on holidays and their minds are elsewhere.”
(Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

The results indicate that each LCSP, once established with Chairperson appointed and coordinator and administrator on board, has worked to set up in each site. This formative work involved setting up a visible presence for the LCSP including offices and systems, engaging with the local community, drawing in members, and setting up governance structures. This took time and effort which is natural and normal for the setting up of such structures. The COVID-19 pandemic coincided with the start-up, and many pointed out how this adversely affected the flow of the work, relationship building, and connecting.

Table 6: LCSP membership in each pilot site*

Members	Pilot A	Pilot B	Pilot C
Independent Chairperson	1	1	1
Community Members	14	16	11
Local Resident Reps	0	4	3
Youth Reps	2	1	1
Older Persons Reps	1	1	0
New/Minority Communities	2	1	1
Business	0	2	2
Education	2	2	2
Community Reps Involved in Community/Social Projects	2	2	1
Voluntary Sector	1	2	1
Other Community Members	4	1	0
Public Service/Statutory Members	14	13	12
Political Reps (Local Councillors)	7	7	6

An Garda Síochána	1	2	1
Local Authority	1	1	1
HSE	1	1	1
Tusla	1	1	1
Local/Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce	1	1	0
Other Public Service/Statutory Members	2	0	2
Total Members	29	30	24

Note: These figures are accurate as of 14/03/22 in Pilot A; 07/03/22 in Pilot B; and 10/03/22 in Pilot C. Some members may represent more than one group (e.g. local residents and new/minority communities), but these members are counted only once to avoid double-counting the number of members.

Table 7: LCSP meetings with their full membership

Date	No. of Attendees	Community Members (%)	Public Service / Statutory Members (%)
Pilot X			
20/09/2021	29	50	50
01/11/2021	27	54	46
20/12/2021	24	52	48
Pilot Y			
02/07/2021	22	57	43
07/09/2021	21	55	45
11/10/2021	21	60	40
06/12/2021	17	38	63
12/02/2022	13	50	50
Pilot Z			
29/07/2021	18	47	53
28/10/2021	16	n/a	n/a
17/02/2022	19	56	44

Note: This table does not include meetings between sub-groups set up by the LCSPs (e.g., steering groups, working groups). This data will be collected and reported from the mid-point phase of the evaluation onwards.

Sub-Theme 1.2: Selection, Recruitment and Representation

Description: This sub-theme focuses on how LCSP members were selected and recruited in each of the pilot areas, and perceptions of the representativeness of the members among evaluation participants.

The full membership of an LCSP is set at thirty members, which includes the Independent Chairperson. The Department of Justice's *Community Safety Policy* largely defines the composition of the members, stating:

“It is intended that membership of the Local Community Safety Partnership will include residents; community representatives, including representatives of youth, new communities and the voluntary sector; business and education representatives; relevant public services in the area, including HSE [Health Service Executive], Tusla, AGS [An Garda Síochána], and the local authority; and Local councillors. As residents are central to identifying problems and solutions for their community, the partnerships will have a 51/49% split in favour of local residents and community representatives on the committee.” (Department of Justice, 2021, p. 6).

Achieving 51% community representation requires that at least fifteen community members are recruited to the partnership.

In all three pilots, guidance from the Department of Justice supported the identification and selection of members. The composition of the memberships in each pilot is formalised within their respective Terms of Reference. While the memberships are largely similar across the three pilots, slight variations in the terms of reference suggest there was scope for adaptation to better fit the profile and needs of the local population. For example, the terms of reference in one of the pilots explicitly makes provision for “one farming representative”, which the other two pilot areas do not.

In two of the pilot areas, potential members were usually approached by the Chairperson, sometimes with the assistance of the Coordinator or the Local Authority. In the third pilot, the bulk of the work of recruiting members was said to have been done by the Department of Justice and the Local Authority in advance of the Chairperson or Coordinator commencing in role. When agencies or organisations were approached for members, “a lot of the agencies... selected their own elected representatives onto the partnership”.

Another avenue utilised for recruiting members in some areas were early public engagement events, which provided a forum for people from the local community to put themselves forward for membership.

In general, the intent to have a broad representative membership to the LCSPs was well-received. The potential benefits that this could bring were recognised.

“I'm delighted at the broad representation across the various agencies and groups, and I think that that is extremely positive. It brings a lot of voices to the table and it also...

gives us an understanding of what each of us are doing.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Nevertheless, all three partnerships experienced challenges in recruiting the appropriate number and composition of members. This was despite some pilots carrying out an “extensive period of consultations across the partnership area with as many stakeholders as possible”.

Challenges included:

- Recruiting a large membership on a voluntary basis, particularly during a time when face-to-face meetings were often not possible due to Covid-19 public health measures.
- Motivating potential members to join in an initial context of uncertainty about the partnerships (e.g., What is community safety? How will the community safety partnership work?) and the role of members (e.g., What does membership involve? What time commitments are needed from members?).
- Recruiting community members who are representative of the diverse range of groups and interests in each community.
- Being inclusive of the broad range of different interests and groups in a local community, while also balancing the need to maintain the LCSPs to a size that can function efficiently.

“What continues to be challenging is the fact that there are thirty representatives on the partnership itself. To identify the community representatives and to seek individuals who are active in their community, who have a credible reputation, who have an ability to get things done and are living in the community, and also will be willing then to volunteer their time to come and sit on the partnership itself has proved to be a challenge, and that challenge is obviously heightened by the fact that the concept of community safety and the Community Safety Partnership is a new concept. So, to explain the objectives and the modus operandi of the Community Safety Partnership to those individuals to try and encourage them... has proved to be somewhat challenging. And there has been, from engagement with all the stakeholders in the area, it would be fair to say that there would be a preference to hear new voices within the area.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

All three partnerships identified gaps in membership, particularly from young people under twenty-five years of age. This was consistently recognised as a crucial voice on the partnership, yet by the end of February 2022 only one partnership had successfully recruited for this role.

Suggestions to enable LCSPs to overcome some of these challenges were also noted:

- Public Participation Networks (PPNs) can play an important role in recruiting community representatives.
- Senior influential figures from lead agencies (e.g., the Department of Justice, local authorities) can champion the LCSPs and assist with driving the initial recruitment of members from statutory and community organisations. The assumption is that until the LCSPs have become established and credible, senior figures from lead agencies are more likely to have the influence needed to generate buy-in and encourage membership from the appropriate level of authority, while also demonstrating commitment from high levels of government.
- Anticipating and being prepared for some degree of turnover in membership, even during the early weeks and months of the partnership.

“Senior people within the local authority, in conjunction with the Chairperson... they’re best placed to approach the senior hierarchy of An Garda Síochána or Tusla to go and get somebody on it. And it’s getting clout, you’re getting buy in from the top, so it’s really important to have them doing some of that work for you... [if the partnership] was just starting from a fresh and it was left to [the Chairperson or Coordinator], some of those doors might have gone unanswered if they were the ones going knocking on them.”
(Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Participants believed that to enable partnerships to function efficiently and effectively it is important that those LCSP members who represent services or agencies have influence and decision-making power as well as:

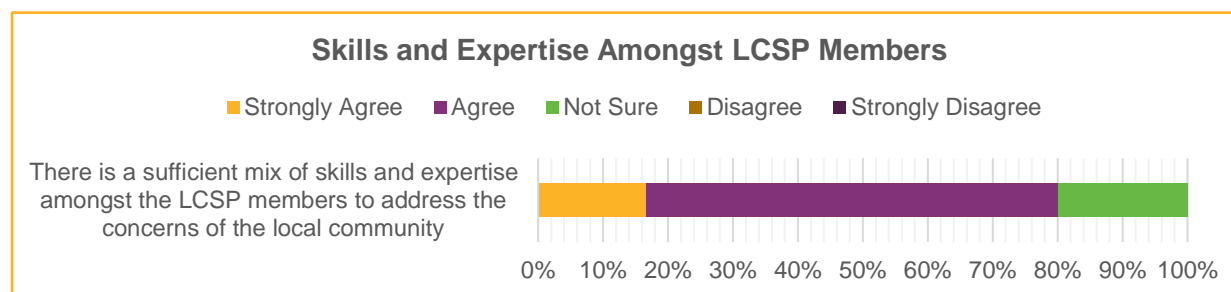
“...the authority and the span of control to commit resources, make decisions, and say I can accept that [on] behalf of my organisation.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

The survey results indicate that for many it was too early to say for sure if ‘representatives at the right level of decision-making authority’ were on the LCSP membership. However, when asked if there is a sufficient mix of skills and expertise amongst LCSP members to address the concerns of the local community, the vast majority of respondents agreed⁷ (80%, n=24). This aligns with the

⁷ For the narrative description of survey results, ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ are combined, as are ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’, unless otherwise stated.

feedback received during interviews and focus groups, where one of the benefits of a large partnership like LCSPs identified by participants was the inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders on the LCSP, with various skills, expertise, and perspectives.

Figure 5: LCSP member perceptions of the skills and expertise amongst LCSP members



Sub-Theme 1.3: Supporting and Resourcing the Setup of LCSPs

Description: This sub-theme focuses on the supports and resources that are available or have been used by the pilots, as well as the perceived adequacy of the supports and resources.

The supporting and resourcing of LCSPs were explored during interviews, focus groups and surveys, with signs of conflicting views. Supports and resources are considered from four different perspectives:

- Funding and training
- Staffing and time available for the partnership
- Accommodation and equipment
- Other supports.

Funding and training

The survey results indicate considerable uncertainty about whether there is sufficient funding (60% 'not sure', n=18) and training and support (63% 'not sure', n=19) available for the LCSP and its members. In the feedback received through open-text comments on the survey, many respondents indicated that it was "too early in [the] project to know", that they were "not aware of funding available", and in some pilot sites "there has been no discussion on any training to date". These results are not surprising at this baseline phase of the evaluation. Nevertheless, some respondents did also note in their comments that "training is going to be important" going forward and that

“resources, including funding, will become more of an issue as the [local community safety] plan is developed”.

The results overall point towards general agreement that the partnerships were adequately financed for the setup and formation stage of the pilots. There is understanding and appreciation of the initial emphasis on building relationships, creating efficient partnerships, and working to make good use of the existing resources of member organisations before seeking more funding.

“Budgets for me [are] not a showstopper because what we’re trying to do was work with our partners, and they are already funded from the public purse. So, for me... it’s about more effective partnership, it’s about... speaking to the partners, to leverage everybody’s abilities, everybody’s budgets, everybody’s knowledge, everybody’s skillsets, everybody’s experience.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

However, as the pilots progress and expand their work, there may be points at which funding arrangements will need to be reconsidered.

“Definitely at the moment we have sufficient funding... and if the work develops in the manner in which is foreseen... the funding would obviously need to be extended and grow.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Staffing and time available for the partnership

The roles of the Independent LCSP Chairpersons and staff⁸ were seen as crucial to the eventual success of the LCSPs, but also as “daunting” and time-consuming roles by some participants.

“My biggest concern... when we get the plan agreed is the capacity. We have one person, the Coordinator, full-time... the procedural jobs [they have] to deal with now at the moment are enormous at the same time as we’re trying to get up and running in terms of the planning, preparation process, getting feed in from members, public consultation... it’s an awfully big job for one person in my view.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Similarly, the “substantial voluntary commitment” from LCSP members to the partnerships was noted.

⁸ Staff refers to the Coordinator for each LCSP and the Administrator where present.

Accommodation and equipment

Views differed considerably between pilot sites when considering the adequacy of accommodation and equipment. Some areas were very satisfied, while others were less so.

On a practical level, significant delays in being accommodated with office space or supplied with equipment were noted as barriers to implementation in some sites. Office space is necessary for the partnerships to establish a solid footprint in the community and provide a base where staff, members, and local residents can engage face-to-face and build relations. In addition, some participants suggested that more than one office may be needed to improve the accessibility of the LCSPs to the local community.

“One office for whole of [pilot area] ... represents... under resourcing of an otherwise positive initiative.” (LCSP Members Survey Respondent, Baseline).

Other supports

Local authorities were identified as key stakeholders in supporting the early setup of LCSPs. As well as having responsibility for accommodation and other resources for the partnerships, they were identified in some areas as being a valuable initial source of information about the local communities for the Chairs and Coordinators.

“[Local Authority] have been super helpful... their staff have been an absolute gold mine of information for us.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

To various extents, some LCSPs have also used or sought the assistance of external facilitators or organisations to help develop their vision and mission and to assist with early community engagement or community safety planning activities.

Finally, some participants have made suggestions for where additional support may be helpful in future. For instance, some pilots were in the process of recruiting a researcher for their partnership, while some participants also suggested guidance may be needed to help them measure their activities and demonstrate success.

“I want some sort of a clear measurement system so that we can judge what's different in two years' time from the way things are now... but I haven't come across a framework

that we can use yet for this, and I think it's one of the things that we, as a partnership, we're going to need support on.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Sub-Theme 1.4: ‘Why are we here?’ – Roles, Goals, and the Need for Local Community Safety Partnerships

Description: This sub-theme focuses on understandings of community safety and the role of the LCSPs within community safety (e.g., LCSP goals and objectives); the roles of staff and members within the LCSPs (e.g., roles and responsibilities); and participants’ early perceptions and experiences of these.

Community safety is a broad concept that is difficult to clearly define in practical terms. This was highlighted by some participants as a challenge for the LCSPs, with implications for how LCSPs work in practice, especially when recruiting members, engaging communities, and defining the boundaries of the remit of LCSPs.

“There certainly is a challenge in relation to the explanation and the definition of community safety and because it's such a broad umbrella that... different individuals can take different interpretations from it.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

There are signs of variation in knowledge and yet many respondents appeared to have a good understanding of the principles and concepts underpinning LCSPs (see Figure 6).

“We're going from a policing focused setup to a community safety setup, which brings in wider partners.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

“The way that we've been communicating in relation to community safety is that obviously it's twofold in relation [to]: one, both the actuality of safety on the streets, but two, equally importantly about the perception and feelings of safety.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Furthermore, among the respondents to the survey of LCSP members, there was almost unanimous agreement (97%, n=29) that there was a need for LCSPs to improve local community safety. Similarly, all respondents to the ‘event attendee survey’ (100%, n=27) agreed that setting up a local community safety partnership is a good way of dealing with local community safety issues.

The aims and objectives of the LCSPs are laid out in the Department of Justice's *Community Safety Policy Paper* (2021, p. 6) and in the Terms of Reference documents of each LCSP (see Figure 6). There is similarity between all these documents, and this similarity is a result of the way the Terms of Reference were developed in the first instance. The first Terms of Reference were completed by the Dublin partnership, which was the first partnership to be formally established. The draft Dublin Terms of Reference were developed collaboratively by the Department of Justice, Dublin City Council and the Dublin LCSP Coordinator and they included the proposed representative make-up of the Dublin partnership. At the request of Longford County Council and Waterford City and County Council, the draft Dublin Terms of Reference were shared with them to inform the development of their own respective Terms of Reference and to be tailored to their individual needs (e.g., membership of the partnership was tailored to each partnership in their Terms of Reference). Each Terms of Reference document and any related Standing Orders were then reviewed and amended as required before their approval at a meeting of the full Partnership once it was formed.

Figure 6: 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 LCSPs 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 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.

By the second or third meeting of the full LCSP membership in each pilot, a workshop was held to develop the "vision, mission, and strategic objectives" of the partnership and for the members to give input on their understanding of community safety and the role they see for the LCSPs within that.

To understand the extent to which there was a shared understanding and commitment towards these goals and objectives, the survey of LCSP members asked to what extent they agreed that:

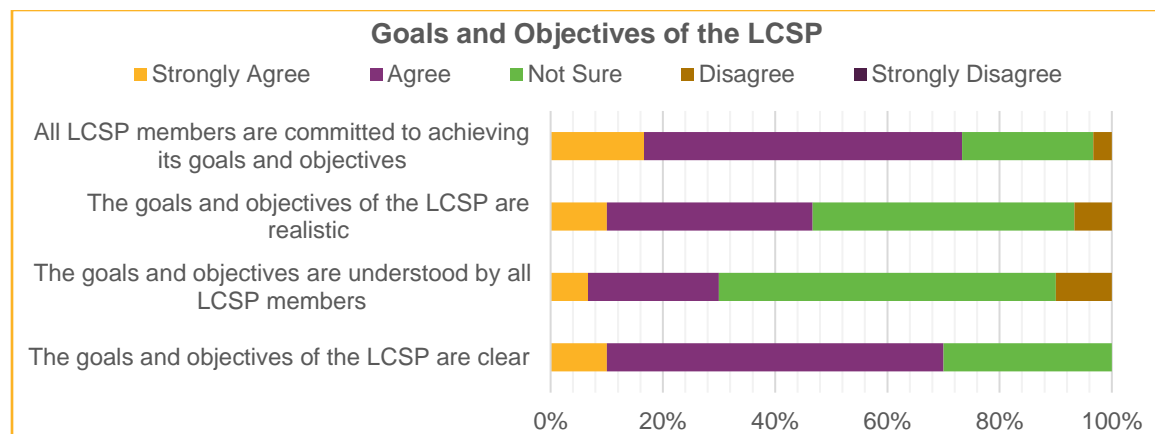
- The goals and objectives of the LCSP are clear
- The goals and objectives are understood by all LCSP members
- The goals and objectives of the LCSP are realistic
- All LCSP members are committed to achieving its goals and objectives.

The results (see Figure 7) indicate that there was broad agreement that the goals and objectives of the LCSPs are clear (70%, n=21), with less confidence of a shared understanding of the goals and objectives of the LCSP among all members (60% 'not sure', n=18). This is to be somewhat expected at the baseline stage of the evaluation, with several respondents highlighting in the open-text comments that the LCSPs were “in its infancy”. Survey respondents also appeared to be split on whether the goals and objectives of their LCSP were realistic, with 47% (n=14) agreeing that they were and another 47% (n=14) who were undecided. Despite the uncertainty, most respondents agreed that all members are committed to their achievement (74%, n=22), although some respondents also noted:

“there is... [a] difference between individuals being committed to [the] partnership and achieving the LCSP goals and the statutory agencies they represent being committed to the LCSP.” (LCSP Members Survey Respondent, Baseline).

Respondents were keen to note that it was still in the “early months” of LCSPs and that ultimately for each of these items “time will tell”.

Figure 7: LCSP member views on the goals and objectives of LCSPs



Some participants noted that there are other partnership structures that are similar to LCSPs in Ireland. However, several areas were identified where it was hoped the LCSPs could bring added value over other partnership structures. These included:

- Capturing a more authentic and representative community voice.

“...the one thing we’ve been saying... [is] what about the people? What about the actual community? And we really want to reach in a bit to that... I am not sure that voice always comes through in the fully representative way [in other partnerships].” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

- Being “more proactive in the community”, “stop the talking shop and get things done”.
- Planning and delivering responses that are genuinely community driven.

“In my understanding... this may be one of the first times that the state has actively requested that the... local communities may direct and heavily influence the response of all state services in their areas, and that’s a challenge. That’s a noble aspiration that places an onus and responsibility on [the LCSPs] to try and respond to.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

- Planning and delivering more holistic responses to community safety due to the broad representation on LCSPs.

“This is a very different partnership. It’s much broader, and therefore, the activities and the actions that might come out of a plan would be more holistic than those that might have come out of a JPC [Joint Policing Committee] format.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

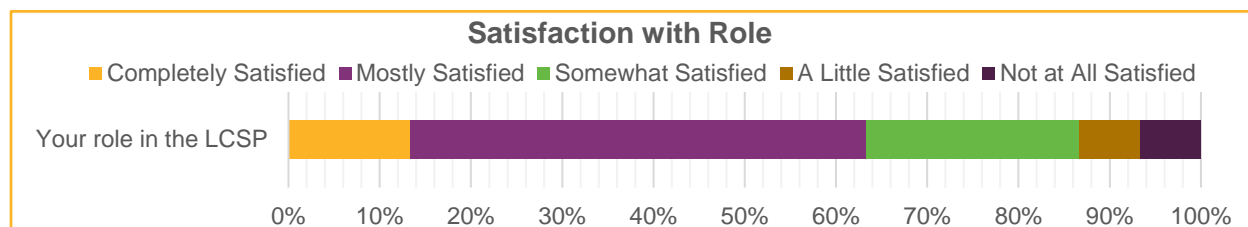
The LCSP members survey also asked to what extent respondents agreed that ‘the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of LCSP members are clearly defined and understood by all’. Only a minority (37%, n=11) agreed the roles were clearly defined and understood by all, though over half (57%, n=17) responded they were ‘not sure’. The open-text comments suggest that for many respondents it was “too early to tell for sure”.

From interviews and focus groups, some participants suggested that where the Chairpersons and Coordinators had background knowledge or experience in community safety, the local community, or in the work of some of the LCSP members, this helped them to engage with and understand the perspectives and needs of different stakeholders.

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their role on the LCSP so far, respondents were much more positive, with almost two-thirds rating themselves as ‘mostly satisfied’ or ‘completely

satisfied' with their role (63%, n=19) at the time of survey completion. For the remainder, open-text comments suggested they required a little more time on the partnership to definitively rate their satisfaction with their role.

Figure 8: LCSP members level of satisfaction with their role



Overall, the findings indicate that there is still work to be done to clarify roles and the precise delineation of the work, especially for people who are new to partnership working.

Sub-Theme 1.5: Engaging, Relating and Working Together

Description: This sub-theme explores how and to what extent LCSP members and staff have engaged, related, and worked with one another during the baseline phase of the evaluation. It notes early experiences of working together, including some of the challenges encountered, and some of the processes and structures which have been established in the three pilots to facilitate partnership-working.

The bulk of the work to date has been formative. It is anticipated that only when the community safety plans are drafted and begin to be implemented will the full extent of partnership-working become apparent. At this baseline point, each pilot site has created structures and is preparing to co-produce their local community safety plan, in some instances with the support of external consultants. Information gathering, learning from elsewhere, and research are happening, with plans in some instances to bring in research expertise.

The experience of the diverse membership and range of input was valued by evaluation participants. The experience of members who were on the JPCs has been helpful, bringing learning and documentation to inform the LCSP work.

Well-meaning and well-funded initiatives are familiar to many of the communities and LCSP members across the three pilot site areas. From the experience of some participants, it is anticipated that there may be varying degrees of fatigue within the communities, or amongst some partners, with government initiatives.

“My experience... was that there’s tiredness: “we’ve been here before, somebody is trying something new, they’re throwing lot of money at it, it won’t work.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

For some, this meant there was extra pressure in the early LCSP member meetings to “grab the imagination, get the momentum going”. Initial meetings of LCSP members appear to have been largely procedural, with little opportunity for members to interact with each other. Opportunities for members to interact and build relations were also heavily impacted early on by Covid-19 public health measures, which meant most meetings had to be online rather than in-person.

“...the first meeting was a very procedural meeting. It was for people to introduce themselves... there wasn’t a substantive discussion around community safety. It was far more around procedural issues around what our terms of reference are, what the evaluation consists of and how our standing orders should be operated... I’m sure if I was there from a community representative, I would be scratching my head going home, saying “what was that all about?”. But I think you have to kind of go through that first procedural meeting.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

However, the relationship-building process extended beyond the meetings of LCSP members. In each pilot, the Chairpersons and Coordinators made conscious efforts to meet with members outside of meetings, either individually or in groups, to begin building relationships and cultivate trust in the partnership.

Across the three pilots, early engagements suggested there is “great interest” and “a lot of enthusiasm and energy” from the members of the partnerships. Some participants noted that in some areas where previous community safety structures would be disrupted by LCSPs, not all stakeholders were immediately receptive to the establishment of LCSPs, but that this began to shift over time.

Each pilot area has also set up sub-groups to help progress various aspects of community safety planning and community engagement.

“...the steering group was set down to go off and just look at pieces of work to bring things along a bit... they’ve set up a facilitated session... to draw out some of the ideas and actions and needs that might be around safety and communities, and I think that would be a very good next step.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

In the survey of LCSP members, several items focused on how members and leaders engage, relate, and work together on the LCSP. The results show almost unanimous agreement amongst the respondents that LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment for LCSP members to work together (97%, n=29). There was also broad agreement that all LCSP members are committed to working in partnership (73%, n=22).

Regarding respondents' involvement in decision-making and planning and setting priorities, fewer respondents (though still a majority) reported feeling part of these processes (60%, n=20; and 53% n=16, respectively), with most other respondents 'not sure'. Similarly, when asked if there was good communication between LCSP members, half (50%, n=15) suggested there was, while the remainder were either unsure or disagreed.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the early stages the LCSPs were in at the time of survey completion, the items asking if people in the LCSP trust one another, and if some members seem to have more power than others, received the highest proportion of 'not sure' responses (50%, n=15; and 43%, n=13, respectively). However, for both items, the proportion in agreement with these statements tended to outweigh those who disagreed.

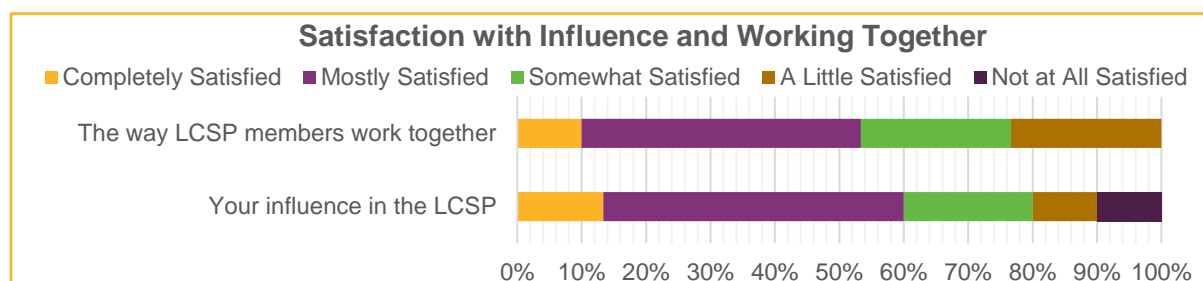
The open-text responses to the survey suggest that, given more time and the lifting of Covid-19 public health restrictions, many of these items will likely improve as members get to know each other and there are more opportunities for in-person meetings to build relationships.

"I think everyone is coming at it in the right frame of mind. A good number of members have not been involved in anything like this before so it will take time for people to find their feet... If we can get to having regular face-to-face meetings, I think this will help. As people get to know each other better I believe we will see more engagement." (LCSP Members Survey Respondent, Baseline).

In addition, the LCSP members survey asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with their influence in the LCSP and the way LCSP members work together. Most participants were 'mostly' or 'completely satisfied' with their influence (60%, n=18) and the way LCSP members work together (53%, n=16), at the time of survey completion.

"I think the vibes are good and everyone wants to make it work." (LCSP Members Survey Respondent, Baseline).

Figure 9: Satisfaction of LCSP members with their influence on the LCSPs and how members work together



However, interview and focus group data suggested that during baseline data collection, information sharing could be problematic in some cases and warrants further consideration and decision making. For example, it was suggested that some agencies may be unable or reluctant to share information, and there does not appear to be a process or agreement to facilitate information sharing between different partners as yet.

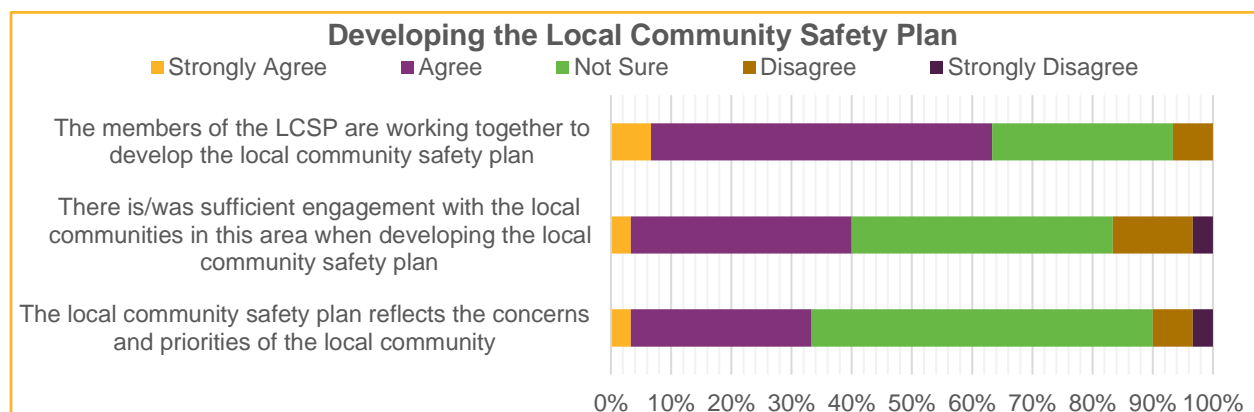
Theme 2: Early Patterns and Approaches to Community Engagement and Community Safety

Description: This theme identifies and discusses some similarities and differences between the three pilot sites in their early approaches to community engagement and community safety; challenges to community engagement and safety planning; and perceptions of these approaches among evaluation participants.

Several items on the survey of LCSP members queried respondents about their views on local community safety planning. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed that:

- The members of the LCSP are working together to develop the local community safety plan.
- There is/was sufficient engagement with the local communities in this area when developing the local community safety plan.
- The local community safety plan reflects the concerns and priorities of the local community.

Figure 10: LCSP members views on community safety planning



While the majority agreed that the LCSP members are working together to develop their local community safety plans (63%, n=19), far fewer agreed that there has been sufficient engagement with the local communities when developing the local community safety plan (40%, n=12) or that the local community safety plan reflects the concerns and priorities of the local communities (33%, n=10). Again, these results are expected at this stage of the evaluation and align closely with the data collected from other methods. The open-text comments provide some additional context to these results, with several respondents highlighting that at the time of survey completion:

“We have had initial meetings... to pave the way for this process but we are at the very beginning of the [community engagement and safety planning] journey.” (LCSP Members Survey Respondent, Baseline).

Covid-19 and the related public health measures were also a significant barrier to public engagement during much of the baseline data collection period. Overall, there appeared to be a preference from most participants for public engagements to be held in person, where possible, because:

“...with any type of public consultation process... you tend to get a sense of people and their engagement if you were physically meeting them, because there are conversations that people would be more comfortable having if they were in the physical environment rather than having something in an online forum.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

However, the impact of Covid-19 and related public health measures meant that, at best, public engagement events often had to be held online rather than in-person, and at worst, events had to

be cancelled in some areas. For the partnerships covering rural populations, ensuring there was adequate consideration of rural community safety concerns was also important.

Despite the early stages of the pilots by the end of the baseline period all three pilots had (to varying degrees):

- Conducted some form of engagement and consultation with local communities.
- Started work to draft formal community engagement and community safety plans.
- Established sub-groups of LCSP members to help progress various aspects of community engagement and community safety planning.

“I am doing a communications and engagement plan that’s going to initially raise some awareness about the partnership itself, then around the consultation to try and get the word out there and to try and reach as many people as they can to have their say.”

(Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and observations highlighted a variety of different community engagement strategies and methods in use between the three partnerships. These included, but are not limited to:

- Raising awareness about the LCSP through local media outlets.
- Setting up web pages with LCSP contact details for the general public.
- Holding large (online) public engagement and information events.
- Holding workshops with LCSP members to get their input on community engagement plans and to identify initial community safety issues to prioritise.
- LCSP members gathering feedback from the groups they represent and bringing it back to their partnership.
- Outreaching to the local community to engage with local residents and encouraging local residents to directly contact the LCSP to establish consistent two-way feedback.

“Two-way feedback further on down the line can sometimes be missing... we constantly need to be in touch with the Community, and it’s not just consultation time we’re looking for them to feed in. It’s going to be all the time.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

The findings indicate variation 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. Their respective community engagement activities were beginning to pick up momentum by the time data collection ended and were intended to actively involve the partnership members in those activities.

“We want to get a bit of feed in from the partnership members as to how that [community consultation process] might be progressed... we want to draw on the skills from around the table [and] there are a lot of what I call ‘community agents’ around the table who already have links into the community.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Other LCSPs, from the information available to the evaluation team, appeared to focus simultaneously, in the early stages, on forming and building the partnership *and* engaging the community and drafting a community safety plan, with one set of activities largely (though not exclusively) driven by the Chairperson and the other set of activities largely (though not exclusively) driven by LCSP staff. In relation to the survey findings, it is not clear to what extent the members of the LCSP were aware of the community engagement activities undertaken by the staff in these partnerships, which appear to have been reasonably extensive and well-planned given the early stages the LCSPs were in.

This involved, for instance: spending a considerable amount of time gathering information, understanding the needs of the community and potential partner organisations, and identifying ways in which they could collaborate with other organisations to improve community safety. It also involved outreaching to the community, documenting community safety issues, developing community safety plans and strategies, and intervening in community safety issues - all before LCSP members had met. The level of recording of the activities and plans of the LCSPs was detailed, and this intended to hold various members/stakeholders accountable and to contribute to the evaluation process.

One of the partnerships was progressing a strategy for engaging and building meaningful relationships with the local community, with some early anecdotal evidence that the strategy was beginning to bear fruit. The strategy involved dividing the geographic area of the LCSP into a number of distinct regions or neighbourhoods. A process of identifying residents associations in each distinct area was then started, and representatives of the associations began to be engaged to discuss their issues of concern and facilitate their introduction to a local community Garda (or other local public service representatives) to help establish a direct connection between the community and local

services. The plan was, over time, to establish a single point of contact for each residents' association, and later to assist the multiple residents' associations within each distinct area to form umbrella residents' associations. These umbrella residents' associations were then intended to streamline the number of single points of contact for each distinct neighbourhood for the LCSP, while also building the capacity of these associations by providing a unified, coherent voice for each distinct area and creating direct channels of communication between the local community and the LCSP.

It is difficult to say, from the data available, how progressed this strategy was at the time of data collection, however, anecdotally there was some evidence that gradually "we were starting to build that relationship" between the LCSP and local communities. The community engagement strategy and community safety plans being developed through this were noted by others to be "an exceptional piece of work". However, the approach to community safety planning was adapted somewhat over time, with the intention to facilitate greater input from the partnership members to the plan and reduce what was perceived to be an over-emphasis on policing.

A small number of survey respondents cautioned against over-engaging the community and expressed a desire to quickly work towards developing a plan and taking action to improve community safety:

"The size of the committee alone covers virtually the entire community, and I don't believe that a procrastinated public consultation process would benefit the end result. I believe more in getting on with the job... It's my experience that oodles of public consultation leads to delays in actually publishing a plan that we can work off to achieve real objectives... People like to see action as opposed to listening to nice conversations."
(Survey Respondent, Baseline).

Theme 3: Lessons Learned and Suggestions for Moving Forward

Description: While partnership-working is new to some of those involved in the LCSPs, many have considerable experience of working in similar partnership structures. This theme documents some of the lessons these participants have learned and believe to be helpful to the LCSPs, and what changes, if any, could be made at this early stage to improve LCSPs going forward.

The theme has been broken into two sub-themes, based on the timing of when the lessons and suggestions are most relevant:

- 3.1 Lessons and suggestions for forming partnerships
- 3.2 Lessons and suggestions for LCSPs moving forward

All those interviewed were invited to reflect on their experience of partnership-working to date, both before the LCSP and during the setting up of the LCSP, and to share what works and suggestions for the future work of the LCSP.

Many lessons and suggestions were contained within the first two themes on the formation of the partnerships and early approaches to community engagement and safety. The lessons and suggestions described below are in addition to those mentioned in the first two themes.

Sub-Theme 3.1: Lessons and Suggestions for Forming Partnerships

Description: This sub-theme describes some of the early lessons and suggestions shared by pilot-site stakeholders that are particularly relevant to the formation stage of LCSPs and may be of relevance to future LCSPs when rolled out nationwide.

It was suggested that a core group of members for all LCSPs should be prescribed nationwide “to make sure to get consistency at the start” and that the prescription should be contained in guidelines, rather than by law, to allow the partnerships some flexibility in tailoring their membership to their local area.

As part of the recruitment of LCSP members and early LCSP meetings, participants suggested that time should be dedicated to the following activities:

- Understanding the needs of member organisations and finding common ground within the LCSP.
- Building buy-in from LCSP members.
- Giving all members an opportunity for their voice to be heard.

“Trying to develop buy-in I think is something that is really important from the outset, and that's why I'm very conscious of the need to get and allow everyone to be heard.”
(Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

“Make the links... if you understand your partner's wants and needs... where in those areas can you work out from in terms of the common ground, and then build out from there.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Noting that not everyone involved in the partnership will have a background in policing or community safety, some participants suggested that more clearly and concisely communicating the rationale, remit and focus of the partnerships from the outset would be helpful. This point relates to communications from national-to-local stakeholders, as well as from local LCSP leaders-to-local stakeholders.

“Earlier on there was confusion about what’s our new function, our new focus, that widened role rather than a specific policing task or focus. And I think some of us struggled with that and I think perhaps the rationale for moving from JPC [Joint Policing Committee] to a CSP [Community Safety Partnership] format I think needs to be kind of teased out a bit more and communicated a bit more.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

In addition, having a repository of information on “who’s who [and] what’s what” within the local community prepared for future LCSPs before they are set up could help to speed up the formation process.

“If there’s some form of – now it would have to be different everywhere because I understand that everywhere works differently – but... some kind of preface of, you know, this is definitively what you can look at and these things are definitively things that fall outside your boundaries... [and] a clearer idea of ‘who’s who, what’s what, what goes where’, because it would save a little bit of time digging around to see where exactly it is that we need to land.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Sub-Theme 3.2: Lessons and Suggestions for LCSPs Moving Forward

Description: This sub-theme focuses on some of the early lessons and suggestions shared by pilot-site stakeholders that were made for the current LCSP pilots moving forward.

The lessons and suggestions are presented under the following headings:

- Assessing and planning
- Accountability and transparency
- Learning and reflecting.

Assessing and planning

In incidents where the LCSP may be lacking the technical knowledge or the time and resources to progress certain activities, some participants suggested that external specialist supports may be required from time-to-time. The activities that might benefit from external specialist support will likely vary from site to site, but may include:

- Organising, facilitating, and analysing the results of public consultations and/or workshops with LCSP members.
- Researching ‘what works, where and how’ when addressing community safety concerns.
- Developing local community safety plans.

When assessing local community safety issues, it was suggested that the LCSPs should consider and understand how local issues fit within the bigger picture nationally and to plan with this bigger picture in mind.

“What you need is people... that can see a picture, a strategic picture, and macro picture. They have to be capable of seeing the strategic picture. They cannot be just getting into the weeds all of the time.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Accountability and transparency

Several suggestions were made for improving the transparency of the LCSPs and ensuring accountability in the implementation of LCSP plans. For example, to ensure accountability it was noted that identifying the owners of actions would be helpful.

“In the development of the [community safety] plan, if someone around the table doesn't own the action, it doesn't happen... That's where you can be as adventurous as you like in identifying wonderful, glossy, shiny things to do. But if somebody doesn't say “I'll take that on and lead it” there's a real issue there.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

In addition, communicating and making publicly available the work of LCSP was suggested to improve transparency and keep the local community informed.

“I think that a wider communication of our work would be useful... stuff like putting the minutes up on the Council website and really bringing the community along with us... I think having the information in the community hands is an important part of that.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Learning and reflecting

There were also suggestions made for how the partnerships might learn from and reflect on their work. These included:

- Piloting certain projects in different communities to assess their benefit before applying them more widely across the whole LCSP area.

“There needs to be projects that are pilots as part of it in different communities so that you can measure the response or the benefit in a particular community, where there's some challenges and trying to address those challenges in whatever way and then measure the outcomes from it then.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

- Building in time for ongoing reflection, review, and monitoring. Related to this, it was suggested for the partnerships to revisit their visions, missions, and values every so often to ensure they remain relevant, are understood by all, and continue to guide the work of the partnerships.

“There always needs to be a place around reflection on how we're doing and reviewing as time goes on, so that we're able to monitor what we're doing there, have we lost sight of what the goals are or the ambitions in all of this? And I think that needs to be built into the whole process, in an ongoing manner for it to be actually effective in any way.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

- Keep abreast of developments in the other LCSP pilots and learn from them.

“We will learn a lot from finding out what's happening in other places like [LCSP pilot] ... learning what's working there and vice versa.” (Interview/Focus Group Participant, Baseline).

Overall Summary of Baseline Findings

The overall findings of the evaluation at baseline confirm that considerable work has gone into setting up the LCSPs in the three pilot sites. This is despite the initiative coinciding and facing significant challenges associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic. A Chairperson has been appointed in each site, coordinators have been recruited and an administrator has been appointed in one location. The structures are continuing to develop. Each LCSP has conducted groundwork to begin preparing

the local community safety plan for their area, including research, data gathering and sharing, and consultation to ascertain local needs and priorities. There is learning arising to inform the future implementation of LCSP nationally, particularly in relation to enabling successful setup, preparation, recruitment, resourcing, agreed data sharing, and early-stage community engagement and relationship building in preparation for co-producing the local community safety plan.

6. Learning Accrued at Baseline

This section draws out the learning that accrued at the baseline stage of the LCSP pilot.

This is the first of three reports documenting the findings of the independent evaluation of the LCSP pilot. As a Baseline Report it tells the story of the beginning stage of implementing the LCSP model over the twenty-four-month pilot timeframe. It sets the scene for the next stages of data gathering at mid and end points, which seek to answer the three overarching research questions:

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, relationship, and impact on the local community?

It is a significant achievement to have set up a pilot of this nature and to work through the difficulties and uncertainties that the pandemic brought into the equation. This is particularly notable given the reliance within the LCSP model on volunteers and people giving of their time in good faith. The chairpersons give their time, wisdom, and experience on a voluntary basis and LCSP members come to the table as part of their role as citizens and members of their community and/or the organisation that they represent.

Considerable work is underway as the LCSPs move on from the formation stage to maintaining and embedding themselves in their local communities and the work of their members. The intention is that this will culminate in a local community safety plan for each location that reflects the priorities of all those living and working in each pilot area.

The pressure of being a pilot site must be acknowledged and the LCSP pilots have entered this in good faith. The learning accrued at this point confirms the formative nature of startup and centres on the need for engagement, support, information, guidance, and space to set up. Each LCSP has come together to develop their vision, mission, and the values that will underpin their work. Early work has also been completed to draw out the priorities for community safety unique to each place.

The findings to date largely align with the literature and there are early indications that many of the enablers of effective partnership working (as set out in Table 2, p.21) appear to be present in some form so far in the LCSP pilots. These include, for example:

- Vision, mission, and aims that unify and are agreed upon by all participating stakeholders

- Shared motivation for being involved in the partnership
- A formalised structure to develop strategies and working groups to execute them
- Involvement of appropriate agencies
- Presence of partners at local level, and
- Access to technical assistance (e.g., external facilitators) to build competency at various levels of the partnerships.

The main challenges encountered to date relate to the pandemic which meant almost all work was online for the first year. This adversely affected the visibility of the pilot and slowed down setup, recruitment, and relationship building. The LCSPs generally found communicating and convincing of the value of community safety and the LCSP model, selecting and drawing in members, and engaging with the community challenging to do online and yet all persisted with work in this regard. There were challenges associated with communicating and managing expectations and distinguishing the LCSP model from that of the JPCs. Gathering robust and reliable data is also noted as a challenge, particularly gaining a reliable sense of the needs of each community to inform the preparation of community safety plans.

The number of people who gave their consent to participate in the evaluation was lower than expected. This affected response rates and the comprehensiveness of the dataset at baseline.

The main messages and learning arising from the evaluation to date are:

- The value of **communication**, including briefings and information sessions led by the Department of Justice and chairpersons locally.
- The challenges, including timing, time, and resources, associated with **preparation for setup**, finding office space, recruitment, engaging with communities, and drawing in diverse and inclusive membership with decision-making capacity. This includes younger and older people and new communities.
- **Resources and resourcing** the work is a challenge, with calls for openness to further resourcing and innovative use of resources as the pilot unfolds.
- A broad range of **community safety issues** are emerging across the LCSP communities. These include, for example, anti-social behaviour; drug dealing, drug addiction (especially among young people) and drug-related intimidation; homelessness; personal safety and fear; property theft and damage; working with young people in a preventative capacity; restorative practice; lighting; litter; Garda visibility and responses; lack of mental health

services; and access to available community services; among others. It is expected that these and other locally specific themes, will be further developed in the formation of the community safety plans.

- **Relationships matter** and it takes time and work to develop the clarity of roles and relationships within the LCSP structure. This includes decision making and responsibility to follow through on actions agreed.
- **Guidance and support** are important and the roles of the LCSP chairperson and coordinator are valued as a centre point for each LCSP. Access to information and sharing of information and learning across the sites is considered useful.
- **Training, briefings, and reflection** for LCSP members were named by some stakeholders as necessary to support the partnership way of working and yet a precise suite of training needs has yet to emerge.
- **Data gathering** and the metrics of monitoring the work of each LCSP is vital to tracking and gauging progression and impact over time. Each LCSP is working on this and developing systems to support the gathering of data, including data from other agencies. This is a significant piece of work that will come more to the fore as the pilot unfolds.

Recommendations

There are some pointers arising from the evaluation process to date that could usefully inform the work of the LCSPs over the coming months. These pointers centre on engagement; communication; data, metrics and monitoring; training; information sharing; and conflict management protocols for LCSP members and staff.

Engagement with the evaluation is important particularly given the learning ethos of the pilot and the commitment to engage with the evaluation which is set out in the Terms of Reference of each LCSP. The evaluation team will continue to work closely with the LCSPs, as set out in the next section, to support and encourage participation in data gathering and reflection at midpoint. We recommend and will support increased engagement with the evaluation process and the opportunities for reflection that it offers to the pilot.

Communication and sharing of learning across the pilot sites will support the learning ethos. We recommend that each LCSP continues to develop their web presence with open and transparent sharing of information, including minutes of LCSP meetings, community safety plans, and details of the progression of the work.

Monitoring and metrics are necessary for tracking the progression of the LCSP community safety plans. The development, testing, and finetuning of the monitoring mechanism will be a key feature throughout 2022. The evaluation team has developed an activity tracker which each LCSP is asked to road test with real time data in the lead up to midpoint data gathering. We recommend a series of interactive workshops with the LCSPs to open the conversation about monitoring and to advance the development of the monitoring system for the LCSPs.

Training and support to build competence, confidence, and capacity to work well in partnership are named in the literature as success factors with a particular emphasis on interpersonal skills, trust building, working well with conflict, and leadership training. We recommend that the LCSPs continue to consider their training needs and draw down funding when appropriate to support and strengthen capacity to work well together.

We recommend the development of formal procedures and protocols for **working with conflict and sharing information** that can be agreed upon by LCSP members and staff in each pilot. The literature suggests that the presence of such procedures and processes can be a significant enabler of the work, influencing trust building and the effectiveness of the partnerships as they develop.

7. Next steps

This section lays out the next phase of the evaluation moving towards mid-point data gathering (June – September 2022) and the next wave of fieldwork which will culminate in an Interim Evaluation Report of the LCSP pilot at the end of 2022. Sharing and discussing the Baseline Report offers a space for reflection and planning for the next phase of the pilot and the accompanying evaluation process.

The following are the next steps as we move to midpoint:

1. **Consider and reflect** upon this Baseline Report.
2. **Prepare a dissemination and communication strategy** for sharing baseline learning with all stakeholders, in partnership with the Department of Justice, in advance of midpoint data gathering scheduled to start in June 2022.
3. **Disseminate the findings and share the learning** to date across the full range of stakeholders through a national workshop in early summer 2022. This will provide an open space and time to facilitate people from the LCSP pilot sites to come together, reflect, and prepare for midpoint data gathering, with the support of the evaluation team.
4. **Seek commitment to learning** from the pilot initiative by working towards greater involvement in the evaluation data gathering across the three sites at midpoint. The evaluation team will re-contract with each LCSP to work towards a significant increase in return of consent forms, aiming to move the response rate closer to 70% by midpoint.
5. **Enhance receptivity to the evaluation** and the learning through reflection and reflexivity. Encourage a learning ethos by working together strategically to bring this about through continued communications from the Department of Justice and the onsite evaluation processes. This will involve purposefully invigorating the participatory aspects of the evaluation process to encourage an increase in the number of LCSP members consenting to participate. It also includes actively widening out the community engagement aspect of the evaluation through the community-based researchers and online surveys channeled through the LCSP structures.
6. **Prepare to conduct mid-point data gathering June through September 2022.** This will involve the second 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:
 - A second round of surveys, interviews and focus groups with LCSP stakeholders.

- Observations at LCSP meetings and community events.
- Return to the theory of change and the contribution analysis to refine as necessary in preparation for midpoint data gathering.
- Review of key documents including all minutes of LCSP meetings and drafts of local community safety plans.
- Comparator sites selected for inclusion in the evaluation following a preliminary review of draft community safety plans and based on set criteria, including equivalence/similarity of implementation and intervention outcomes, as well as community profile characteristics.
- Online community surveys activated through a range of channels, including the LCSP networks, with the support of the community-based researcher in each site.
- Consultation with the Sponsors Group in each site.
- Road testing of the Activity Tracker, as the next step in developing a monitoring system for the LCSP, from March through to September 2022.
- Stories of change, with specific attention to selection of stories to supplement the quantitative data and tell the story of change within the LCSP location.

7. Prepare Midterm Evaluation Report by end of 2022.

8. Carry out the final round of data gathering towards the end of the LCSP pilot timeframe, February through June 2023.

9. Final Evaluation Report by the end of 2023.

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Appendix One: Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is designed to answer three high-level questions and a series of associated sub-questions, which 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 their 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?