Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot:
Final Evaluation Report

April 2024

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List of Acronyms

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

Acknowledgements

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We thank our colleagues in the Department of Justice, national stakeholders and the LCSP stakeholders across all three pilot sites, Dublin North Inner City, Longford, and Waterford, for their engagement with the evaluation over the two-year lifecycle of the pilot. Gratitude also to the Chairperson and Coordinator of the Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB) for sharing their reflections of the DIB with the evaluation team.

CES/UL Evaluation Team

April 2024

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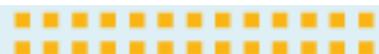
1 Introduction

The Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) is a whole of government initiative that commenced in early 2021 led by the Department of Justice. The LCSP was piloted in three locations, Dublin North Inner City, Longford, and Waterford.

The LCSP pilot is a key action under Goal 3 of the Department of Justice strategy for *A Safe, Fair and Inclusive Ireland, 2021-2023* [1].

The policy intention is that the LCSPs meet one of the key recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing (CoFPI) in Ireland's report, namely that community safety is not solely the responsibility of An Garda Síochána (AGS) or the Department of Justice [2]. This fits with the vision for community safety as a whole of Government responsibility.

The partnership approach to community safety is centred on the principle that responding to the issues of community safety requires a range of inputs from across Government, local services, voluntary sector and the community itself. In practice, this new approach repositions community safety as the provision of adequate and appropriate social services consistent with local needs. Communities will be empowered to have a stronger say in what actions are prioritised by the services operating in their area and will also have an oversight role in ensuring those actions are followed through.

The LCSPs are replacing and building upon the existing Joint Policing Committees (JPCs). They will provide a forum for state agencies, other relevant stakeholders and the local community to work together to act on community concerns [3]. The LCSPs seek to build on the good work of the JPCs, through the evolution and expansion of that structure. The intention is that LCSPs will bring a broader focus to community safety issues, of which policing is but one factor, to enable communities to be safe and feel safe.

The LCSP pilot was originally designed to run for a two-year period from early 2021. The pilot was accompanied by an independent formative evaluation purposefully designed to capture the learning arising from the pilot. The intention is that the learning will inform the rollout of LCSPs in local authority areas across Ireland in accordance with the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill, (2023)[4].

The Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill 2023 (the "Bill") was published on 19 January 2023 [Bill No. 3 of 2023]. According to the Explanatory Memorandum: "This Bill is an important part of the Government's policing reform plan – A Policing Service for Our Future (APSFF) – developed to implement the recommendations of the 2018 Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (COFPI) and fulfils a commitment in the Programme for Government: Our Shared Future."[5]

This Bill, due to be finalised later in 2023, will place the LCSPs on a statutory footing. The Bill states that a **national strategy for community safety** will be prepared, and a **national community safety steering group** and a **national office for community safety** will be

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[1] Department of Justice, 'A Safe, Fair and Inclusive Ireland: Statement of Strategy 2021-2023' (Dublin, 2021).
[2] Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, 'The Future of Policing in Ireland' (Dublin, 2018).
[3] Department of Justice, 'Community Safety: Policy Paper' (Dublin, 2021).
[4] The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 was signed into law by President Michael D. Higgins on the 07 February 2024.
[5] P McDonnell, 'Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill 2023: Community Safety' (Dublin, 2023).

established. The proposed legislation will place an obligation on relevant departments, state agencies and local authorities to cooperate with AGS in delivering community safety.

This final evaluation report marks the movement towards formal closure/end of the pilot phase and the transition to national roll-out of the LCSP model across Ireland. It is the final report in a series of three that tracked and evaluated the set up and development of the three LCSP pilot sites:

- **Dublin North Inner City LCSP** was set up early in 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in February 2021, and the inaugural meeting of the partnership was held on 29th July 2021.
- **The Dublin North Inner City Community Safety Plan 2023 – 2026** was launched by the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee on 8th September 2023.
- **Longford LCSP** was set up in summer 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in June 2021, and the inaugural meeting of the partnership was held on 19th September 2021.
- **The Longford Community Safety Plan 2022-2024** was launched by the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee in September 2022.
- **Waterford LCSP** was set up in summer 2021, the Chairperson was appointed in June 2021. There was a premeeting of the LCSP on 20th July 2021 and the first official meeting of the partnership was held on 7th September 2021.
- **The Waterford Community Safety Plan 2023-2028** was launched by the Minister for Justice Simon Harris on 27th March 2023.

The CES/UL evaluation team began their evaluation work in May 2021. The first (baseline) evaluation report was published in June 2022. The Interim Report was published in April 2023[6] and presented the findings from an analysis of data gathered, and learning arising from the evaluation process, midway through the LCSP pilot lifecycle.

This final report builds on the findings and learning set out in the Interim Report. The purpose is to inform decision making for the planned implementation of the rollout of the LCSP nationwide in 2024 and beyond.

1.1 Evolving Context for Community Safety Policy in Ireland

This evaluation was purposefully focused on the LCSP pilot and yet it is important to note that the pilot took place within a contemporary context, relevant to a whole of government approach to community safety, and an emphasis on inter-agency working, that is wider than the three pilot sites.

This section builds on the context set out in the Interim Report and brings up to date developments relevant to community safety policy and partnership working in Ireland. These

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[6] The Baseline Evaluation Report is published here: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dbaf2-local-community-safety-partnership-pilot-baseline-evaluation-report/

The Interim Evaluation Report is published here: https://assets.gov.ie/263398/6351adfc-5e5b-4225-b6f8-170b8160db17.pdf

include developments relating to the Policy, Security and Community Safety Bill (2023), developments within the three pilot sites and developments relating to wider community safety initiatives, including the Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF), the Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB) and the establishment of the Programme Board on Building Stronger and more Integrated Responses to Local Area Challenges.

The Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill (2023)

The Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill (the Bill) finished its passage through Dáil Éireann in July 2023. Part 3 of the Bill sets out the national infrastructure through which community safety will be delivered throughout the state.

The Bill provides for, *inter alia,* the development of a **National Strategy for improving community safety**[7]; the establishment of a **National Community Safety Steering Group** to monitor the implementation of the national strategy and to promote and monitor compliance by public service bodies with their duties under the Act[8]; the establishment of a **National Office for Community Safety** to provide training, guidance and support to community safety partnerships and to monitor the implementation of local community safety plans and promote public awareness of issues affecting community safety[9]; and the appointment of a **Director of the National Office**[10]. The legislation also makes provisions for regulations concerning the establishment and operation of local community safety partnerships[11] and area-based neighbourhood community safety fora[12].

At the time of this report the Department of Justice was working on preparations for rollout of the LCSP nationwide in 2024. Preparations include the setting up of the National Office for Community Safety, the recruitment of the Director of the National Office and taking soundings from the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and the County and City Management Agency (CCMA).

The pilot phase of the LCSP was originally designed to be 24 months duration and due to finish in July 2023 in Dublin, and September 2023 in Waterford and Longford. A proposal for limited extension of the LCSP pilots until the end of 2023 was sought on the basis that covid restrictions, in 2021 impeded the ability of the pilots to get fully get up and running. In March 2023, this proposal for extension received Ministerial approval. A submission was made as part of the 2024 Estimate Bid to fund the expansion of the pilots to allow for the smooth transition to establishing LCSPs on a statutory basis across the country.

The decision to extend the pilot phase of the LCSP was made to support the transition of the pilot sites from pilot phase to national rollout of the LCSP. The rationale for the decision to extend the timeframe into 2024 was that in the three pilot locations, the joint policing committees (JPCs) were stood down, but they continue to operate around the rest of the country so standing down the LCSP pilots would disadvantage those locations.

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[7] S.106
[8] S.107
[9] S.108
[10] S.109
[11] S.114
[12] S.115

Embedding the Concept *and* Practice of Community Safety

Introducing the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill in February 2023, it was emphasised that one of the main objectives of the Bill was making the prevention of harm and protection of people who are vulnerable or at risk an objective of An Garda Síochána (AGS) and making the safety of communities a 'whole of government' responsibility.[13]

The Bill will set in statute the cross-government responsibility for community safety. This is making explicit, in legislation, what is already the reality in terms of everyday policing. As pointed out by the CFPI, 'the police are often on the front line supporting the more vulnerable members of society – people with mental health conditions or substance misuse problems, homeless people, children and elderly people at risk, and those left behind in poverty or social exclusion'.[14] This also raises a central point about policing and community safety, that it is more than solely the responsibility of the police service.

The public response to issues of community safety is often to call for a greater police presence. However, while a visible Garda presence is important to reassure the public, a more integrated response is required to address complex community safety issues in a sustainable way with multiple stakeholders working together, over time with a shared commitment to common results.

Other important milestones in terms of embedding the community safety concept and moving it into practice, as highlighted in the Interim Evaluation Report, have been:

- the All-Ireland 'Beyond Borders' conference held in Co Louth in November 2022,
- the extension of the Community Safety Innovation Fund, and
- the setting up of the Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB) in late 2021 to implement the 70 actions set out in the Geiran Report on Community Safety and Wellbeing in Drogheda (2021).[15]

The Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF)

The Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF) reinvests the proceeds of crime, seized by the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB), and is an important fund relevant to advancing community safety policy and plans in Ireland. The aim of the CSIF is to allow proceeds of crime to be directed into community projects to support community safety. This is part of the broader objective to drive community participation, as an approach to making communities safer and to working across government and with state agencies to support this goal.

The CSIF is a significant fund that has supplemented the financial resources of the three LCSP pilot sites as well as raising awareness of community safety as a concept and bringing it to life as real and robust in practice. It is early days as the CSIF enters year two and yet it is an important feature that supports, financially and conceptually, a significant proportion of the work of the LCSPs and other community safety initiatives.

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[13] Department of Justice, 'Landmark Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill 2023 Begins Its Legislative Journey', Gov.ie, 2023, https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/fde96-landmark-policing-security-and-community-safety-bill-2023-begins-its-legislative-journey/#.
[14] Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, 'The Future of Policing in Ireland', 2018, pg. 6.
[15] Department of Justice, 'Scoping Report into Community Safety and Wellbeing in Drogheda', Gov.ie, 2021, https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c9386-scoping-report-into-community-safety-and-wellbeing-in-drogheda/.

The Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF) 2022 allocated €2 million to support the development of community safety through innovative and local community-based initiatives. A total of 22 community projects across the country have benefitted to date from grants ranging from €5,000 to €150,000, that are supporting the delivery of innovative projects to improve community safety in their local areas.

A total of €353,903 of the CSIF 2022 was allocated to initiatives under the LCSP pilot sites for the following projects: Longford LCSP Cornerstone Initiatives, Dublin North Inner City Community Safety Warden Scheme, Dungarvan Community Project, Waterford Northwest Suburbs Community Action Plan.

In 2023, €3 million was allocated for the Community Safety Innovation Fund 2023. A total of €330,000 of the CSIF 2023 was allocated to initiatives under the LCSP pilot sites for the following projects: Waterford LCSP: Consent Matters and Waterford Community Safety Wardens and Longford LCSP and partners: All Island Community Safety Network. Of note, a grant was also awarded to Bohemian Football Club (€147,175) to support a North Inner City Sporting Alliance Programme. Another round of applications for the CSIF will open in 2024 and the fund will be increased to €3.75 million.

Department of Justice Statement of Strategy 2023 – 2026

At the time of this report the Department of Justice was in the process of preparing their new Statement of Strategy for 2023 to 2036. This will be in line with the Department's stated mission to work to advance community safety and national security, promote justice and equality and safeguard human rights, to achieve the vision of a safe, fair, and inclusive Ireland.

> *"Protecting our citizens is much wider than policing, and I want to empower communities to have a say in matters relating to their own safety."* [16]

Key Developments within the LCSP Pilot sites since the Interim Report

Since the Interim Evaluation Report, completed in April 2023, the LCSP's in Longford and Waterford have been in the process of implementing actions from their respective Community Safety Plans. The Longford LCSP has been working on this since September 2022 and Waterford LCSP since March 2023.

On September 8th, 2023, the Minister for Justice Helen McEntee was joined by the Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, to launch the Dublin North Inner City Local Community Safety Plan in the Ballybough Community Sports Centre. The Community Safety Plan includes measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and drug dealing as well as broader actions to improve feelings of community safety, such as integration of new cultures into the area, improved supports for families and increased awareness around issues like domestic violence.[17]

The Department of Justice responded to the findings of the Interim Report and a number of developments and adjustments have been made to the LCSPs. This includes decisions to

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[16] Quote from the Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee, October 2023.
[17] NEIC, 'Local Community Safety Partnership', NEIC.ie, 2024, https://www.neic.ie/local-community-safety-partnership.

increase the grade of the coordinator from grade 6 to grade 7, to provide administrative support to the LCSPs and to offer leadership training to LCSP sites.[18]

The Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB)

The Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB) was set up in late 2021, after the publication of the report of the Drogheda Scoping Exercise which was commissioned by the Minister for Justice in 2020 in response to rising concerns regarding crime and fear of crime in Drogheda. The scoping report, entitled 'Drogheda: Creating a Bridge to a Better Future', was completed by Mr. Vivian Geiran, former director of the Probation Service, and published in January 2021.[19]

The scoping report explored the challenges presenting in the Drogheda catchment area, in addition to local strengths and resources. It identified measures that could support community safety and chart a path to improved community wellbeing in and around Drogheda. The recommendations in the report fall under two general headings:

- the need for improved interagency cooperation in the administration and delivery of services in Drogheda, and
- the need to resource services or provide additional services in the area.

The scoping report led to the development of an Implementation Plan which was adopted by cabinet with 70 actions arising from the recommendations in the report. The DIB is the coordination structure for the delivery of these actions and provides another contemporary example of partnership working in relation to community safety.[20] The Drogheda Implementation Board is resourced by the Department of Justice through Dormant Accounts funding. It has a similar makeup of members to the LCSP, with 16 members of the range of relevant agencies and a representative of the community.

The DIB differs in a number of ways from the LCSP pilot sites. For example, it is hosted by the Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) and it is charged with implementing a pre-existing implementation plan, i.e. The Drogheda Implementation Plan. This is described as a living document that will be updated on a regular basis as new actions or activities emerge. Actions and timelines regarding the Drogheda Implementation Plan are also included in the Justice Plan 2022.[21]

In July 2023 the DIB was extended to align with the national rollout of Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs). The intention is that the LCSP will then bring forward the work of the Drogheda Implementation Board.

Funding the LCSP Pilot

The overall spend across the lifetime of the LCSP pilot to date was €1,675,521.06.[22]

- Dublin NIC: €700,424.49
- Longford: €494,195
- Waterford: €480, 901.57

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[18] The UL Executive Leadership Programme is part of a Youth Justice team package that was approved in 2022 and is approximately €33k.
[19] Department of Justice, 'Scoping Report into Community Safety and Wellbeing in Drogheda'.
[20] Drogheda Implementation Board, 'Welcome to the Drogheda Implementation Board', 2022, https://droghedaimplementationboard.ie/.
[21] Department of Justice, 'Justice Plan 2022' (Dublin, 2022).
[22] Data provided by the Department of Justice to the evaluation team.

The Dublin pilot was core funded primarily via the North-East Inner City Initiative Funding in year one (€150,000) with additional support provided through the Department of Justice's Crime Prevention Budget (CPB) (€50,670). The Dublin pilot was funded from the Department of Rural and Community Development's Dormant Accounts Funding (DAF) in years two and three, with some further support from the CPB.

The Longford and Waterford pilots received core funding from the DAF with additional support for non-core interventions over the lifetime of the pilots, from the CPB.

Each of the pilots secured project funding via the Community Safety Innovation Fund 2022. The total funding was €353,903, which included an allocation to Dublin of €150,000, Longford €137,500 and Waterford €66,403 (€41,403 + €25,000).

Under CSIF 2023, a total of €330,000 of the CSIF 2023 was allocated to initiatives under the LCSP pilot sites for the following projects: Waterford LCSP: Consent Matters and Waterford Community Safety Wardens and Longford LCSP and partners: All Island Community Safety Network.

In August 2023 the Department approved a pilot Small Grants Scheme for €50,000 to be administered by the Waterford LCSP to allow for small grants of up to €5k. The purpose of this is to test how a small discretionary grant aid fund might be utilised by a partnership.

Programme Board on Building Stronger and more Integrated Responses to Local Area Challenges

In late 2022, the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Equality agreed to proposals for strengthening local government arrangements for community development and engaging with communities around their local needs and responses. The Programme Board on Building Stronger and More Integrated Responses to Local Area Challenges (The Programme Board) was established to progress these proposals with administrative support being provided by the Department of the Taoiseach.

The work of the Programme Board is to bolster the ongoing attempts to address local area challenges and to put structures in place to effectively address these challenges into the future. To that end, the Programme Board is (1) exploring how local consortia of state and community organisations can be supported and incentivised to work in more integrated ways and intensify efforts in areas facing specific challenges of disadvantage, (2) examining how the use of small area data can be maximised to diagnose local area challenges and drive bespoke responses, (3) improving line of sight of funding allocation to areas and communities across sector and across Government, and (4) building the capacity of organisations across the system to work collaboratively, and deliver targeted, integrated responses.

There are opportunities for synergy between the LCSPs and the wider work of the Programme Board on Building Stronger and More Integrated Responses to Local Area Challenges, particularly in the areas of mining local area data and supporting consortia approaches to service delivery.

2 Background to the evaluation

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

2.1 Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

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

The evaluation was designed to answer three high-level questions and a series of associated sub-questions over the lifecycle of the pilot:

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

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

The methodology followed a set process across three time points during the life cycle of the evaluation integrating a blend of quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods to generate a comprehensive set of data. This mixed method approach drew on existing and available secondary data as well as primary quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

The data gathering methods across all three timepoints are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Data collection methods used at each evaluation timepoint

Data Collection Method	Timepoint		
	Baseline 2021	Midpoint 2022	Endpoint 2023
Interviews	XX	XX	XX
Focus Groups	X	X	X
Online Survey	X	X	X
Document Analysis	XX	X	XX
Observations	X	X	
Activity Tracker	X	X	X
X = pilot-level stakeholders X = national and/or international stakeholders/experts			

A more detailed description of the data gathering methods for endpoint is set out below in Table 2. A cornerstone of the methodology was the administration of stakeholder interviews (national and local), focus groups and online surveys of LCSP members at each time point, which facilitated the evaluation team to track patterns and trends over the lifecycle of the pilot.

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

Data Type	Data Collection Method	Description, Purpose and Responses
Qualitative	Interviews	One-to-one interviews with local and national stakeholders.
		The purpose of the interviews was to understand how the LCSP pilot is unfolding and how LCSPs are conducting their work.
		Interviews with LCSP Chairpersons (x4), coordinators (x3), An Garda Síochána (x2) and local authority representatives (x2), and other local stakeholders (x1) across the three pilot sites.
		Interviews with national stakeholders (x5) from relevant government departments and state bodies.
Qualitative	Focus Groups	Facilitated focus groups with members of the LCSP.
		The purpose of the focus groups was to explore and understand how the LCSP conducts its work.
		Focus groups (4) involving LCSP members (12).
Quantitative	Survey	An online, self-completion survey for all members of the LCSP, who consented to take part in the evaluation issued at baseline, interim and final points.
		The purpose was to gather the views and experiences of LCSP members across the three pilot sites on the operation, implementation, and perceived outcomes of the LCSP.
		Survey administered at endpoint with 34 respondents.
Qualitative	Document Analysis	Review of local and national-level documents relevant to the LCSP. This includes terms of reference for LCSPs, a sample of LCSP and Sponsors' Groups meeting minutes, CSIF applications, Community Safety Plans.
		The purpose was to gain insight into the pilot and supplement the other methodologies.
		Endpoint analysis of documents (30).
Quantitative and Qualitative	Activity Tracker	The purpose of the Activity Tracker was to road test a monitoring system for the LCSP. This was part of the greater commitment to systematic monitoring of the pilot initiative which will carry through to the national roll-out.
		The Activity Tracker data collection began in June 2022 seeking data on a quarterly basis during the pilot phase. The Tracker had a quantitative component and qualitative component.
		All pilot sites returned at least some quantitative data on LCSP meetings and meeting attendance. Data on other indicators varied across the three pilots.
		6 stories of change were returned by two pilot sites.

The data that informs this Final Evaluation Report was collected between June 2023 and September 2023, in tune with the original endpoint of the pilot.

The initial evaluation plan included a community survey in each of the three pilot sites at endpoint. The intention was to gather the views and experience of community members of their local LCSP. In the reality of setting up of each pilot site, the work of recruiting and creating each partnership and developing the local community safety plan in each area, it became clear that a robust community survey would be premature as a useful methodology at that time. The LCSPs, at that point, were too early in their development to reasonably expect widespread awareness of the LCSP or population-level outcomes. There was also understandable concern, particularly within the pilot sites, that any community survey conducted by the evaluation team could confuse the consultations and surveys that the LCSPs themselves were conducting to inform the development of their Community Safety Plans. The evaluation team would have had to rely heavily on the already extremely busy LCSP coordinator to support the administration of a comprehensive community survey in each site. All these factors led to the decision, jointly between the Department of Justice and the evaluation team, to hold off on the community survey. Whilst the community voice is missing in this regard from this report, it is present in the evaluation through the responses of the members of the LCSPs who represent their community. It is also present in the consultations that each partnership conducted locally to inform their Community Safety Plan.

It could be argued that a community survey is a more appropriate and valuable exercise when timed shortly before and then repeated, with the same sample, towards the end of the implementation of each Community Safey Plan. Such a survey would require specific resourcing and careful design in order to examine experiences, perceptions, and feelings of safety across a representative sample of a given community.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

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

2.4 Response Rates

Table 3 sets out the response rates for each of the component parts of the methodology. This includes one-to-one interviews, focus groups, and the LCSP members survey.

At each stage of the evaluation all LCSP members were invited to participate in the focus groups and the online survey. Of the estimated 79 members (excluding Chairpersons) on the LCSPs at the time of the endpoint survey, 34 completed the survey yielding a response rate of 43%. This was supplemented with the focus groups which were attended by twelve LCSP members (6 community representatives, 4 statutory and 2 local councillor representatives), and one-to-one interviews with LCSP Chairpersons, Coordinators, local authority representatives and An Garda Síochána representatives.
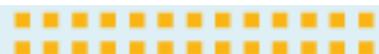
Elected representatives are a major stakeholder group within the membership of LCSPs and yet they are under-represented in the data. This is due to less than expected engagement with the evaluation at all time points over the lifetime of the two-year pilot.

Table 3: Endpoint data collection and responses

	Pilot-Sites			Total
	Pilot A	**Pilot B**	**Pilot C**	
Consent Forms (LCSP Members)				53
Interviews				
LCSP Stakeholders	**3**	**4**	**5**	**12**
LCSP Chairpersons	1	1	2	4
LCSP Coordinators	1	1	1	3
LCSP Local Authority Representatives	1	0	1	2
LCSP An Garda Síochána Representatives	0	1	1	2
LCSP Researcher	-	1	-	1
National Stakeholders		5		**5**
Focus Groups				
LCSP Members (site specific)	5	3	2	**10 (3)**
LCSP Members (across sites)	1	1	0	**2 (1)**
Surveys				
LCSP Members' Survey	14	12	8	**34**
Documents				
LCSP Documents	44	34	1	**79**
National-Level Documents		27		**27**
Activity Tracker				
Quantitative Indicators	0 (6)	6 (6)	0 (6)	
Qualitative Indicators (Stories of Change)	0	3	2	

Focus Groups: Figures outside brackets are the number of focus group participants. Numbers in brackets are the number of focus groups. Of the 12 participants across the 4 focus groups at endpoint, 6 were community representatives and 6 were non-community representatives (i.e. representatives of statutory organisations or local councillors).

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

3 Findings

This section sets out the findings arising from the triangulated analysis of the data gathered across the LCSP pilot sites between June and October 2023. This includes the online survey of LCSP members, stakeholder interviews (national and local), focus groups, and document analysis.

The analysis is situated alongside the seven enablers known to facilitate effective partnership working. These enablers include conducive context, vision, resourcing, data sharing, solution and evidence focus, structures and processes, relationships and communication, capacity, and experience. They are the characteristics and conditions that facilitate effective community safety partnerships to be created and sustained.[23]

The seven enablers are set out in Table 4 below and serve as a benchmark to assess and ascertain both the extent to which favourable conditions exist and the work required for partnership to work. These enablers were tracked through the evaluation over the lifecycle of the LCSP pilot.

Table 4: Enablers of effective partnership-working identified in the literature

Enablers of effective community safety partnership	
Enabler One: Favourable 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
Enabler Two: Vision, Leadership and Champions	Clear vision, mission, and aims that unify and are agreed upon by all participating stakeholders
	Full integration of project aims into the overall aims of partner organisations
	Good leadership and strategic direction, with leaders at senior levels focused on getting buy-in and improving coordination, and local level champions advocating for the partnership
	Leader(s) that are respected by the other partners, can champion the goals of the partnership, stimulate problem-solving, resolve conflicts, and maintain group cohesiveness
Enabler Three:	Adequate resourcing, including ensuring representatives have enough time away from their core work to provide input to the partnership

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[23] Geoff Berry et al., 'The Effectiveness of Partnership Working in a Crime and Disorder Context: A Rapid Evidence Assessment', *Research Report 52* (London, 2011); Dennis P Rosenbaum and Amie M Schuck, 'Comprehensive Community Partnerships for Preventing Crime', in *The Oxford Handbook of Crime Prevention*, ed. Brandon Welsh and David Farrington, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 226–46; Anthony Morgan et al., 'Effective Crime Prevention Interventions for Implementation by Local Government', *AIC Reports: Research & Public Policy Series 120* (Canberra, 2012), https://zeus.tarleton.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=i3h&AN=84344348&site=ehost-live.

Resourcing and Data-Sharing	Capacity of agency representatives to commit resources
	Data sharing policies and protocols, and regular exchange of relevant information
Enabler Four: 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
Enabler Five: 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
Enabler Six: 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
Enabler Seven: Experience and Capacity-Building	Prior experience of 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.

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

How the findings are organised

The findings are organised and discussed under the following themes:

- Theme 1 -- Partnership-working in practice 1: Goals, roles and structures

- Theme 2 -- Partnership-working in practice 2: Engaging, relating and working together
- Theme 3 -- Partnership-working in practice 3: Supporting and resourcing LCSPs
- Theme 4 -- Partnership-working in practice 4: Accountability and decision-making
- Theme 5 -- Community engagement and community safety
- Theme 6 -- Perceptions of the benefits, drawbacks, added value and outcomes of LCSPs.

We use the terms Baseline (B), Midpoint (M) and endpoint (E) when referring to data at each time point in the evaluation during the two-year timeframe. We start each theme and/or sub-theme with a summary of the relevant baseline and interim report findings for that section. This shows how the main findings and conclusions from each timepoint link together. At the same time, it is not possible for the summaries to capture all the details and nuances from the baseline and interim reports.

The three reports -- baseline, interim and final -- are companion documents that tracked the pilot over the two years. We encourage readers to consider the three reports together so as to be informed of the development of the pilot sites from concept to formation through to preparation of community safety plans and their implementation.

3.1 Partnership-working in Practice 1: Goals, roles and structures

This is the first of three themes on 'Partnership-Working in Practice'. These themes are intended to convey what partnership-working is like in practice and the realities of bringing together large diverse groups of people and organisations into an LCSP for a shared purpose.

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

The theme is split into two sub-themes:

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

LCSP goals and the need for community safety partnerships

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

At both baseline and midpoint, the survey of LCSP members showed strong consensus of a perceived need for LCSPs to improve community safety.

Challenges in precisely defining the concept of community safety were evident which appeared to contribute to varied understandings amongst some LCSP members of the aims, principles and concepts underpinning LCSPs.

Overall, many respondents appeared to have good understanding of the principles and concepts of community safety. The data at midpoint indicated this situation was improving compared to baseline, notwithstanding differences in this respect between the pilots and the fact that significant room for improvement still existed.

To the extent that variation in understanding of the LCSPs aims and principles existed, some of the knock-on effects of this include, difficulties defining and explaining the boundaries of the remit of LCSPs and an over-emphasis on policing responses to community safety issues. There are also some perceptions that the role of community members of LCSPs was not fully understood or respected by all members in some partnerships.

In the survey of LCSP members, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed that:

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

Figure 1: Perceptions of the LCSP goals and objectives amongst LCSP members
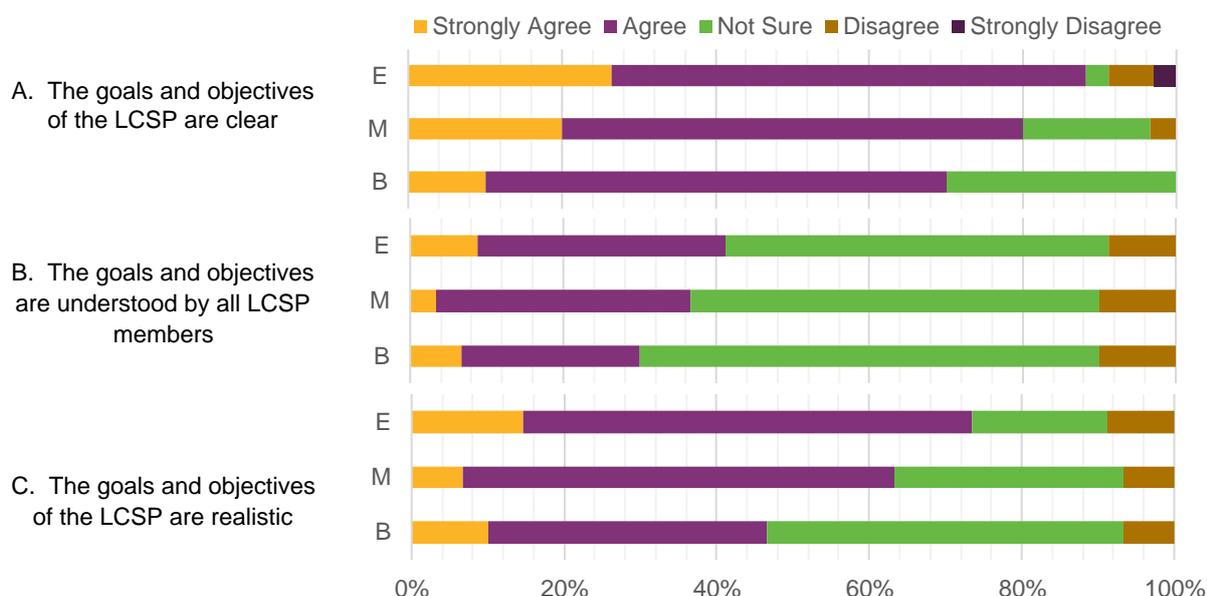
For all three items, incremental improvements can be seen at each evaluation timepoint. For instance, with item A, 70% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' at baseline that the goals and objectives of their LCSP were clear, rising to 80% at midpoint and 88% at endpoint. Similarly with item B, those in agreement that the goals and objectives are understood by all LCSP members went from 30% at baseline, to 36% at midpoint, to 41% by endpoint. Finally for item C, agreement that the goals and objectives of the LCSP are realistic rose from 47% at baseline, to 64% at midpoint, and to 74% by endpoint.

The survey results suggest most respondents believe that they understand the LCSP goals and objectives, and yet are unsure if all LCSP members understand them. At the same time, with item C, the results suggest growing confidence amongst LCSP members that their goals and objectives can be achieved.

When these results are broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, items 2.1., 2.3 and 2.4), there are similar trends across the three pilots for item A. All show higher levels of agreement at endpoint compared to baseline that the goals and objectives of the LCSP are clear.

For items B and C, two pilot sites either consistently showed high or improving agreement at each evaluation phase, while one pilot site either showed no change or less agreement at endpoint compared to baseline for these two items. In other words, two of the three sites show

gradual improvements over time in collective understanding of the LCSP goals and how realistic they are believed to be.

As qualitative data was not specifically gathered on these topics at endpoint, it is not possible to understand definitively why these different trends between the pilots have emerged. In the interim report, several enablers to generating a shared understanding of goals and how realistic they are were identified. These included investing appropriate time and energy into developing shared understandings and managing expectations about what LCSPs could reasonably deliver. However, from the qualitative data gathered by the evaluation team at baseline and midpoint, there is little evidence to suggest the three pilots differed in the presence of relevant enablers, with one exception: the development and launch of a community safety plan.

In particular, based on survey data, the development of a community safety plan may have a connection with item C (perceptions of how realistic LCSP goals are). For instance, at the time of the midpoint LCSP members survey, one LCSP had published their community safety plan[24] and subsequently seen a 46% rise in the proportion of respondents between baseline and midpoint who agreed that the goals and objectives of the LCSP are realistic. This compares with a 12% increase and 7% decrease with the other two pilots in this timeframe. At the time of the endpoint LCSP members survey, a second LCSP had published their community safety plan and subsequently saw a 35% rise in the proportion of respondents between midpoint and endpoint who agreed with item C, compared to a 6% increase and 15% decrease in the other two pilots over the same period.

The results suggest that the process of coming together and developing a community safety plan helps generate shared understanding of local problems and solutions. This also supports establishing clearer boundaries for the work of an LCSP and defining the specific actions to be taken by members to achieve community safety goals and objectives.

> *"The community safety plan would be the bones of a thousand pages if we choose to look at every single issue that's to be addressed under the term 'safety'. So, I think we have to be focussed. And… [they] have to be achievable, realistic goals that we set" [T2, int-781].*

The open-text survey responses at endpoint suggest that the perceived adequacy of resourcing for LCSPs also contributes to beliefs about how realistic LCSP goals and objectives are.

> *"The goals are realistic but only if the necessary resources are made available. This is definitely not the case, and the initiative is severely under resourced in my view especially vis-a-vis staff" [T3, sur-624].*

The process of developing their community safety plan was an important grounding exercise for each LCSP, bringing to life the reality of the priorities and related actions or responses in each location. The process of developing the plans also included some consideration of the metrics and measurement to track progress of actions over time. The plans are the baseline set and it is only as the plans are implemented, in their set time frames, that a true picture of the outcomes and impact is likely to unfold.

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[24] The community safety plan (CSP) for this pilot site was published two-weeks after the survey opened and roughly half the respondents completed the survey after publication of the plan. Those who completed the survey before the plan launched are also very likely to have been familiar with its contents as meeting minutes [Doc-002] show the actions of the CSP were collectively agreed by the partnership members two months before the survey.

The review of the community safety plans indicates that the definition and understanding of community safety is broad, inclusive and is guided by a vision of a safe community for all. This is reflected in the definitions and descriptors of community safety and the priority themes and actions within each CSP.

The language and descriptions in the community safety plans indicate a shift in ways of thinking about safety and a move towards a culture of prevention. This includes, across the board, themes of community development and capacity building, education and lifelong learning, environment, integration and inclusion, as well as crime prevention and garda visibility.

For example, the Dublin NIC LCSP prioritises actions under five themes:

- Drugs Inclusion-Health, Anti-Social Behaviour
- Family, Youth and Community
- Education, Lifelong Learning
- Integration, Ethnic and Multi Faith Inclusion
- Physical Environment.

The Longford CSP (page 22) states that there is no single or universal definition of community safety and simply states it as 'people being safe and feeling safe in their community'.

The Longford CSP has six priority areas:

- Priority One: Enhance crime prevention and response, garda visibility and the perception of safety in Longford.
- Priority Two: Build capacity and drive collaboration within the Longford Community Safety Partnership.
- Priority Three: Improve communication and sharing of information about services and supports.
- Priority Four: Enhance integration and supports for minority groups, new communities and disadvantaged communities.
- Priority Five: Build a model of community and agency collaboration and response in targeted geographic areas in Longford.
- Priority Six: Lead collaborative community safety and community development projects across County Longford.

The Waterford CSP (p.41) sets out actions under four outcome areas:

- Outcome One: Aware and Knowledgeable, through access to education and training
- Outcome Two: Protected and Respected, centred on reducing crime and harmful behaviour
- Outcome Three: Supported and Involved, focused on social inclusion and building community capacity
- Outcome Four: Safe and Secure focused on increasing safety in the built and natural environment.

LCSP roles and structures: Revisiting a source of tensions and trade-offs

The role and representativeness of members on the LCSPs

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

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

The findings also suggested that most respondents to the LCSP members survey were 'completely' or 'mostly' satisfied with their role. At the same time there was dissatisfaction amongst community representatives in one site who reported feeling "ignored" and not experiencing their LCSP as a partnership of equal stakeholders.

Several challenges were noted to creating a partnership that is representative of the community. These include an over-reliance on recruiting LCSP members from a small number of sources and inadequate input from the LCSP into who agencies nominate as representatives.

A consistent finding across all three pilots at baseline and midpoint has been the challenges associated with recruiting direct representation from young people aged 18-25. On the other hand, a factor believed to enable a representative partnership was balancing standardisation across the pilots in the size and composition of LCSP membership with flexibility to adapt the size and composition of LCSPs to better respond to and match local needs and demographics.

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

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

Figure 2: Perceptions of the definition and understanding of LCSP member roles, responsibilities and expectations

A. The roles, responsibilities and expectations of LCSP members are clearly defined and understood by all.
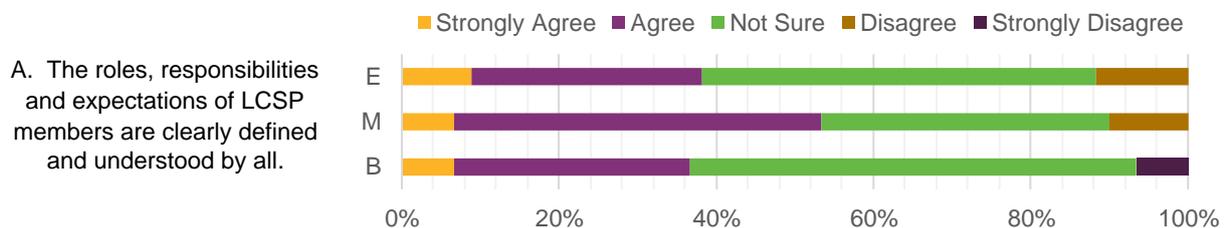
The graph indicates that at all three timepoints there have been a considerable proportion of respondents who were either '*not sure*' or '*disagreed*' that the roles, responsibilities and expectations of LCSP members are clearly defined and understand by all (ranging from 47% at midpoint to 64% at baseline). The overall trends indicate that role clarity and understanding improved from baseline to midpoint, and then fell between midpoint and endpoint.

The overall data hide the variation in trends which appear across all three pilot sites (see Appendix 1, item 3.1.). In pilot Z, the trends indicate improvements in role clarity and understanding at each timepoint. In pilot Y, the trends are the opposite, appearing to show declines in role clarity and understanding at each timepoint. And in pilot X, the trends are similar to the overall picture, showing improvement between baseline and midpoint, before declining again between midpoint and endpoint.

As shown in Box 1, the evaluation team considered several possible explanations for this variation.

These findings suggest that partnerships cannot assume that members role clarity and understanding will automatically improve with time. Rather, LCSPs need to periodically check-in with members to ensure that the roles, responsibilities and expectations of LCSP members are clearly defined and understood by all. There is also a guidance and communication role for the National Office for Community Safety in this regard during the rollout and implementation of the LCSP nationwide.

Box 1: Possible explanations for variations in role clarity and understanding

Three possible explanations for variations in role clarity and understanding were considered by the evaluation team: (1) that the variations reflect differences arising due to the turnover of members on each partnership, (2) that the variations reflect different respondents completing the survey at each timepoint, and (3) that the variations reflect different experiences of enablers to role clarity and understanding present in each pilot site.

Firstly, on membership turnover, the hypothesis was that high turnover rates would mean more members with relatively little time on the partnership to understand their role and the roles of others, which would lead to lower role clarity over time. There is conflicting evidence on this. As shown in Table 5, for instance, pilot Z and pilot Y show opposite trends in role clarity and understanding, yet their turnover rates are almost identical.

Furthermore, pilot X showed fluctuating results in terms of role clarity and understanding across the three timepoints, despite maintaining a relatively stable membership over the course of the evaluation. This conflicts with interview and focus group data, which suggest that time is needed for new members to get up to speed with their role and understand the roles of others on the partnership. This comes though being present at meeting and relating to others during the course of LCSP meetings and related work.

From this, the evaluation team concluded that member turnover may be a contributor to the varying trends in role clarity and understanding across the three pilot sites and yet is unlikely to fully explain the trends.

Table 5: Rate of member turnover on each LCSP

	Pilot Z	Pilot Y	Pilot X
Trends in Role Clarity & Understanding (Between baseline and endpoint)	Improving	Declining	Improved then Declined
Total # of individuals on the LCSP (Between baseline and endpoint)	40	38	28
Total # of individuals who left the LCSP (Between baseline and endpoint)	10	10	4
Turnover Rate	25%	26%	14%

A second possible explanation is that the results reflect the response of different survey respondents at each timepoint. Again, the evaluation team believe this may be a contributor but is unlikely to fully explain the results. Only LCSP members who consented to participate in the evaluation could complete the survey. The majority of consents were given at baseline, suggesting that most survey respondents were the same at each timepoint. And as with the rates of membership turnover, the rates of new consents at each timepoint do not match the variation in role clarity trends across the three pilot sites.

Thirdly, the interim report identified enablers that influence role clarity and understanding. It is possible that these enablers are present to different degrees in each of the pilot sites. This could reflect natural storming and norming of the group[25] occurring across the LCSPs over the pilot lifecycle. Clear guidelines would help alleviate this situation. The indications at endpoint are that the coproduction and launch of a community safety plan also helps clarify roles, responsibilities and priorities locally.

The survey of LCSP members also asked respondents to what extent they were satisfied with their role in the LCSP:

    B.   Your role in the LCSP.

Figure 3: Members' satisfaction with their role on LCSPs
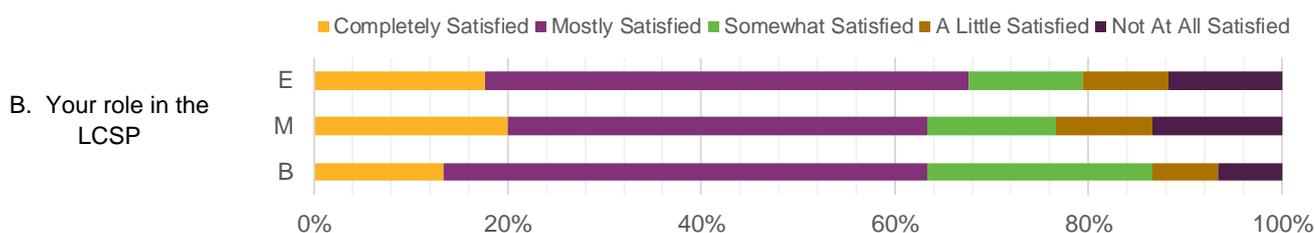
The results in Figure 3 above indicate that levels of role satisfaction amongst LCSP members have been relatively stable across the three timepoints of the evaluation. Roughly one-third of respondents have consistently rated themselves as '*somewhat, a little, or not at all satisfied*' with their role at each timepoint, compared to around two-thirds who consistently state they are '*completely or mostly satisfied*' with their role.

Again, these overall results hide differences at pilot-level (see Appendix 1, item 6.1.). The overall results are reasonably reflective of pilots X and Z. Between these sites, the lowest satisfaction levels were 63% of respondents were '*completely or mostly satisfied*', by pilot X at midpoint, while the highest was 100% of respondents '*completely or mostly satisfied*', by pilot Z at midpoint. In comparison for pilot Y, a majority of respondents were '*somewhat, a little or not at all satisfied*' with their role in the LCSP at all three timepoints.

Interview and focus group data from LCSP members has supported these survey findings at each timepoint, with some community participants in some pilot sites continuing to express dissatisfaction with their role.

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[25] Bruce W. Tuckman, 'Developmental Sequence in Small Groups', *Psychological Bulletin* 63, no. 6 (1965): 384–99, https://doi.org/10.1037/h0022100.

At midpoint, some community participants in pilot Y characterised their experience on the partnership using terms such as "ignored", "disappointed" and feeling "no respect to date" and had not yet experienced their LCSP as a 'partnership'. At endpoint, similar sentiments were again expressed by some community representatives.

These perceptions appear to be related to other findings discussed in more detail later. Namely, that in all three pilots there was at least some degree of questioning of the commitment of all members to the LCSPs goals and objectives, and to partnership working. In pilot Y, however, it tended to be the commitment to the principle of a community-led partnership that was questioned, particularly by community representatives, leading some to question their role and whether to continue in it.

Collectively, these findings could be interpreted as indicating two things. On one hand, LCSPs have the potential to strengthen the role of local communities in addressing local community safety issues through meaningful participation of community representatives on the partnerships. On the other hand, if sufficient numbers of community representatives feel under-valued and disrespected, this could potentially undermine the image, credibility and purpose of the partnerships. The findings suggest that ensuring that local community representatives experience their participation as meaningful and that their contributions matter and are taken seriously is a key learning and success determinant for future LCSPs.

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

 C. Service providers on the LCSP are represented by individuals at the right grade / level.

The item was added at endpoint in response to feedback in the baseline and interim reports about the importance of service providers being represented by individuals with the power to make real-time decisions, share information, commit resources, and take ownership of actions on behalf of their agency. In this respect, some participants at midpoint suggested that various agencies on their partnership were not represented by individuals at the right grade/level.

Figure 4: Members perceptions of the appropriateness of the grade at which service providers are represented on the LCSPs
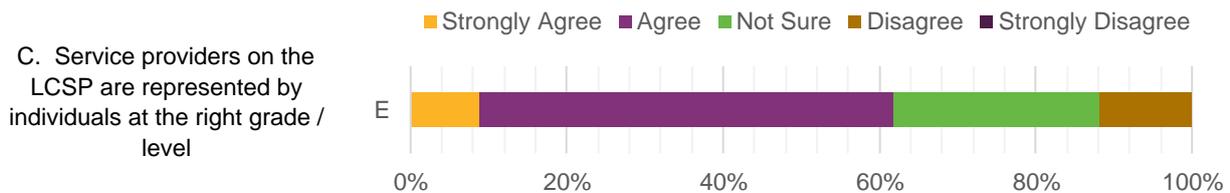
The results in Figure 4 above suggest that, overall, most respondents (62%) *agreed* service providers on their LCSP were represented at the right grade/level, compared to 26% who were *not sure* and 12% who *disagreed.*

When broken down by pilot site, the percentage of those in *agreement* with statement C is similar across the three pilots, ranging from 58% in pilot Y up to 64% in pilot Z. There is greater variation across the pilots in the proportion of respondents who disagree with statement C, ranging from 0% in pilot Z to 25% in pilot Y. However, overall, the results indicate that even within each LCSP a majority of respondents believe service providers on the LCSP are represented by individuals at the right grade/level.

While the survey results lend support to the service providers being represented at an appropriate level of decision-making power across the three pilots, some interviewees considered how this could be more challenging to achieve when the LCSPs are scaled up nationwide. Two challenges in particular were identified: one on a local level and one on a

regional or national level. The local level challenge relates to the 'crowded partnership landscape', in that if appropriate representatives are members of multiple committees in their local area how can this work be maximised, particularly in terms of meeting attendance, and engagement with the LCSP as well as other partnership structures that they may be involved in.

> *"If this was to be rolled out in every county then that would be an issue for [service provider]. It would certainly be an issue for [geographic area] to have a rep for all-, you know if there was to be one in [area 1], one in [area 2], one in [area 3], one in [area 4], for us to come up with 5 or 6 senior managers that could attend this volume of meetings and give it the commitment and involvement [needed], we would really struggle because there's not 5 or 6 of me waiting around to join these committees… [so] that would be a major resourcing issue for [service provider]. I could see us not getting to many meetings and there being issues arising that [service provider] aren't giving it the priority that it needs" [T3, FG-292].*

The quote above also hints towards a second challenge, on a regional and/or national level. As shown in Figure 5, many state agencies are not 'coterminous', meaning they do not share all the same geographical boundaries across the country.

The alignment of individual LCSPs geographic boundaries with the boundaries of the state agencies on their membership could result in the boundaries of an LCSP crossing multiple geographic divisions of some state agencies, or vice versa where a geographic division of a state agency partially crosses the boundaries of multiple LCSPs. In such cases, it could be challenging to ensure engagement or representation at the appropriate level if a representative is required to be a member of multiple LCSPs or if multiple representatives are needed from a state agency because the LCSP crosses multiple geographic boundaries. There are also potential opportunities in this sharing and overlap.

Figure 5: Variation in geographic boundaries of selected state agencies

An Garda Síochána Regions & Divisions	Local Authority Areas
4 regions and 19 divisions	31 local authorities

Tusla Regional and Local Areas	HSE Health Regions
6 regional areas and 17 local areas	6 health regions
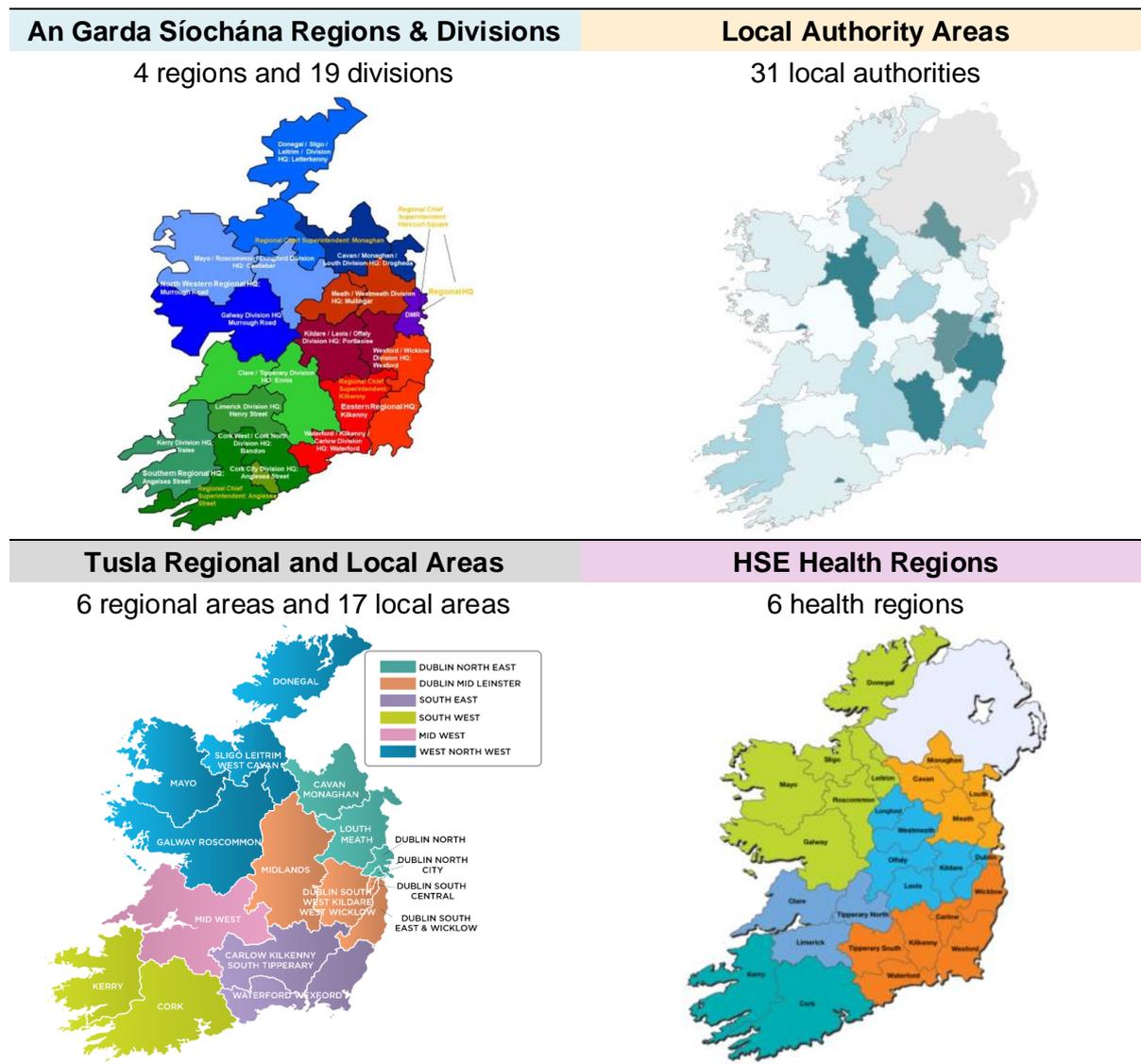
Leaders and leadership on the LCSPs

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

Formal and informal leaders were described as playing an important role in LCSPs, with the potential to contribute to both positive and negative conditions within a partnership. Attempts from independent Chairpersons to "empower" and share leadership opportunities with members were described, though it was not possible to say from the data available the extent to which informal leaders had emerged in each pilot site.

The survey showed variation across the pilot sites in levels of agreement with the statement 'LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment when LCSP members can work together to address community safety issues.'

At endpoint, topics other than 'leaders and leadership' were generally prioritised in interviews and focus groups, meaning the evaluation team relied on survey data for this topic at endpoint.

The survey of LCSP members asked respondents at baseline, midpoint and endpoint to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

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

Figure 6: Perceptions of LCSP leadership
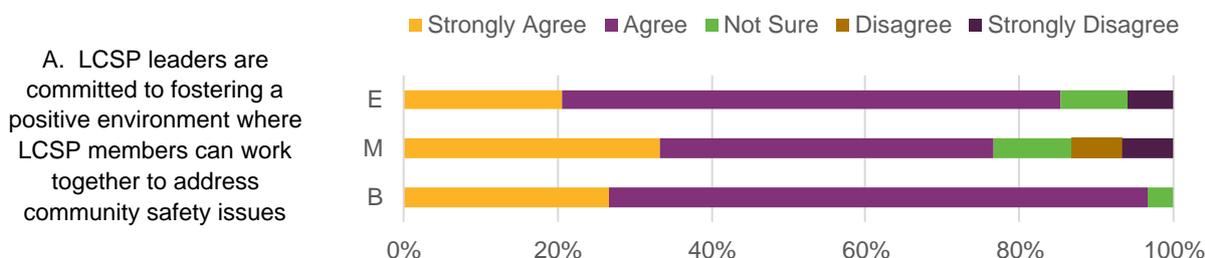
At all three timepoints, the majority of respondents *agreed* that LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment, though the trends indicate a small decline between baseline and midpoint before recovering somewhat between midpoint and endpoint.

As previously mentioned, the overall results obscured variation across some of the sites at midpoint. However, by endpoint, these differences were greatly reduced and the majority of respondents in all three pilot sites *agreed* with the statement, ranging from 75% in pilot Y to 100% in pilot X.

3.2 Partnership-Working in Practice 2: Engaging, relating and working together

Commitment to Partnership

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

The interim report described commitment from LCSP members and member organisations as an essential ingredient for a successful LCSP. However, in interviews and focus groups there were conflicting views about the levels of commitment amongst LCSP members: for some, the levels of commitment were seen as a strength and for others the levels of commitment were questioned.

Overall, survey data suggested there was a rise in the questioning of commitment to LCSPs and partnership-working at the midpoint compared to baseline. For example, commitment of statutory agencies to the LCSP was questioned in some sites and in others commitment to the principle of a community-led partnership.

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

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

Figure 7: Perceptions of LCSP member commitment to LCSPs
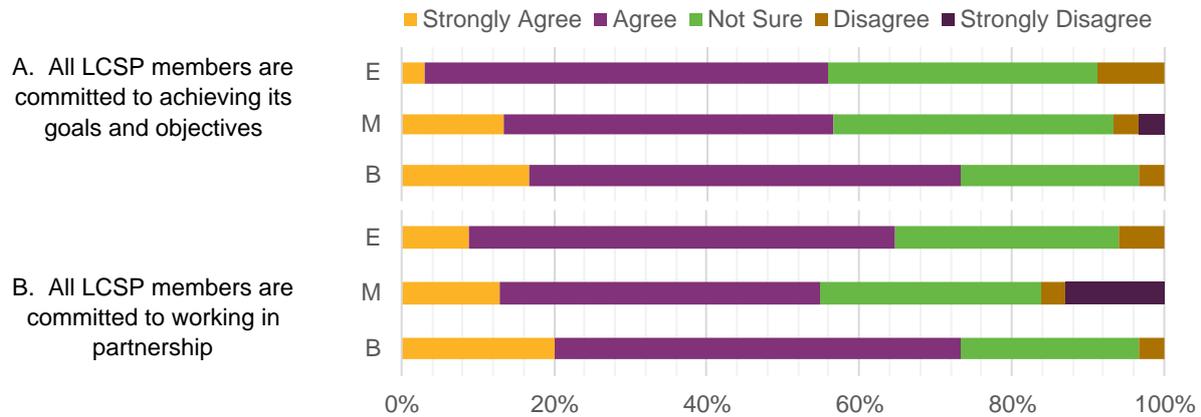
For both items, at all three timepoints, most respondents *agreed* that LCSP members are committed, and yet those in agreement was lower at endpoint compared to baseline: there was an 18% decline in those agreeing with item A (74% at baseline vs. 56% at endpoint) and 8% decline with item B (73% at baseline vs. 65% at endpoint), respectively.

When the survey results for item A are analysed by pilot site (see Appendix 1, items 2.5. and 2.6.), similar trends can be seen in each area. As with the overall results, fewer survey respondents in all three pilot sites *agreed* with this item at endpoint (64% in pilot Z, 63% in pilot X, and 42% in pilot Y) compared to baseline (73% in pilot Z, 75% in pilot X, and 71% in pilot Y).

There is also a notable difference in trends for item A across the pilot sites in that a majority of survey respondents agreed with these items in pilots Z and X at all three timepoints. This is compared to pilot Y which saw a majority of respondents '*agree*' with the item at baseline only.

The patterns for item B are largely similar, with the exception of pilot Y which achieved a majority of '*agree*' responses at endpoint (58%), albeit amongst a lower percentage of respondents than pilots Z (64%) and X (75%).

Overall, the patterns suggest that perceptions of commitment have improved since midpoint but are still lower than at baseline, for all three pilots. In pilot Z and X, most respondents appear to believe that members are committed to LCSPs, despite a significant minority who are not sure. In the third pilot site, views have been more mixed at both midpoint and endpoint.

In seeking to understand why some participants questioned commitment to the LCSPs, the qualitative data gathered at endpoint is largely similar to that at midpoint. That is, in pilot Y, the experience of some community participants led them to question the commitment to the principle of a community-led partnership.

In comparison, in pilots Z and X participants believed some of the statutory agencies need to engage more.

> *"Some state agencies have only started to engage with the partnership"*
> *[T3, sur-624].*

In addition, open-text survey data suggests that while most members appear to agree with the idea of partnership-working in principle, in practice "some are still slow to work collaboratively".

> *"Not all members of the LCSP pull together" [T3, sur-624].*

"Members also need to understand the role of LCSP and the way in which a joint approach is required to address issues" [T3, sur-624].

Respondents indicated several factors that can influence commitment (or perceived commitment) of some LCSP members. These factors include resourcing; competing priorities and agendas; and regular turnover in representatives for some stakeholder groups.

"While all members are committed, resources and other pressures can impact on their ability to deliver" [T3, sur-624].

"…the statutory representatives keep changing and only meeting quarterly means it is very hard to estimate the commitment of the other members" [T3, sur-624].

"While I do agree that all of the LCSP members are committed to achieving the goals and are working in partnership - the statutory members also have the agenda of their own organisations to work with and I feel sometimes that can be at odds with that of the residents" [T3, sur-624].

The challenge of ensuring good strong engagement in the LCSP and its work on the part of all representatives was a recurring theme in stakeholder interviews at end point.

Communication, trust, and cohesion: From conflict to camaraderie

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

Building trust and group cohesion was noted as a process that takes time, with challenges in this regard to be expected for newly formed partnerships as large and diverse as LCSPs.

The climate and cohesiveness of each partnership appeared to vary considerably. For example, in some pilots there were signs of conflict occurring between certain stakeholder groups, with some participants describing of a climate of "negativity" and 'us vs. them' dynamics within their partnership. Multiple factors were identified as contributing to such a climate or culture. These included perceptions of a lack of transparency, communication and opportunities to participate; social interactions that were perceived as controlling or lacking respect; and an absence of collectively agreed conflict management processes.

On the other hand, some pilot sites showed evidence of growing trust and camaraderie between its members, with opportunities for in-person, face-to-face, formal and informal social interactions identified as a powerful driver for trusting relationships. There were also indications that opportunities for *extended* periods of social interaction (i.e., longer periods than a typical LCSP meeting would provide) might]t be a way to expedite building trusting, cohesive partnerships. The field trips to the north of Ireland and the first national conference are examples of success stories in this regard.

A range of enablers to trusting, cohesive partnerships were also identified. Enablers included consistent attendance at LCSP meeting by members and having the "right people with the right mindset and personalities' on the partnership. This suggests that effective recruitment is an important success determinant for the LCSP.

Survey respondents were asked at baseline, midpoint and endpoint to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

A. There is good communication between LCSP members
B. People in the LCSP trust one another.

Figure 8: Perceptions of communication and trust between LCSP members
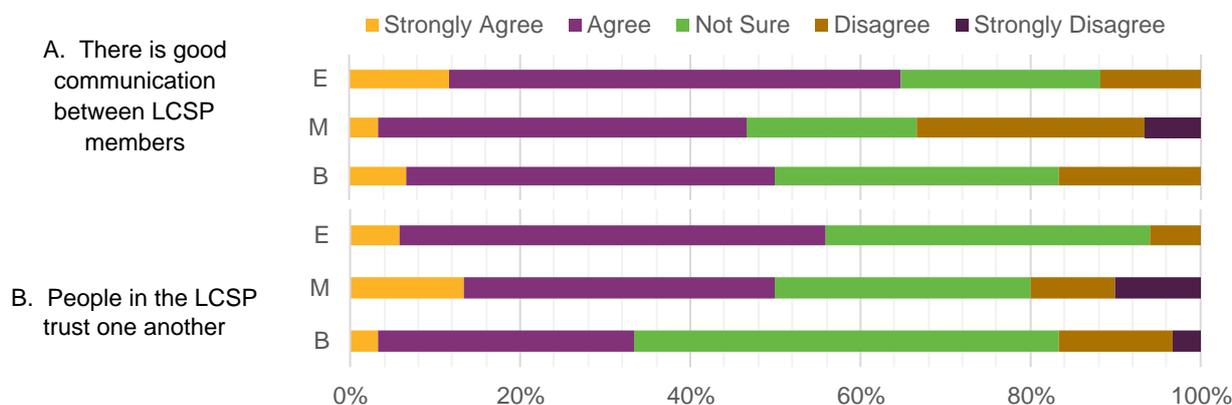
Overall, the survey results suggest that communication and trust between LCSP members have improved over time. The proportion of those in *agreement* rose by 19 percentage points for item A (46% at midpoint to 65% at endpoint) and 6 percentage points for item B (50% at midpoint to 65% at endpoint).

When the results are broken down by pilot site, the overall trends are largely reflective of local trends, though some variation in agreement with both items can be seen at the endpoint phase between the partnerships (see Appendix 1, items 3.4 and 3.5). For item A (communication), the amount of variation is relatively small at endpoint, ranging from 59% in *agreement* in pilot Y up to 71% in pilot Z. For item B (trust), the variation is greater, ranging from 41% *agreement* in pilot Y up to 64% in pilot Z.

Collectively, the survey results could be interpreted as showing that communication and trust between LCSP members are improving across the three sites, though some LCSP members still see room for improvement.

Meeting processes, participation, and collaboration: Returning to another source of tensions of trade-offs

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

Feedback from LCSP members indicated that even if LCSPs achieve good meeting attendance with fully committed LCSP members, that will not automatically lead to meaningful engagement in LCSPs. Similarly, when asked "how well are members working together?", the typical responses tended to be that the LCSP is "a work in progress", there's "still a long road to travel".

Given the relational aspect of partnership working this is not surprising and the learning is that it takes time to form an LCSP and get it up and running.

LCSPs were established during the Covid-19 pandemic when public health restrictions were still in place. This meant that in the LCSPs were forced to rely on virtual meetings for much of the baseline and midpoint periods. Over time, the partnerships moved more towards in-person meetings, which provided greater opportunities for members to socially interact, build relations and share ideas, thus improving how well members worked together. Yet, in-person meetings were not a panacea to improved meeting participation, as the challenge of encouraging "meaningful input" from all LCSP members was described even in sites that relied mainly on in-person meetings.

In interviews and focus groups, meeting processes were sometimes described as "procedural" in nature. The processes most typically relied upon appeared to have limited success in encouraging interaction and engagement in meetings beyond a small number "who are vocal". This led to a view amongst several participants that "maybe we need to look at structuring [LCSP meetings] a little bit differently", though there was uncertainty about how to do this with a large group of members.

To better understand this perspective and identify potential areas for improvement, more detailed analysis of LCSP meetings were carried out through observations of meetings and an analysis of LCSP meeting documents. The analysis identified a range of factors that influence meeting engagement and participation. The analysis concluded that when planning and facilitating an LCSP meeting, different considerations that need to be taken into account can conflict with each other. This meant trade-offs were associated with some of the main factors that could potentially increase meeting engagement.

For example, it was noted that larger meetings tended to have lower engagement. This implied that smaller meetings could improve engagement, but at the risk of reducing the representativeness, inclusivity and diversity of meeting attendees. Similarly, longer meetings held in-person, also appeared to have better engagement, but at the risk of reducing meeting attendance through the greater time and travel burdens imposed on members, many of whom already expressed limited capacity to attend meetings.

Finally, many of the enablers of strong commitment and engagement amongst LCSP members identified by participants, spoke to more general beliefs about the importance of having the 'right personalities' involved, and working together towards solutions. It also points to a need for induction and capacity building for members and skilful facilitation of meetings.

The findings at baseline and midpoint imply that active participation and collaboration amongst LCSP members cannot take place without adequate opportunities for these activities. At endpoint, a new item was added to the survey of LCSP members asking respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:
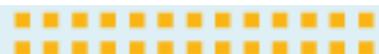
  A. There are adequate opportunities for LCSP members to collaboratively problem-solve community safety issues.

This item is a proxy-measure of the adequacy of opportunities for active participation and collaboration and was added to provide a quantitative data-point for one of the evaluation questions (question 2e).

Figure 9: Perceived adequacy of opportunities for collaborative problem-solving amongst LCSP members

A. There are adequate opportunities for LCSP members to collaboratively problem-solve community safety issues
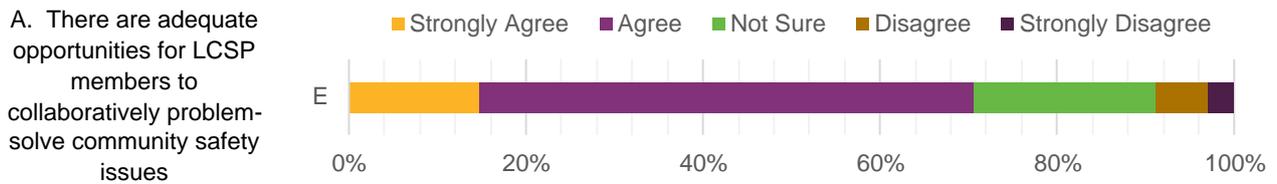
As seen in Figure 9, the results show a strong majority of respondents (71%) *agreed* that there are adequate opportunities for LCSP members to collaboratively problem-solve community safety issues.

The overall results hide some differences at the pilot-site level. For instance, respondents in two pilot sites showed strong *agreement* with item A, with 75% in pilot Y and 85% in pilot Z *agreeing* with the statement. However, the responses in pilot X were more mixed, with only 38% *agreeing* and 50% *not sure* if there are adequate opportunities on their LCSP for members to collaboratively problem-solve community safety issues.

Where the results of item A suggest that most respondents believe there are adequate *opportunities* for members to participate and collaborate in at least two pilot sites, two further items in the survey of LCSP members act as proxy-measures for respondents' perceptions of the *actual* levels of participation and collaboration amongst LCSP members. The items asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

  B. All LCSP members are actively involved in planning and setting priorities
  C. The members of the LCSP worked/are working together to develop the local community safety plan.[26]

Item B was asked at all three timepoints, while item C was asked only at midpoint and endpoint.[27]

Figure 10: Perceptions of members participation and collaboration in LCSPs

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[26] This item is phrased in both past and present tense because not all sites had completed their local community safety plan at the time of survey completion.

[27] Technically item C was asked at all three timepoints, however, none of the pilots were working on a community safety plan at the time of survey completion for baseline, so the baseline results have been removed due to irrelevance. Including the baseline results would not have changed the interpretation above.
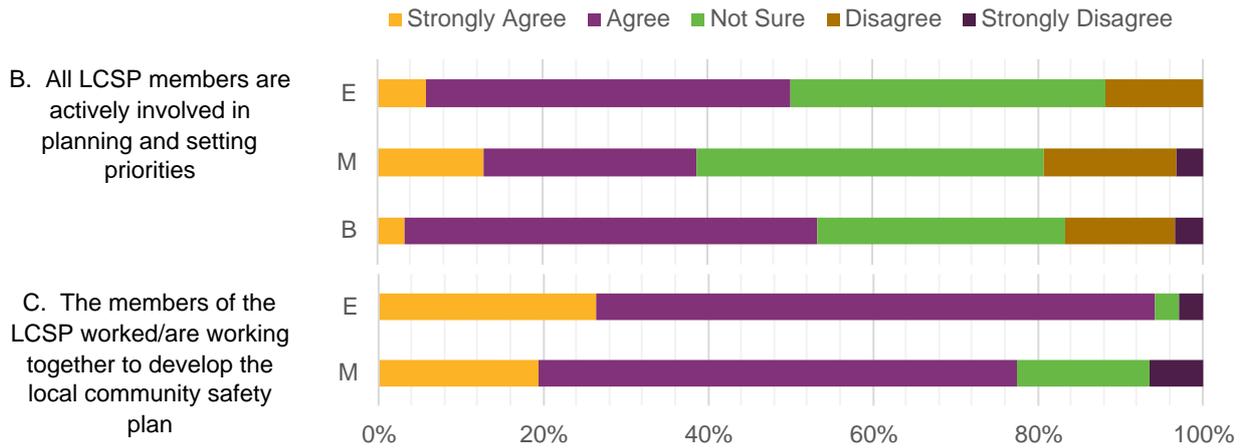
The results in Figure 10 above, indicate that participation (item B) and collaboration (item C) have improved between the midpoint and endpoint phases. When broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, items 3.3. and 5.3.), wide differences on both items between some of the pilot sites at midpoint had narrowed by the endpoint phase. All three pilots showed improvements for both items between midpoint and endpoint.

Figure 10 also shows there is variation in the levels of agreement between item B and item C. Namely, at endpoint, there is almost unanimous *agreement* (94%) with item C, compared to only 50% *agreement* with item B. These differences are also clearly evident at a pilot-site level. In the interim report, this was also noted and was explained by highlighting that item B, unlike item C, asks about *active* involvement, which sets a higher standard for participation compared to item C.

Collectively, the results indicate that both collaboration and participation have improved across the three LCSP over the lifetime of the pilot. There also continues to be room for improvement in the *active* participation of all LCSP members. The active engagement of **all** the statutory agencies was also noted as a challenge during stakeholder interviews.

Building on these items, the survey asked members at baseline, midpoint and endpoint to what extent they were satisfied with:

D. The way LCSP members work together.

Figure 11: Satisfaction amongst LCSP members with how they work together
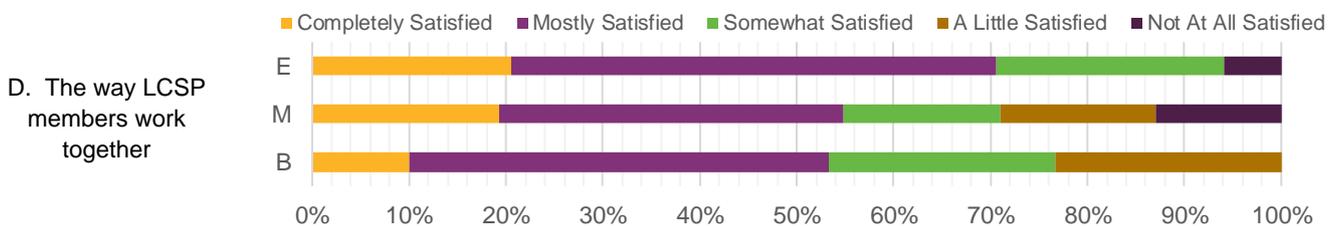
The results at endpoint indicate a considerable increase in satisfaction with the way LCSP members work together, compared to baseline and midpoint. At endpoint, 71% of respondents were '*completely or mostly satisfied*' for this item, compared to 54% at midpoint and 53% at baseline.

The overall results are reflected across the pilot sites (see Appendix 1, item 6.3) with all three showing improvements at endpoint compared to midpoint. The main difference between the pilot sites is that pilots Z and X appear to show significantly higher levels of satisfaction at endpoint (86% and 75% '*completely or mostly satisfied*', respectively) compared to pilot Y (50% '*completely or mostly satisfied*'), albeit pilot Y has shown gradual, consistent increases in those '*completely or mostly satisfied*' at each timepoint.

Overall, the data at endpoint support one of the main conclusions of the interim report. Namely, that while respondents in most pilots believed they worked together to develop their community safety plan, there may be challenges in generating and ensuring opportunities for more *active* participation of members. The survey results at endpoint suggest this situation is gradually improving across the three pilot sites. The results also suggest that there is an ongoing and continuous body of work required to facilitate partnership working.

The results indicate that building collaborative relationships and ways of working, and active participation on the LCSPs, is a gradual process that takes considerable time and purposeful effort. The interim report discusses at length factors that can help, hinder or potentially speed up the process of generating collaboration and meaningful engagement within LCSPs. Readers are encouraged to consult the interim report (pg. 48-56) for more insight on this.

Sharing information, resources, tasks and responsibilities

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

Information and resource-sharing were recognised by participants as key factors for an effective LCSP, and yet participants also tended to identify them as areas still in development with significant scope for improvement.

For instance, the evaluation team were uncertain about the extent of resource-sharing amongst LCSP members based on the available data and the survey of LCSP members revealed mixed-opinions about the adequacy of resource-sharing.

With information and data-sharing, the survey of LCSP members suggested a slight majority of respondents (54%) believed there was sufficient information-sharing, though this overall result masked large differences in perceptions at a pilot-site level. Moreover, there was a common belief across all three partnerships that the level and quality of data-sharing from An Garda Síochána (AGS) in particular had declined when compared with that of the JPCs. By endpoint an AGS Quarterly Reporting Template had been codesigned for application across the LCSPs. This is described as a living document that can be updated overtime.

The sharing of tasks and responsibilities amongst LCSP members was similarly seen as a work in progress. Compared to JPCs, there was evidence the responsibility for tasks were slowly spreading to a wider range of stakeholders. At the same time, the coordinators alongside a relatively small number of "really proactive members" appeared to be driving the majority of the work.

The interim report also outlined various barriers and enablers identified by participants to the sharing of resources, information, tasks and responsibilities.

The survey of LCSP members asked respondents, at midpoint and endpoint, to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

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

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

Figure 12: Perceptions of information, data and resource-sharing amongst LCSP members

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

B. LCSP members and organisations share resources to ensure the LCSP can do its work
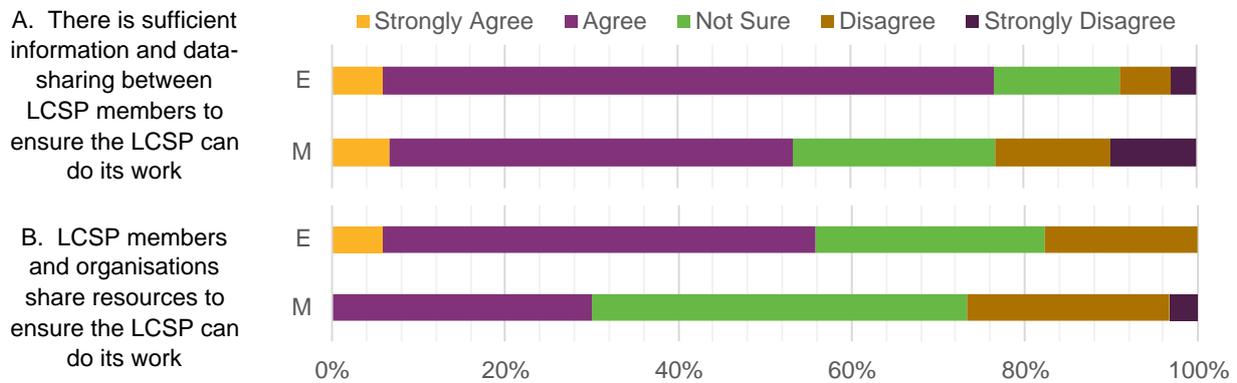
The results above show considerable improvements in LCSP members perceptions of information, data and resource-sharing in their LCSP. For instance, the proportion of respondents in *agreement* with the statements rose from 54% at midpoint to 77% at endpoint for item A (information and data-sharing), and from 30% to 56% for item B (resource-sharing).

When the results are broken-down by pilot site, the improvements between midpoint and endpoint appear to be driven by two pilot sites for both items. With item A (information and data-sharing) for example, while a majority of respondents in all three pilot sites *agreed* with the statement at endpoint (63% in pilot X, 75% in pilot Y and 86% in pilot Z), two pilots in particular showed large improvements since midpoint. *Agreement* with item A rose from 22% to 63% in pilot X and from 40% to 75% in pilot Y, while the results were largely steady for pilot Z (91% to 86%), between midpoint and endpoint, respectively. With item B (resource-sharing), two pilot sites again seen large improvements between midpoint and endpoint and a majority-*agreement* with the statement, rising from 11% to 63% in pilot X and 45% to 71% in pilot Y, respectively. In contrast, however, the item B results for pilot Y were steady and did not reach a majority *agreement*, going from 30% at midpoint to 33% at endpoint.

When the overall and pilot-level results are considered together, they show large improvements between midpoint and endpoint, across both items, in most pilot sites. The results also suggest that there may still be some room for the further development of resource-sharing between member organisations and the LCSPs.

The LCSP members survey also asked respondents, at midpoint and endpoint, to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

C. Tasks are distributed fairly between LCSP members.

Figure 13: Perceptions of the fairness of task distribution between LCSP members

C. Tasks are distributed fairly between LCSP members
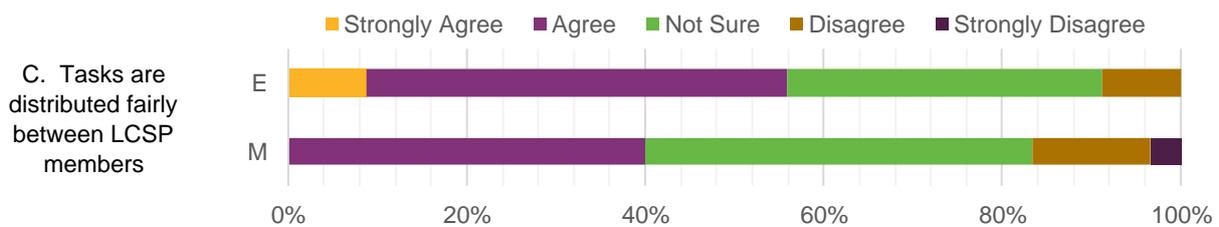
Overall, the results suggest improved perceptions amongst LCSP members, with 56% of respondents *agreeing* at endpoint that tasks are distributed fairly, compared to 40% at midpoint. As with item B (resource-sharing), however, the results could also be interpreted as suggesting

that there is still considerable room for further improvement in how fairly tasks are distributed between LCSP members.

The results at a pilot-level are similar to those at the overall-level. For example, the proportion of respondents *agreeing* that tasks are fairly distributed between LCSP members at endpoint ranged from 50% in pilot X to 58% in pilot Y. The improved perceptions were mainly seen in two pilot sites -- pilot X and pilot Y -- where *agreement* rose from 33% to 50% and 30% to 58%, respectively, between midpoint and endpoint. In contrast, the midpoint and endpoint results were steady in pilot Z, going from 55% *agreement* to 57%.

Collectively, the findings on the sharing of information, resources and tasks suggest that this is an area where LCSPs are continuing to develop and mature, with progress and learning continuing to be made on these aspects of partnership-working between the midpoint and endpoint phase.

3.3 Partnership-Working in Practice 3: Supporting and Resourcing LCSPs

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

In the Interim Report, this theme covered five sub-themes:

1. National governance and guidance
2. LCSP staff
3. LCSP funding
4. LCSP training and skills
5. Time and space in the LCSP.

The three pilot sites believed the Department of Justice was contactable and listened to their feedback. The *Terms of Reference* for each pilot made provision for a Sponsors Group comprised of Department of Justice officials and (sometimes) other high-level stakeholders to formally oversee and support the LCSP pilots. A Sponsors Group was operational for one of the three pilot sites during the early stages of the pilot. In October 2022, a second Sponsors group was established for the two pilot sites previously without this structure. This was a response to feedback from LCSP participants calling for more "regular structured interaction" between LCSPs and the Department of Justice.

National-level coordination was also a strong theme. At a local level, all three LCSPs appeared to be operating in a 'crowded partnership landscape' whereby several pre-existing partnership structures were reportedly working to address overlapping community issues. As these partnership-structures often come under the remit of different government departments, improved national-level coordination of the 'partnership landscape', as well as "more cross-departmental and whole-of-government involvement", were suggested as necessities to improve the context nationwide.

With regard to LCSP staffing, a consistent finding, across the entire pilot phase, is that the LCSP Coordinators are considered an essential resource. There was evidence they were "overworked", though much of their work is hidden and can easily go unnoticed. Amongst participants most familiar with the day-to-day workings of the role, there were consistent
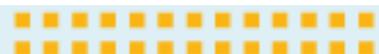
recommendations for full-time administrative support at the minimum for LCSP Coordinators to ensure the role is tenable long-term[28].

Funding was also considered an essential resource. There were a range of conflicting opinions about the adequacy of the funding levels for LCSPs, but general agreement that funding would likely need to increase for LCSPs over time as its workload increases and understanding of resourcing needs improves. All three LCSPs received additional funding through the Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF), though the majority of data collection at midpoint was completed by this point and it was not clear how that additional funding influenced people's perceptions.

The various skills, expertise and perspectives brought by such a broad range of stakeholders on the LCSPs were considered to be an important strength of the partnerships. Training needs were beginning to emerge at midpoint, including 'how to collaborate', 'how to problem-solve', and the 'roles and responsibilities of LCSP members'. The LCSP members survey suggested roughly 1-in-3 members identified the need for additional training and support for their role. However, limited capacity, motivation and funding to undertake training, as well as finding training to meet the specific needs of the partnerships, were all described as challenges.

Finally, on time and space in the LCSP, the "substantial voluntary commitment" required from LCSP members had become a major challenge for many, to the extent that it was contributing to limited meeting attendance and turnover in membership. The design and location of office space also emerged as important factors at midpoint. The offices of all three partnerships had varying characteristics, and different strengths and weaknesses. For example, street-facing offices in higher-density areas may potentially improve visibility, accessibility, and awareness of the LCSP for some of the local community, while offices located within a local authority building may help improve coordination and support from the local authority.

Staffing LCSPs

Following the findings of the interim report on the need for full-time administrative assistance for each Coordinator, the two LCSP pilots without an administrative assistant were both granted funding to recruit administrative support. This was welcomed by participants, who at endpoint reiterated the need for Coordinators to be supported.

> *"We have a brilliant [coordinator] but the workload is very heavy for one person" [T3, sur-624].*

> *"The Department recently announced funding for an additional admin resource which is very much welcomed" [T3, sur-624].*

The LCSP members survey asked respondents at midpoint and endpoint to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

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

Figure 14: Perceptions amongst LCSP members of the sufficiency of LCSP staffing

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[28] This finding was acknowledged, and additional administrative support was allocated, by the Department of Justice to each partnership since the Interim Report.

A. There is sufficient staffing to ensure the LCSP can do its work
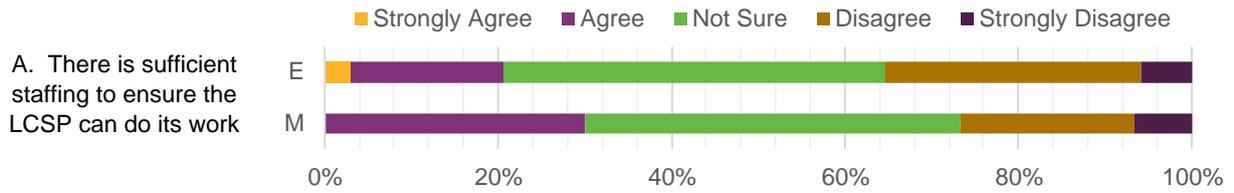
At the time the endpoint survey was completed, only one pilot site had part-time administrative support for its Coordinator, with the other two moving through the recruitment process at that stage. The evaluation team cannot say to what extent the recruitment of administrative support would have influenced the responses to item A in those two pilots.

With this in mind, the overall results show mixed views about the sufficiency of staffing for LCSPs. '*Not sure*' had the highest proportion of respondents at both midpoint (43%) and endpoint (44%), though the results also showed a higher proportion of respondents *disagreeing* at endpoint (35%) compared to midpoint (27%).

The overall results obscure differences in perception at a pilot-level. For instance, the proportion of respondents who *disagreed* that their LCSP had sufficient staffing actually outweighed those who were *not sure* in two pilot sites at endpoint (62% vs. 38% in pilot X, and 43% vs. 29% in pilot Z, respectively), one of which already had part-time administrative support for the Coordinator at the time of survey completion.

In the Interim Report, the mixed views about the sufficiency of staffing were explained by drawing on qualitative data sources which suggested that much of the day-to-day work of Coordinators was behind-the-scenes and could easily go unnoticed by most LCSP members. There is little, if any, data at endpoint that contradicts this conclusion, and in this context the endpoint survey results lend further support to the midpoint finding that Coordinators require full-time administrative support at the minimum.

Funding LCSPs

The LCSP members survey asked respondents at all three timepoints to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

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

Figure 15: Perceptions amongst LCSP members of the sufficiency of LCSP funding

B. There is sufficient funding to ensure that the LCSP can do its work
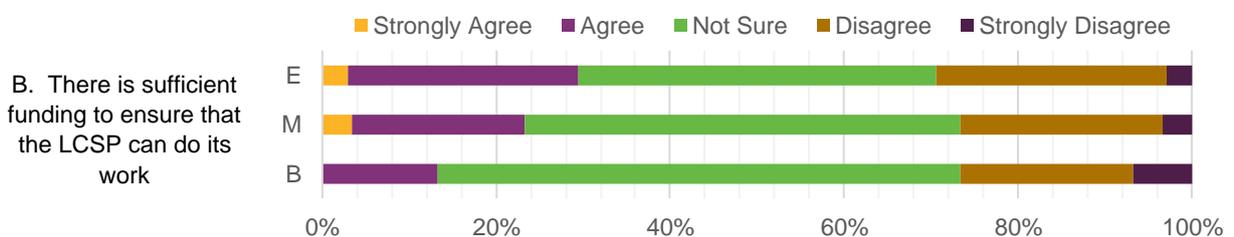
The overall results show that respondents have consistently reported mixed views about the sufficiency of funding for LCSPs across all three timepoints. '*Not sure*' has consistently had the most responses at each timepoint while also gradually declining. The proportion of respondents

agreeing that there is sufficient funding has gradually increased at each timepoint, and yet the proportion of those *agreeing* and *disagreeing* was equal at endpoint (29% each).

However, when the results are broken down by pilot site, the trends in responses to this question vary considerably across the three pilots. For example, at baseline, *not sure* had the highest proportion of responses in all three pilots (43% in pilot Y[29], 50% in pilot X, and 73% in pilot Z) while *agree* had the lowest proportion of responses (14% in pilot Y, 13% in pilot X, and 13% in pilot Z). However, by endpoint, only pilot Z had a clear majority (57%) of *not sure* responses. Pilot Y responses were evenly split between *agree*, *disagree* and *not sure* responses (33% each), while *disagree* had the highest proportion of responses in pilot X at endpoint (50%).

As was the case at baseline and midpoint, the endpoint survey results indicate different views amongst LCSP members, across the three pilots, about the sufficiency of LCSP funding.

Training and support for LCSP members

The LCSP members survey also asked respondents at all three timepoints to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

C. There is sufficient training and support available to LCSP members to help them carry out their role with the LCSP.

Figure 16: Perceptions amongst LCSP members of the sufficiency of training and supports available to them
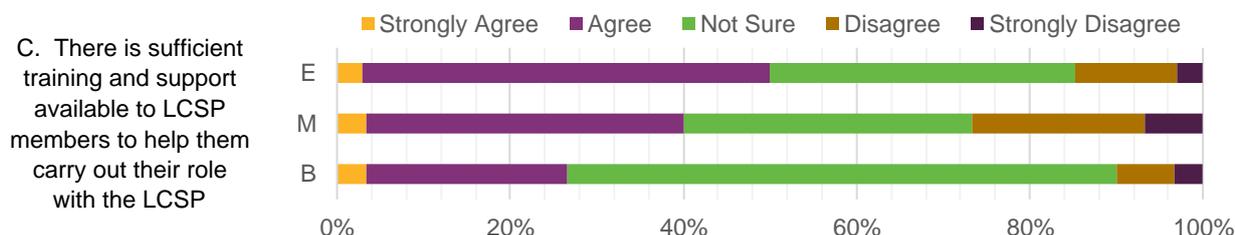
The results show a steady increase over time in the proportion of respondents *agreeing* that there is sufficient training and support available to LCSP members, rising from 26% at baseline to 50% by endpoint. The results also highlight that a large portion of LCSP members at each timepoint were either *not sure* or *disagreed* with whether there was enough training and support available to them.

The overall results hide variation across the pilot sites. Pilot Z, for example, has seen consistent and relatively large increases in the proportion of its respondents *agreeing* with this statement at each timepoint, rising from 27% at baseline to 54% at midpoint to 71% at endpoint. In comparison, in pilot X, *not sure* has consistently been the most popular response when asked if LCSP members have sufficient training and support, holding steady between 50% and 56% across the three timepoints. Finally, pilot Y started with a strong *not sure* response at baseline (86%), before having evenly split proportions of *agree* and *disagree* responses at both midpoint (40% each respectively) and endpoint (33% each respectively).

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[29] *Not Sure* had the joint highest response in pilot Y at baseline, equal to *disagree* which also had 43% of responses.

Collectively, the overall and pilot-level survey results indicate that the training and supports provided to LCSP members have met the needs of some but not all LCSP members. It also appears that a significant minority of LCSP members may still be unsure what training and supports are actually needed for an LCSP membership. This could suggest two things. First, that specific training needs will take time to emerge for many LCSP members, and secondly that LCSP members training needs could change over the lifetime of a partnership, requiring LCSPs and support structures that are responsive to the emerging needs of LCSP members.

The findings from interviews with national stakeholders and document analysis indicates that the support and guidance to the LCSPs strengthened over the course of the pilots. Officials from the Department of Justice met regularly with the Chairpersons and responded to questions arising as the pilot unfolded. The role of the two Sponsors' Groups, which met monthly, was also an important component of the governance structure, which responded to issues as they arose over the course of the pilot. There was also a series of joint engagement meetings involving the LCSPs, the AGS and the Department of Justice to discuss progress and draw out the learning as the pilot unfolded.

Each pilot site engaged in some level of capacity building and training over the course of the pilot. For example, the Longford site participated in Leadership Training, Dublin NIC visited Newry, Mourne Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership and some participated in open information events organised by the Policing Authority.
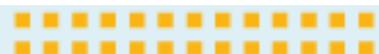
3.4 Partnership-working in Practice 4: Accountability and Decision-Making

Decision-Making

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

How and when decisions were made in the partnerships was, at times, either unclear to the evaluation team or seemed to depart from the processes stipulated in their *Terms of Reference*. A 'proposer/seconder' process (which requires only two people) seemed to be frequently used in all three pilots as a method of decision-making. The evaluation team concluded this may be an attempt to improve the efficiency of a large partnership, though it also risks unintentionally sidestepping the majority decision-making power community representatives are intended to hold. This did not necessarily mean a proposer/seconder process was inappropriate. Rather, the evaluation team suggest the partnerships consider the type of decisions the method is used for in order to strike a balance between efficiency and inclusivity. All efforts and skilled facilitation to arrive at consensus are a hallmark of good practice partnership working.

The findings indicate that most members felt part of decision-making and were satisfied with their influence in their LCSP, and yet there was also a growing belief that some have more power in decisions than others. When all data sources were considered together, the evaluation team concluded there was evidence of some level of unequal influence and power between LCSP members in all three partnerships.

Power differences emerged for two main reasons: (1) individual characteristics and differences between members, and (2) structural or process issues within a partnership:

1. Individual characteristics and differences tended to simply reflect differences in the personalities or backgrounds of members. For example, some members being more experienced, more confident and as a result more vocal in large committee-type meetings.
2. Structural and process issues were seen as features more inherent to the way a partnership functioned. For example, limited opportunities for decision-making, or poor communication and transparency about decisions.

This points to a need for capacity building for LCSP members as well as purposeful use of facilitative processes to bring all voices into the discussions.

Survey respondents were asked at baseline, midpoint and endpoint to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

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

Figure 17: Perceptions of decision-making amongst LCSP members
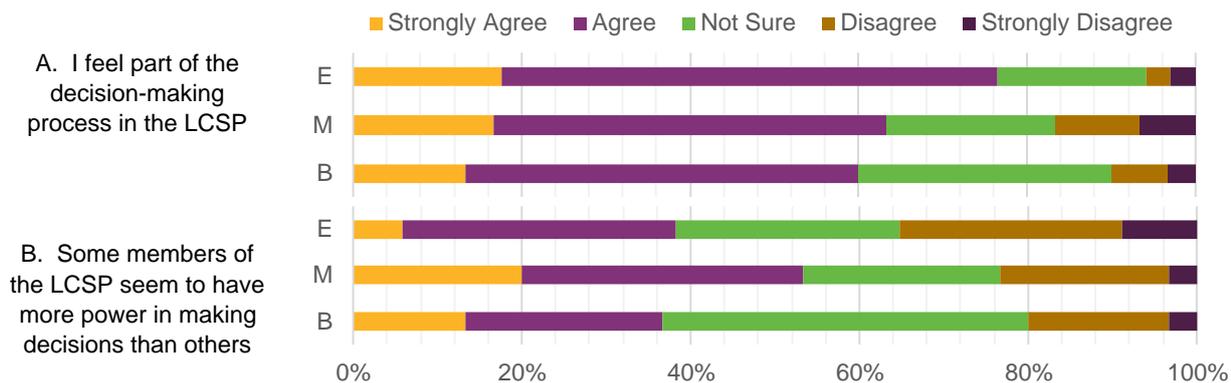
In addition, the survey also asked members at baseline, midpoint and endpoint 'to what extent are you satisfied with':

C. Your influence in the LCSP.

Figure 18: Satisfaction amongst LCSP members with their influence in LCSPs
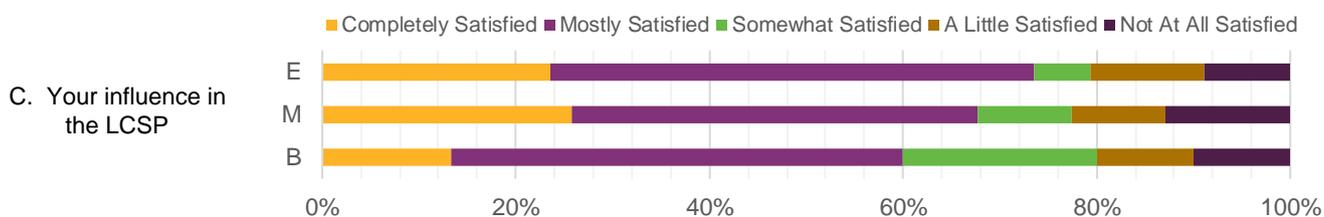
Figures 17 and 18 show that overall, there have been gradual increases at each time point in the proportion of respondents who felt part of the decision-making process (item A) and were satisfied with their influence in their pilot sites (item C). Those in *agreement* between baseline and endpoint rose from 60% to 77% for item A, and those that were '*completely or mostly satisfied*' rose from 60% to 74% for item C.

Views are mixed at endpoint on whether some members of the LCSP seem to have more power in making decisions than others (item B), with 38% *agreeing*, 36% *disagreeing* and 26% *not sure* that this is true. However, compared to baseline and midpoint, the endpoint results were trending in a positive direction.

When the results are broken down by pilot site, similarities and differences emerge. For instance, with items A and B, the endpoint results across the three pilot sites are largely similar. With item A, a majority of respondents (67% in pilot Y, 76% in pilot X, 86% in pilot Z) at endpoint *agreed* that they feel part of the decision-making in their LCSP, which aligns well with the overall results. With item B, views were mixed in all three pilot sites (33% vs. 41% in pilot Y, 50% vs. 38% in pilot X, and 36% vs. 28% in pilot Z, *agreed* vs. *disagreed* respectively) at endpoint on whether some members seem to have more power than others in decision-making, which again align reasonably well with the overall results.

The main difference between the three pilots arose with item C, on whether respondents were satisfied with their influence in their LCSP. In pilots Z and X, a majority of respondents were '*completely or mostly satisfied*' at all three evaluation timepoints, reaching 93% in pilot Z and 88% in pilot X at endpoint.

In pilot Y, the majority of respondents reported themselves as '*somewhat, a little or not at all satisfied*' at all three timepoints, despite improved results at endpoint where 58% of respondents

were '*somewhat, a little or not at all satisfied*'. As the qualitative data collection did not focus specifically on this topic at endpoint, it is difficult to say definitively why such a large difference between the pilots has persisted between the sites since the Interim Report. The available data suggests that, as was the case at midpoint, power differences in pilot Y were more likely to be reflective of larger structural and process issues within their partnership, and not just due to differences in the characteristics and mindsets of individual members.

The endpoint survey results largely support the findings and conclusions in the interim report. Namely, that most members feel part of decision-making and are relatively satisfied with their influence in their LCSP. There are also perceptions of varying degrees of unequal influence and power between LCSP members.

The results also indicate that this situation has improved since midpoint and that power differences between members are narrowing or balancing across the three pilots. It is possible that this is part of the process of forming and storming which is natural to group formation.[30] It also draws attention to the need for capacity building for members and use of skilled facilitation to support partnership working.

A fourth survey item of relevance to decision-making was added to the LCSP members survey at endpoint. It asked to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed that:

  D. The LCSP makes decisions in a timely way.

Figure 19: Perceptions amongst LCSP members of the timeliness of decision-making
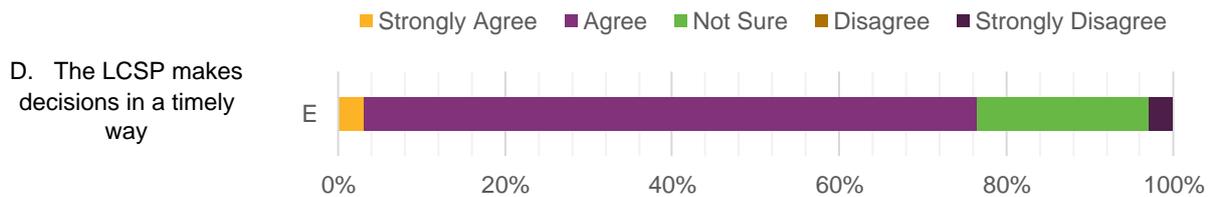
This survey item was added in response to feedback from participants at midpoint which identified several barriers to timely decision-making. These barriers included too long a gap between LCSP meetings (roughly 3 months) and inconsistent meeting attendance from some members. Related to this was a tension and trade-off identified by the evaluation team in the way LCSPs were operating, whereby there appeared to be a desire for more frequent LCSP meetings to improve partnership efficiency on the one hand, but limited capacity amongst many members to actually attend more frequent meetings on the other hand.

Despite these barriers, tensions and trade-offs, the overall results for item D indicate that most LCSP members (77%) *agree* that their LCSP makes decisions in a timely way. The results within each pilot site are also largely in line with the overall results, with those in *agreement* ranging from 63% in pilot X to 86% in pilot Z.

A potential implication of these results is that more frequent meetings may not be necessary to improve partnership efficiency in terms of the timeliness of decision-making. However, the feedback at midpoint also suggested that timeliness of decision-making is only one of several

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[30] The concept of Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing (FSNP) describes the four stages of psychological development that a team or group goes through as they work on a project (Tuckman, 1965). Teams move through each stage as they overcome challenges, learn to work together and eventually focus on accomplishing a shared goal.

factors that feed into decisions about meeting frequency. Other factors include providing opportunities for members to build relations, share information, problem-solve community safety issues, drive actions of the partnership and build momentum.

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

Accountability: "Something you have to handle with great care"

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

Accountability was not explicitly explored as a theme in the baseline and midpoint phases of the evaluation. Nevertheless, mechanisms to improve the accountability of LCSP members and transparency of LCSPs were identified at both evaluation phases. These included, for example:

- Developing standardised agenda and meeting minutes that record decisions, decision-making processes, actions, action owners, and whether these are followed up from meeting to meeting.
- Collaboratively developing LCSP plans and activities, identifying lead agencies for each action, monitoring implementation progress, and implementing mechanisms for progress to be reported back to the wider partnership.
- Communicating and making publicly available information about an LCSPs activities.

The selection process for the chairperson was another area where the theme of accountability emerged. It was not a theme of discussion in all partnerships, but where it did emerge, participants typically questioned whether the accountability of the role could be enhanced by electing a chairperson from within the membership of the LCSP rather than selecting a chairperson who is independent of the membership. As all three LCSP pilots had independent chairpersons, it was not possible to assess the impact of an independent chairperson versus an elected chairperson on perceptions of accountability.

A new item was added to the LCSP members survey at endpoint asking to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed that:

A. The LCSP is effective at holding individuals on the partnership accountable.

Figure 20: Perceptions amongst LCSP members of the LCSPs effectiveness at holding members accountable
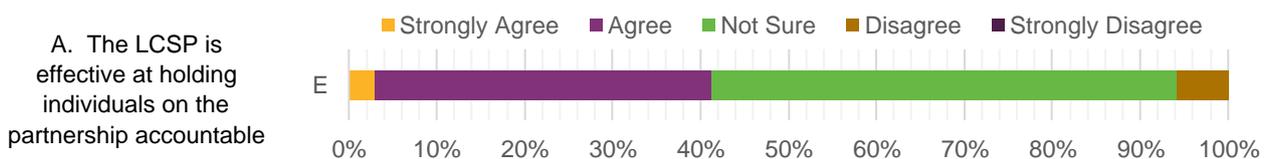
As can be seen in Figure 20 above, the overall results suggest that a majority of respondents (53%) were *not sure* if their LCSP is effective at holding individuals on the partnership accountable, compared to 41% of respondents who *agreed* with the statement.

When broken down by pilot site, there is considerable variation in the proportion of respondents who *agree* with the statement, ranging from 13% in pilot X up to 57% in pilot Z. At the same time,

many respondents in each area were also *not sure* if their LCSP was effective at holding individuals on the partnership accountable, ranging from 43% in pilot Z up to 75% in pilot X.

Two additional survey items were added at endpoint, asking members to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

B. The LCSP has made services on the partnership more transparent about the actions (or lack of actions) they have taken to improve community safety

C. The LCSP has made services on the partnership more accountable for the actions (or lack of actions) they have taken to improve community safety.

The results are reported in more detail in Appendix 1 (see items 7.14 and 7.15). They are slightly more positive than the results of item A, yet still closely align with them. Namely, there is considerable variation in the results across the three pilots. Overall, the results indicate close to half of respondents either *disagreed* or were *not sure* if their LCSP improved the transparency (44%) or accountability (53%) of the services on their partnership.

Feedback gathered through interviews and focus groups suggest that accountability "takes an awful lot of work" and was a "difficult" aspect of partnership-working that members and staff had grappled with throughout the evaluation.

The analysis identified at least seven different considerations which appeared to factor in to how the partnerships managed accountability. Firstly, ensuring accountability was typically seen as a desirable and necessary function of LCSPs, which often arose in instances of consistently poor engagement, data provision, or delivery of actions.

> *"I think there should be accountability... for organisations which endlessly fail to send representatives to meetings or don't respond to correspondence at the leadership level" [T3, int-050].*

It was not always easy to distinguish, however, where accountability lies between the individual representative and their agency, which complicated how and towards whom accountability strategies should be targeted.

Box 2: Provisions in the Terms of Reference for the LCSP pilots relevant to accountability and transparency

With the exception of the following provision -- "Service providers will be accountable to the community in fulfilling the agreed actions identified in the Local Community Safety Plan" -- there are no provisions in the *Terms of Reference* for each LCSP that are explicitly intended to ensure accountability and transparency.

However, many provisions could be seen as indirectly or implicitly intended to improve accountability and transparency. These include:

- Providing a forum for local residents and community groups to monitor, engage with and critique the actions (or lack of actions) of service providers
- Holding 4 or more LCSP meetings a year, of which at least one must be open to the public
- Making publicly available a report of an LCSP meeting that is held in private
- Giving the Chairperson authority to request the resignation and replacement of a member who misses 3 consecutive meetings
- Issuing public updates on the activities of the LCSP every 3 months
- Making decisions on the basis of the consensus of members or majority vote
- Maintaining a register of interests for members to declare any potential conflicts of interest
- Engaging with the relevant Sponsors Group, which provides national-level oversight of the pilots.

> *"In terms of accountability… is it the organisation accountability or the individual members accountability? They are two different things and sometimes they are hard to differentiate… Some people you have a great working relationship with, there is no problem sharing things… Does that mean the [agency] is 100% accountable for everything? No, it does not. So, that's something that's separate …" [T3, int-800].*

Secondly, LCSPs were in a pilot phase and were learning through experience. The pilots had some guidance relevant to accountability in their *Terms of Reference*, but most of this was not explicitly intended to promote accountability and was scattered throughout various parts of the *Terms of Reference* rather than providing a clear, coherent set of guidelines (see Box 2). In practice, this gave considerable flexibility to each LCSP to develop their own processes and norms for promoting accountability. It also created uncertainty for some participants about the role, powers and mechanisms available to LCSP leaders and members on this issue.

> *"One of the areas… that needs to be clarified in a greater way is the role of the Chairperson in terms of holding people to account… what can [the Chairperson] do when it [an action assigned to an agency] is not delivered?... In many cases they don't have the resources, so it's about saying "well hold on, you said you were going to do it, why didn't you do it?". Now whether that's overstepping the role of the Chairperson or whether it's an expectation on the Chairperson to absolutely crack the whip?" [T3, int-865].*

Thirdly, member organisations often have other pressures outside of the LCSPs as well as their own internal accountability structures to adhere to. Both of these can sometimes come into conflict with the work and objectives of the LCSPs and mitigate any pressure LCSPs may be able to apply through their own accountability mechanisms.

> *"I think we have to take cognisance of the other pressures that are on the agencies. We're not their bosses. They have other accountability structures that they have to report into" [T3, int-322].*

A fourth consideration relates to the reference in the quote above: "we're not their bosses". The *Terms of Reference* for each pilot tasks the Chairpersons with "providing leadership and direction" and ensuring "active participation" and "active engagement" from LCSP members. However, the power and authority of Chairpersons to enforce active participation and engagement was questioned, with one participant describing the role as "influence without authority".

Fifthly, a core aim of the LCSPs is "to improve multi-agency collaboration" and confrontational or punitive approaches to ensuring accountability were not believed to fit with the spirit of collaboration.

> *"I don't think it would be constitutional to denounce individuals or to visit punishments on them at the level of a consultative group like this… the [LCSP] concept is really to promote interagency cooperation and community understanding and support" [T3, int-050].*

"We want to facilitate and make it work without being too much [about] 'lashing the whip' or too much of the 'stick' as opposed to the 'carrot'" [T3, int-865].

Sixthly, a consistent theme throughout the evaluation has been the importance of trusting, respectful relationships, for a well-functioning partnership. The LCSPs were still learning how best to ensure accountability whilst also keeping relationships intact.

Seventhly, and closely related to the two previous points, there was no legal obligation on agencies to engage with the LCSPs during the pilot phase. Rather, engagement was voluntary and, in theory, more delicate than engagement which is obligated by law, due to its greater dependence on goodwill and positive relationships. As one participant put it, "the holding of people to account is something you have to handle with great care".

With these seven considerations in mind, the broad approaches to promoting accountability were remarkably similar across the three partnerships. In particular, two main strategies appear to have dominated: one at a partnership level and one at a national level.

At a partnership-level, the approach to accountability was described as largely relationship-based. That is, if certain members or member organisations were not believed to be meeting expectations in some way, LCSP leaders tried mainly to manage accountability through "personal interactions", often in 1-to-1 meetings. This relational approach leveraged the trust and positive relationships that had been built up through previous interactions, and tried to improve engagement by further strengthening relationships, identifying opportunities to collaborate for mutual benefit, and problem-solving issues that may be contributing to poor engagement.

"For me, it's about winning hearts and minds and trying to get people to cooperate with us rather than holding them accountable for what they haven't done" [T3, int-322].

"What [we] have had to do to try and get stuff moving on is to arrange individual meetings. So I would have had a 1-to-1 meeting with [agency A] to discuss some of the issues that [agency B] were having -- so have that initially- and then bring them together" [T3, int-800].

After some time, if the relational approach to accountability did not have the desired effect, LCSP leaders eventually communicated their concerns up to a national level, to seek assistance from the Department of Justice or Sponsors Groups who could apply or facilitate pressure on LCSP representatives.

"From an engagement perspective… we had challenges with two agencies and we went to the Department [of Justice] about it and they raised it and since then it has definitely improved here in [pilot site]. But it goes back to a point that I made earlier, a lot of this relies on personal contacts and personal relationships and the trust that's built up between the Coordinator and the individual agencies. So going out and meeting on a 1-to-1 basis with them and exploring what the opportunities are and how we can work

together… I think at the end of the day this comes down to building relationships" [T3, int-826].

While a relational approach coupled with the escalation of concerns to the Department of Justice appeared to be the main ways of promoting accountability amongst LCSP members, they were not the only ways. Data from interviews and focus groups, as well as the observations of LCSP meetings at midpoint, provided evidence of "robust engagements" and "robust questioning" between LCSP members, on occasion.

"At out last meeting… [agency representative] gave a presentation and there was quite robust questioning to [agency] around X, Y and Z, which afterwards the person who gave the presentation was not particularly comfortable and not particularly happy with the robustness of the questioning. So that's what I'm saying, trying to keep everyone happy is sometimes difficult" [T3, int-800].

A common tread across several strategies was promoting accountability through transparency. For example, strategies to enhance transparency and by extension accountability, included:

- The development and publication of local community safety plans with responsible agencies identified for each action
- Developing monitoring tools to track the implementation of actions by responsible agencies
- Opening LCSP meetings to the public at least once a year to provide local communities with an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the work of the LCSP
- Facilitating the attendance of news media at LCSP meetings.

"This year we're going to try have one event whereby we engage with the community and that will be our mechanism for telling them at least what we're doing and seeing so that we get any feedback from them" [T3, int-322].
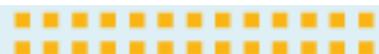
3.5 Community Engagement and Community Safety

Approaches to, and perceptions of, community engagement

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

There is a strong emphasis on community engagement in the Department of Justice's *Community Safety Policy Paper* and the *Terms of Reference* of each LCSP. Community engagement and involvement are central to the LCSP model and will be an important feature in the implementation of the national rollout.

Early community engagement efforts were severely hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic during the baseline phase, however by the end of midpoint data collection, all three pilot sites appeared to have had a "big escalation in community engagement". Various engagement strategies were observed at midpoint, such as holding large-scale public consultations to inform the development of a community safety plan, communicating with the public through social media channels, and organising and attending community events to respond to safety concerns and/or build relations with local residents and stakeholders.

The specific approaches and their sequencing varied across the pilot sites. Three local level factors appeared to be particularly influential in guiding each LCSPs specific approach to community engagement. These were (1) the size, geography and population density of an LCSPs local area, (2) the availability, design and location of an LCSP office, and (3) the approach to developing a local community safety plan. Collectively, these factors suggest that there is no 'one-size fits all' approach for LCSPs to engage with local communities. Rather, the appropriateness and feasibility of certain community engagement approaches will vary according to the stage of development, local context and capacities of each LCSP.

Survey results suggested that the perceptions of LCSP members about the quality of communication and engagement between their LCSP and local communities varied across the pilot sites. However, the evaluation team did not conclude these results were indicative of the actual objective quality of community engagements. Other data sources suggested other factors contributed to members perceptions of the quality of community engagement, such as the extent to which they were aware of, felt part of and approved of their LCSPs community engagement approach and believed it to be successful.

Participants also identified a wide range of barriers and enablers to LCSPs engaging with local communities, with feedback consistently emphasising the importance of building and nurturing relationships and leveraging pre-existing connections when engaging communities.

The survey of LCSP members asked respondents, at each time point, to what extend they agreed or disagreed that:

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

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

A. There is good communication and engagement between the LCSP and local communities in this area.
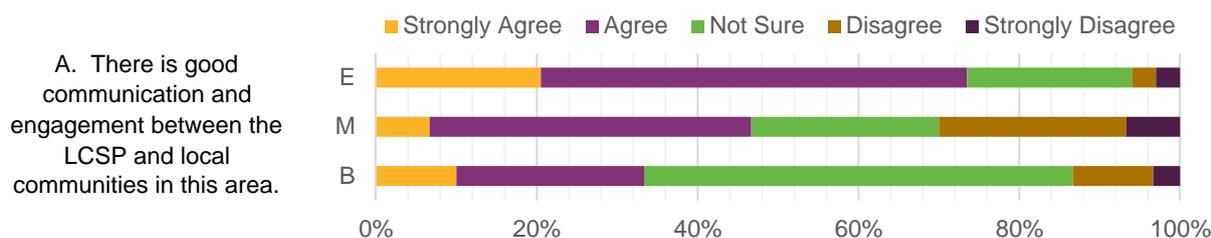
Overall, the results show consistent increases in the proportion of respondents in *agreement* with item A at each timepoint. And while views about the quality of communication and engagement between the LCSPs and local communities were relatively mixed at baseline and midpoint, a clear majority of respondents (74%) *agreed* there was good communication and engagement by endpoint.

When the endpoint results are broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, item 3.8), some interesting patterns emerge. In pilot Z, a dramatic increase in the proportion of those *agreeing* with item A can be seen between baseline and midpoint, rising from 27% to 82% (at endpoint, the high level of *agreement* was maintained at 79% at endpoint). In pilot Y, a similarly dramatic increase can be seen with item A between midpoint and endpoint, rising from 20% to 92% agreement. In pilot X, however, changes in the level of agreement were relatively small and gradual. Nor did pilot X reach a majority of *agree* responses to item A at any timepoint, ranging from 26% at baseline to 38% at endpoint.

There are indications that conducting formal large-scale public consultations, to inform the development of a community safety plan, is a significant influencing factor on perceptions of the quality of communication and engagement with local communities. For example, the large jump in positive perceptions in pilots Z and Y both occurred after the completion of formal large-scale public consultation processes (see Interim Report, pg. 77-80 for more detail on the public consultation processes).

With pilot X on the other hand, while there were public consultations held to inform its community safety plan, the evaluation team do not have evidence to suggest it was of the same size or scale as that of pilots Z and Y. This could explain why pilot X has not seen the large jump in members' perceptions of the quality of communication and engagement with local communities.

Approaches to and perceptions of community safety

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

Guidance in the *Terms of Reference* of each LCSP directs the partnerships and its members towards an approach to community safety with four key aspects: (1) be strategic, (2) coordinate and collaborate, (3) respond to community safety concerns that are identified and prioritised by local communities themselves, and (4) empower communities through the co-design and co-delivery of solutions.

On aspect (1), *being strategic*, all pilot sites were working to develop a community safety plan, with Longford LCSP having officially launched their plan. Many members in Longford saw the plan as "the highlight" of their partnership at that time. After analysing the *Longford Community Safety Plan (2022-2024)* the evaluation team concluded that it had set a foundation for improved multi-agency collaboration when compared to the *Longford JPC Strategic Plan (2016-2022)* by better sharing responsibilities for community safety actions across a wider range of stakeholders. As such, it was

said to confirm 'proof of concept' of LCSPs in relation to planning more holistic, multi-agency responses to community safety issues. And yet several participants from across the pilots also stressed that "the plan should not be the endgame", that success of the LCSPs would ultimately depend on the actions taken to improve safety. To this extent, the importance of achieving "quick wins" early and regularly, coupled with timely and visible responses to community concerns, was believed to be important to increase perceptions of progress, generate buy-in and gradually embed the LCSPs in communities.

On aspect (2), *coordinating and collaborating*, while there were some early examples of multi-agency collaborations across the three pilots by the end of midpoint, by and large the majority of the workload of LCSPs appeared to be resting primarily on LCSP staff and a relatively small number of "really proactive members". This was related to broader challenges across the partnerships in generating, or ensuring opportunities for, the active participation of all LCSP members. Limitations in information and data-sharing amongst LCSP members and member organisations were also noted.

On aspect (3), *responding to community safety concerns that were identified and prioritised by local communities themselves*, all LCSPs were engaging with local communities using various methods to understand community safety needs and priorities. The timing of when each LCSP started to progress community safety initiatives varied across the three pilot sites, however, this aspect of LCSPs was gradually growing and all had started responding to community safety concerns before publishing a community safety plan. And yet, there was considerable variation between the pilot sites in LCSP members levels of satisfaction with the actions their partnership had taken by the midpoint phase to address community safety. While a majority were satisfied in most pilots, the data also suggested that perceived delays or slowness in the delivery of actions can lead to frustration and a perceived lack of progress amongst members.

Finally, on aspect (4), *empowering communities through the co-design and co-delivery of solutions*, data on this aspect was relatively thin. The data available suggested that while there were examples of co-designed and co-delivered community safety responses, there were several challenges to fully meeting this aspect. These included, for example, the extent to which LCSPs had actually begun delivering interventions by midpoint, which varied considerably across the three pilots. When interventions had started to be delivered, difficulties generating and/or providing adequate opportunities for community members to participate in co-designing and co-delivering interventions were noted. Furthermore, some participants expressed a belief that local community residents may be unable to take responsibility for the co-delivery of tasks related to service delivery, seeing this instead as the domain of statutory and community agencies for the vast majority of tasks.

Community Safety Plans

By the end of the two-year lifecycle of the pilot, all three partnerships had successfully developed and launched their local community safety plans (CSPs). Two partnerships had launched their plans before endpoint data collection (pilot Z roughly 8-9 months before and pilot Y roughly 2-3 months before). The third partnership was in the process of developing their plan and subsequently launched it after the vast majority of data collection had ended.

Putting the 'local community' into 'local community safety plans'

Given that two partnerships (pilots Y and Z) had launched plans by the time the endpoint survey was administered, a suite of new items were added to the survey of LCSP members. These

items asked respondents in these two partnerships about their perceptions and satisfaction with their LCSPs community safety plan.

To start, the first set of survey items examined the role of local communities in the community safety plans of pilots Y and Z. Specifically, respondents were asked at endpoint to what extent they *agreed* or *disagreed* that:

- A. There was sufficient engagement with the local communities in this area when developing the local community safety plan.
- B. The local community safety plan reflects the concerns and priorities of the local community.
- C. People from the local community are involved in the implementation of the local community safety plan.

Figure 22: Perceptions amongst LCSP members in two pilot sites of the role of local communities in local community safety plans

A. There was sufficient engagement with the local communities in this area when developing the local community safety plan.

B. The local community safety plan reflects the concerns and priorities of the local community.

C. People from the local community are involved in the implementation of the local community safety plan.
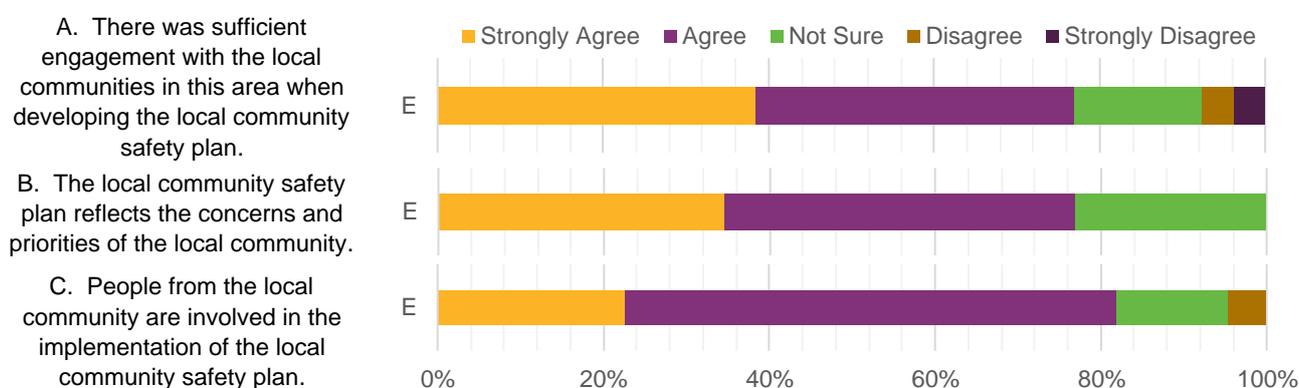
The overall results indicate the majority of respondents *agree* that there was sufficient engagement with local communities when developing their safety plans (item A, 76%); that their safety plans reflect local community concerns and priorities (item B, 77%); and that local community people are involved in implementing their safety plans (item C, 82%).

When the results for items A, B and C are broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, items 5.2, 5.1 and 5.6, respectively), some interesting patterns emerge. A majority of respondents in both pilot sites *agreed* with all three items, though the proportion of respondents who *agreed* was greater in pilot Z for all three items, ranging from 79% for item B up to 92% for item C. In comparison, the proportion of respondents in pilot Y who *agreed* with the three items ranged from 67% for items A and C up to 75% for item B.

Nevertheless, in terms of the development of the local community safety plans, the results indicate that most respondents in pilots Z and Y believe local communities were sufficiently engaged during the development of the plans and that the plans reflect local community concerns and priorities. As with Figure 21 on the quality of communications and engagement between LCSPs and local communities, it is likely that the large-scale public consultations conducted in both pilots has contributed to the positive perceptions of LCSP members, perhaps by increasing their greater confidence in the quality of community engagement and plan development processes. Furthermore, the results also suggest LCSP members believe that their LCSP is having some success in involving people from local communities in the co-delivery of actions from their community safety plan. The review of the CSPs confirms that the involvement of all stakeholders is central to the implementation of each plan.

Development of local community safety plans

Regarding the development of the local community safety plans, one item on this in the survey (about whether LCSP members were working/had worked together to develop the plan) was discussed earlier in the findings (see Figure 10). The results indicate almost unanimous *agreement* (94%) across the three sites that members had worked/are working together to develop their community safety plan.

Having developed and launched their community safety plans before the endpoint survey was administered, respondents in pilots Y and Z were asked at endpoint to what extent they were satisfied with:

   D.   The LCSPs plans for addressing community safety.

Figure 23: Satisfaction amongst LCSP members in two pilot sites with their LCSP's community safety plan

Overall, the results suggest a majority of members are '*completely or mostly satisfied*' with their LCSPs community safety plans (77%). Collectively, the survey results could be interpreted as showing that communication and trust between LCSP members are improving across the three sites, though some LCSP members still see room for improvement.

When the results are broken down by pilot site, there are considerable differences in the levels of satisfaction. For example, in pilot Z, responses were overwhelmingly positive with 100% of the respondents reporting themselves as '*completely or mostly satisfied*' with their community safety plan. In pilot Y views were a lot more mixed, with 50% of pilot Y respondents reported themselves as '*completely or mostly satisfied*' with their LCSPs community safety plan.

Early implementation of local community safety plans

Respondents in pilots Y and Z were also asked at endpoint to what extent they agreed or disagreed that:

   E.   LCSP members take responsibility for implementing actions in the local community safety plan relevant to them/their organisation.
   F.   The members of the LCSP worked/are working together to implement the local community safety plan.
   G.   Implementation of the local community safety plan is going to plan.
   H.   There are adequate processes in place to track the implementation of the local community safety plan.

Pilot X had not launched its plan at the time the endpoint survey was conducted and is not included in the results in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24: Perceptions at endpoint amongst LCSP members in two pilot sites of the early implementation and monitoring of their local community safety plans

E. LCSP members take responsibility for implementing actions in the local community safety plan relevant to them / their organisation

F. The members of the LCSP worked / are working together to implement the local community safety plan

G. Implementation of the local community safety plan is going to plan

H. There are adequate processes in place to track the implementation of the local community safety plan
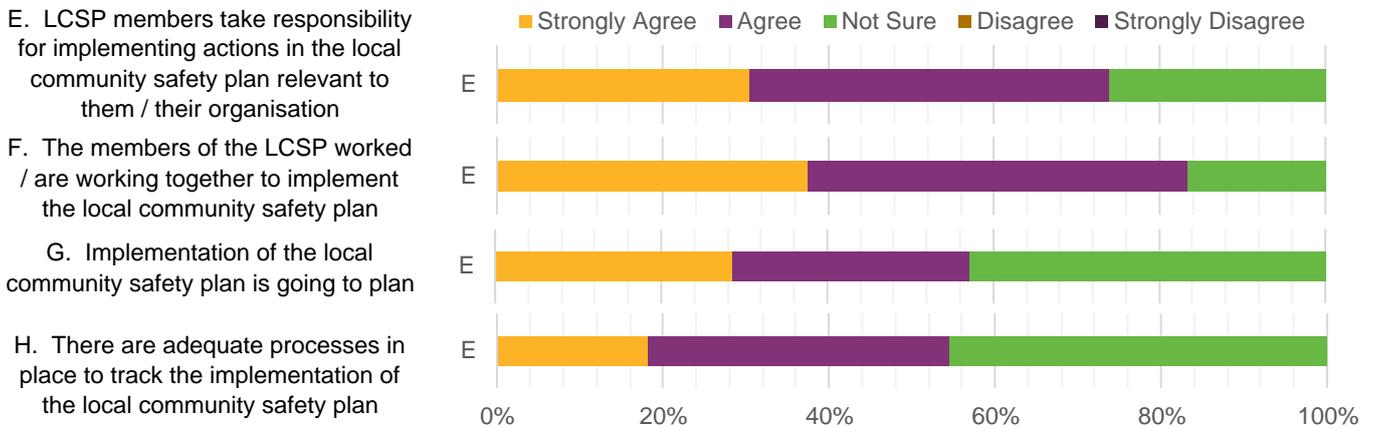
The overall results suggest that a majority of respondents *agreed* with the above statements for items A (73%), B (83%), C (57%), and D (55%). It is also notable that no respondents *disagreed* with any of the statements above, though a relatively large minority were *not sure* whether the implementation of their plan was going to plan (item C, 43%) or whether there were adequate processes in place to track implementation (item D, 45%).

When the results are broken down by pilot site (Appendix 1, items 5.8, 5.5, 5.7 and 5.4, respectively), considerable differences can be seen. In pilot Z, for example, there was consistently high levels of *agreement* with all four items, ranging from 82% agreement with item D up to 100% agreement with item B. In pilot Y, the levels of agreement varied considerably. A majority of respondents *agreed* that LCSP members take responsibility for implementing relevant actions in the plan (item A, 54%) and are working together to implement the community safety plan (item B, 63%). However, relatively large majority of respondents were also *not sure* when responding to item C (80%) and item D (73%).

Open-text survey data suggest some respondents in pilot Y believed it was too early to comment on the implementation of their safety plan, which may account for some of the differences in perceptions on items E-H between the two pilot sites.

Building on items E-H, the LCSP members survey also asked respondents at endpoint to what extent they were satisfied with:

I. The way the LCSP is implementing its plans for addressing community safety.

Figure 25: Satisfaction amongst LCSP members in two pilot sites with the implementation of their LCSP's local community safety plan

I. The way the LCSP is implementing its plans for addressing community safety
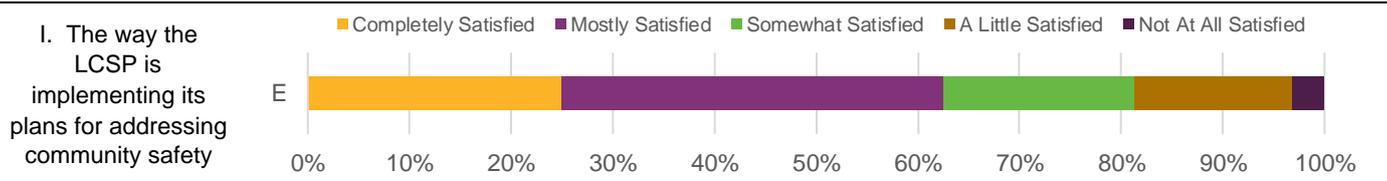
Overall, the results suggest that most members (63%) are '*completely or mostly satisfied*' with the way their LCSP is implementing its plans for community safety. The majority of members are '*completely or mostly satisfied*' with their LCSP's community safety plans (77%).

However, when the results are broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, item 6.6), significant differences can be seen. For instance, 93% of pilot Z respondents were '*completely or mostly satisfied*', compared to 36% of pilot Y respondents. Based on responses to items E-H, it may be reasonable to assume that it was again too early for some respondents in pilot Y to express high levels satisfaction with the implementation of their community safety plan.

Ideas and actions to improve community safety

The survey of LCSP members asked respondents at midpoint and endpoint to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that:

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

Figure 26: Perceptions of the similarity of ideas amongst LCSP members for resolving community safety concerns

J. The LCSP members share similar ideas about how to address the concerns of the local community.
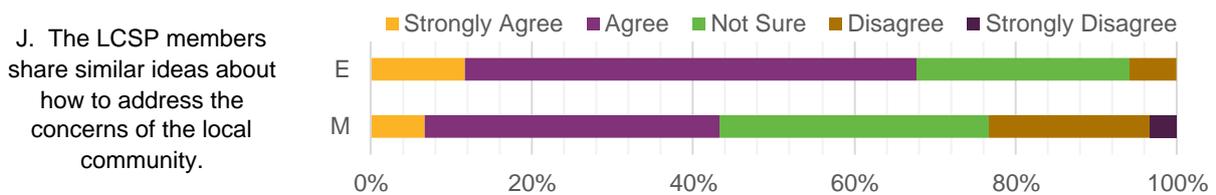
The results at midpoint suggested a divergence of views. By endpoint the results suggest a coming together of ideas amongst LCSP members about how to address the safety concerns of the local community. While several factors may have contributed to these results, the evaluation team concluded that the co production, development and launch of collectively agreed community safety plans played an important role.

The evidence and analysis leading to this conclusion are discussed further in Box 3 below.

There are several possible implications of these results. As noted in the interim report, low levels of agreement with item J are not necessarily a negative. It could be perceived as reflective of a greater diversity of ideas and perspectives, which may be beneficial for understanding complex challenges and creating innovative solutions [31]. At the same time, LCSPs are expected to take actions to improve community safety and decisions about those actions are expected to be decided by either the consensus or majority vote of members, as specified in the ToR of each pilot site. If the divergence of views between members is to such an extent that it stifles an LCSPs ability to make decisions and take action, then it could become problematic. Furthermore, item J could be seen as an indicator of the extent to which LCSP members have achieved a shared vision for their partnership, which the literature suggests is an important enabler for

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[31] Dennis P Rosenbaum, 'Evaluating Multi-Agency Anti-Crime Partnerships: Theory, Design and Measurement Issues', *Crime Prevention Studies* 14 (2002): 171–225.

effective collaborations [32]. Collectively, these considerations imply that there is a balance to be struck between the diversity and similarity of ideas that LCSP members share.

Box 3: Possible explanations for variations in the perceived extent to which LCSP members share similar ideas about how to address community safety

At midpoint, 44% of respondents '*agreed*', 33% were '*not sure*' and 23% '*disagreed*' with item J. The evaluation team interpreted this divergence in views as being somewhat expected given the diversity of the representatives on the LCSPs who could bring with them a diversity of ideas. When the results were broken down by pilot site, however, there was considerable variation across the pilots in these results, suggesting 'diverse representation' was unlikely to fully explain them. Some qualitative data suggested that two other factors could be contributing to variations at a pilot site level at midpoint in the perceived similarity of ideas about how to address the concerns of the local community.

Firstly, in some sites, wider concerns amongst community representatives about the commitment of their LCSP to the principle of a community-led partnership might also have contributed to differences between some members in the perceived role of the local community in resolving community safety concerns.

Secondly, when looking across all three pilots, there appeared to be differing perspectives about when and what kind of interventions should be pursued in the lifecycle of a partnership. Some participants advocated developing a robust community safety plan first, with others preferring to start with achieving 'quick wins'. In addition, some participants believed that prevention and early intervention initiatives and action focusing on the root causes of crime should be a strong focus of LCSPs, with others believing that a short-to-medium term focus on smaller practical interventions would be more beneficial for improving people's day-to-day lives.

At endpoint, the results suggest that LCSP members were moving towards a shared vision of how to address the concerns of the local community. For instance, at endpoint, 68% of respondents '*agreed*' with item J, compared to 26% who were '*not sure*' and 6% who '*disagreed*'.

A reasonable assumption is that on a partnership as broad and diverse as LCSPs, members may start out with very different ideas about how to address community safety and over time begin to converge towards a similar or shared set of ideas. This happens through the process of discussing the specific issues, problems and the merits of different solutions and responses to local community safety priorities.

When the results are broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, item 3.9.), this assumption does not seem to hold true. While a growing proportion of respondents *agreed* with item J in two pilots (63% up to 79%, and 30% up to 83%, for pilots Z and Y, respectively, at midpoint and endpoint), '*not sure*' had the highest and a growing proportion of responses in pilot X between midpoint and endpoint (44% up to 63%). Having a diverse membership, different perceptions about the role of local communities in resolving community safety concerns, and different beliefs about when and what kind of interventions to pursue may have helped explain variations in the midpoint results. However, they could not fully explain the results for item J between midpoint and endpoint.

In seeking to understand the change in results between midpoint and endpoint results, turnover in membership was examined as one potential contributor. This was based on the assumption that a

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[32] Berry et al., 'The Effectiveness of Partnership Working in a Crime and Disorder Context: A Rapid Evidence Assessment'; Paul Mattessich and Kirsten Johnson, *Collaboration: What Makes It Work*, 3rd ed. (New York: Fieldstone Alliance, 2018).

higher-level of churn could mean more people with different ideas coming in and out of the partnership. However, the two pilots with the highest-level of turnover (see Box 1) also had higher levels of *agreement* that LCSP members share similar ideas about how to address local community concerns.

The most plausible explanation seems to be linked to publishing a community safety plan agreed upon by all members. Pilot Z had agreed and published its community safety plan during the midpoint survey and had significantly higher levels of agreement at midpoint than pilots X and Y. Pilot Y agreed and published its plan after midpoint but before endpoint data collection and subsequently seen a large increase in *agreement* at endpoint. Pilot X was still developing its plan during the endpoint survey, seen a small drop in levels of *agreement* and had considerably lower levels of *agreement* at endpoint than pilots Z and Y.

The precise mechanism through which the co production of a community safety plan would lead members to share similar ideas about how to address local community safety concerns is not directly addressed in the data. However, one hypothesis is that, if actions in response to identified community safety concerns have been discussed and agreed by all (or most) members on a partnership, then members will experience a shared sense of their approach and response to community safety concerns.

The survey of LCSP members also asked respondents in all three pilots at midpoint and endpoint to what extent they were satisfied with:

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

Figure 27: Members' satisfaction with community safety actions of their LCSP
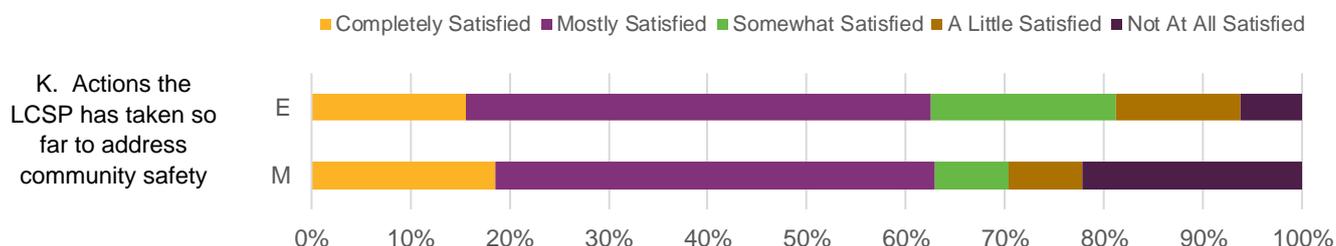
The overall results indicate a slight improvement in satisfaction levels with item K between midpoint and endpoint. The same majority of respondents (63%) were '*completely or mostly satisfied*' at midpoint and endpoint with the actions their LCSP has taken so far to address community safety. The proportion of respondents who were '*somewhat, a little or not at all satisfied*' also remained the same at both timepoints, though fewer respondents were '*not at all satisfied*', falling from 22% at midpoint to 6% at endpoint.

The overall results hide differences between some pilot sites (see Appendix 1, item 6.5). In pilot Z, for example, almost all respondents were '*completely or mostly satisfied*' with item K at both midpoint (91%) and endpoint (92%). Pilot X and Y respondents had considerably more mixed views. 43% of respondents in pilot X, and 41% in pilot Y, were '*completely or mostly satisfied*' at endpoint. In pilot X, this was a decline of 24 percentage points from midpoint, while in pilot Y it was an 11 percentage point increase.

The qualitative data from open-text survey responses align with these survey findings. It also suggests a common desire in all three pilot sites for more actions, or actions on a wider scale, to be taken to improve community safety. Resourcing of the LCSPs was regularly noted as an important factor in this regard.

"There have been a number of very good initiatives but we need to roll these out in other areas but resources do not allow for this. The main drawback is this not [being] able to roll out things in multiple areas" [T3, sur-624].

"Not enough practical/tangible evidence of new safety initiatives that are promoting additional safety" [T3, sur-624].

3.6 Perceptions of the benefits, drawbacks, added value and outcomes of LCSPs

Perceptions of benefits, drawbacks and added value

> ### *Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings*
>
> The perceived benefits and drawbacks for members of participating in LCSPs were alluded to at various points throughout the Baseline and Interim reports.
>
> At baseline, participants noted that LCSPs shared some similarities with other existing partnership structures in Ireland and identified several areas where it was hoped LCSPs could bring added value over these existing structures. These were: (1) capturing a more authentic and representative community voice; (2) being "more proactive in the community", to "stop the talking shop and get things done"; (3) planning and delivering responses that are genuinely community driven; and (4) planning and delivering more holistic responses to community safety.

The LCSP members survey asked respondents, at midpoint and endpoint, in all three pilot sites, to:

A. Please name the main benefits and/or drawbacks you have experienced through your participation in the LCSP so far.

A variety of benefits and drawbacks were reported (see Appendix 1, item 6.7.). The most consistently reported benefits in all three pilot sites at midpoint and endpoint were related to multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnership working.

The specific aspects of multi-stakeholder collaboration that were reported to be beneficial for members varied slightly between pilot sites and included:

- improved networking and engagement with a broad mix of stakeholders
- sharing information, ideas, experiences and workload; and
- working collectively to address local community safety concerns.

Other identified benefits tended to be site specific and included an acknowledgement and recognition of the voices of members in pilot Z; more positive community engagement in pilot X; or an improved understanding amongst some stakeholders in pilot Y of how they can help their local communities.

The main drawbacks varied slightly by pilot site, and typically revolved around: a perceived lack of capacity and resources for LCSPs; perceptions of poor engagement, either from some stakeholders with the LCSP or on the part of the LCSP towards certain stakeholders.

Other more site-specific drawbacks included the challenge of adapting to new ways of collaborating for some stakeholders in pilot Z; the significant increase in workload the LCSPs have brought in pilot X for some members; and perceptions that the process is moving too slow in pilot Y.

Having noted the benefits and drawbacks experienced through participating on the LCSP so far, respondents to the LCSP members survey were then asked at midpoint and endpoint in all three pilot sites:

> B. So far, how have the benefits of participating in the LCSP compared with the drawbacks for you?

Figure 28: Perceived weight of the benefits and drawbacks of participating in the LCSPs for LCSP members

B. So far, how have the benefits of participating in the LCSP compared with the drawbacks for you?
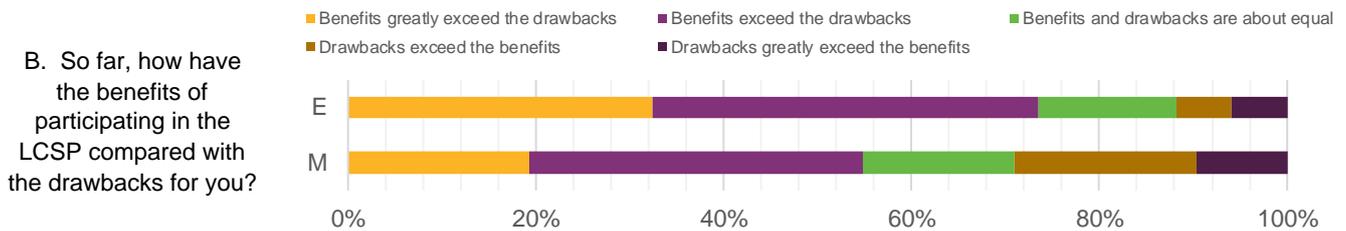
The overall results suggest that just over half (54%) of the respondents at midpoint believed the '*benefits (greatly) exceed the drawbacks*' of participating in LCSPs, with a relatively large minority (29%) believing the '*drawbacks (greatly) exceed the benefits.*'

At endpoint, these results had improved considerably, rising to 73% of respondents who believed the '*benefits (greatly) exceed the drawbacks*' of participating in LCSPs, compared to (12%) who believed the '*drawbacks (greatly) exceed the benefits.*'

When broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, item 6.9.) interesting similarities and differences emerge. For instance, notable similarities are that between midpoint and endpoint all three pilots seen increasing proportions of respondents who believed that the '*benefits (greatly) exceed the drawbacks*' of participating in LCSPs;[33] decreasing proportions of those who believed the '*drawbacks (greatly) exceed the benefits*';[34] and all three had a majority of respondents believe the '*benefits (greatly) exceed the drawbacks*' of participating in LCSPs at endpoint.

On the other hand, the results also indicate a relatively large minority of respondents in pilots X (37%) and Y (42%) did not think the benefits outweighed the drawbacks at endpoint,[35] compared to pilot Z (7%).

The LCSP members survey also asked respondents at endpoint in all three pilot sites if:

> A. Overall, based on your experience so far, do you believe your LCSP brings added value in the management of local community safety issues compared to other existing arrangements?

---

[33] Rising from 82% to 93%; 55% to 63%; and 27% to 58%, between midpoint and endpoint, in pilots Z, X and Y, respectively.

[34] Falling from 9% to 0%; 22% to 13%; and 54% to 25%, between midpoint and endpoint, in pilots X and Y, respectively.

[35] This refers to respondents who believed the drawbacks were equal to or greater than the benefits.

Figure 29: Perceptions amongst LCSP members on whether LCSPs bring added value in the management of local community safety issues

A. Overall, based on your experience so far, do you believe your LCSP brings added value in the management of local community safety issues compared to other existing arrangements?
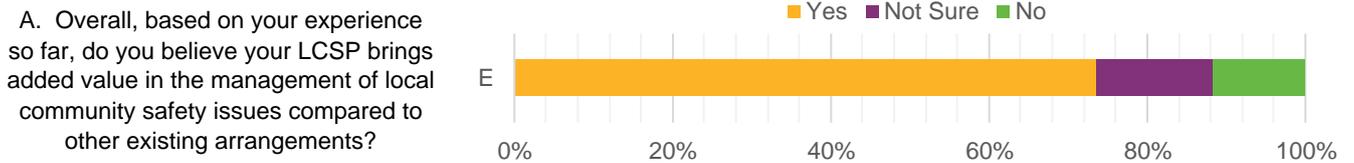
Overall, the majority of respondents (74%) believe their LCSP brings added value in the management of local community safety issues compared to other existing arrangements. When broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, item 6.9), some variation can be seen between the pilot sites and yet a majority of respondents in all three pilots believed their LCSP added value, ranging from 63% of respondents in pilot X to 86% in pilot Z.

The LCSP members survey then asked respondents to what extent they believed their LCSP added value (if any) in the specific areas participants at baseline had hoped LCSPs could add value. Namely, in:

B. Capturing a more authentic and representative community voice
C. Being 'proactive' and 'getting things done in the community'; being more than a 'talking shop'
D. Planning and delivering community-driven responses to local community safety issues
E. Planning and delivering more holistic responses to community safety.

Figure 30: Perceptions amongst LCSP members on extent to which LCSPs add value in specific aspects of managing local community safety issues

B. Capturing a more authentic and representative community voice

C. Being 'proactive' and 'getting things done in the community'; being more than a 'talking shop'

D. Planning and delivering community-driven responses to local community safety issues

E. Planning and delivering more holistic responses to community safety
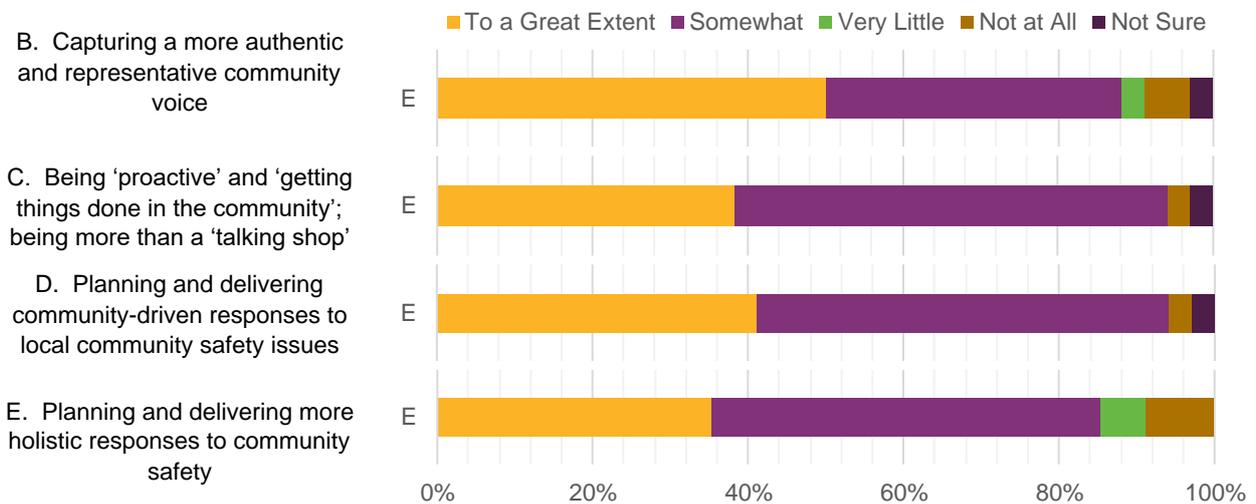
An overwhelming majority of respondents believed that LCSPs added value, either '*to a great extent or somewhat*', on all four items, ranging from 85% for item E up to 94% for items C and D.

While the overall results hide some variations in the results at pilot level (see Appendix 1, items 6.10.1. - 6.10.4.), the majority of respondents in all three pilot sites believed their LCSP added value '*to a great extent or somewhat*' for all four items. For example, in pilot Z, 100% of respondents believed their LCSP added value '*to a great extent or somewhat*' on all four items. In fact, '*to a great extent*' was the majority response for all four items. In comparison, in pilot Y the proportion of respondents who believed their LCSP added value '*to a great extent or*

somewhat' ranged from 58% on item E up to 88% for items C and D. The results in pilot X tended to occupy a middle-ground between pilots Z and Y.

In summary, results from the LCSP members' survey indicate that a large majority of members believe their LCSP adds value to the management of community safety issues compared to other existing arrangements. Moreover, members in all LCSPs could identify benefits and drawbacks to their participation in LCSPs, with a large majority believing the benefits outweighed the drawbacks by endpoint. These results suggest the benefits of community-focused, collaborative-working are being felt amongst most members and are likely growing over time.

However, it cannot be assumed that the benefits of collaborative-working will automatically outweigh any potential drawbacks. For a period of time, the LCSP member survey results suggested that a majority of respondents in some pilot sites actually believed the drawbacks of their participation exceeded the benefits. Such situations are unlikely to be sustainable over a long period of time as they could act as a driver of poor engagement and high-turnover and could seriously threaten the functioning of a partnership. It cannot be assumed that the benefits of collaborative-working will automatically outweigh any potential drawbacks. In essence collaborative working requires time, work and attention.

It is "a marathon, not a sprint": Perceptions of outcomes by the endpoint of the pilot

Summary of Baseline and Midpoint findings

"The local community safety partnership is a marathon, not a sprint. The local community safety partnership will take years in the making, well beyond the pilot. So, I would say the pilot phase is [about] embedding in the community… [and] enabling the members too" [T2, int-947].

The above quote reflected the general sentiment of evaluation participants when asked about the LCSPs outcomes for communities by the midpoint of the pilot. The midpoint phase was generally believed to be too early to see widespread population-level outcomes. Where improved community outcomes had begun to become visible, these were believed to be limited to small, specific groups or areas that LCSPs had engaged with more intensively. A shared belief was that *at best* modest community outcomes *might* be observable after two years when the pilot ends.

The LCSP members' survey indicated that members had more positive perceptions of improvement for certain outcomes by the midpoint. Namely, that LCSPs may be:

- improving the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues that matter to the local community
- improving community involvement in identifying and prioritising community issues that matter to them
- improving working relationships between different agencies and organisations in the LCSP communities.
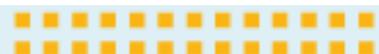
The LCSP members survey asked respondents about their perceptions of outcomes. All were asked about at endpoint. To understand changes in the perceptions of LCSP members over time, nine of these outcomes were asked also about at either midpoint, endpoint, or both.

The outcomes are divided into the following areas:

1) Intended outcomes on:
    a. Partnership-working and service delivery
    b. Community engagement and relations
    c. Community safety
2) Potential unintended negative outcomes.

Intended outcomes

A visual summary of the key results for 'intended outcomes and impacts' are shown in Figure 31, with Box 4 below providing a description of Figure 31.[36]

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[36] See Appendix 1 for the full survey results of the outcomes in Figure 31.
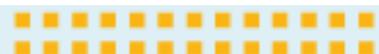
Box 4: Explanation of 'Figure 32: Perceptions and trends amongst LCSP member survey respondents on the LCSPs contribution to improved outcomes'

Figure 32 below visually summarises key results from the LCSP members survey about outcomes that the LCSP are intended to contribute to. It also gives readers a sense of the order in which outcomes might reasonably be expected to become noticeable to most LCSP members over time, based on the results of the survey at endpoint.

The graph shows results for 13 outcomes. 6 are related to partnership-working and service delivery, 5 are related to community engagement and relations, and 2 are related to community safety:

■ = Partnership-working & service delivery outcomes

■ = Community engagement & relations outcomes

■ = Community safety outcomes.

Beside each outcome, there is a small circle. The circle states the percentage of respondents from all three LCSPs, *at endpoint*, that 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement in the box beside it. For example, if 33% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'the LCSP has improved the sense of safety in the local community', this is shown as:

The ring of the circles are either green or black. Green signifies that a majority of respondents at endpoint (51% or more) agreed with the statement, while black signifies that those in agreement with the statement did not reach a majority (50% or less).

○ = majority (51% or more) agreement reached

○ = majority agreement not reached

For outcomes that were asked about in the LCSP members survey at more than one timepoint (which is the case for 9 of the 13 outcomes in Figure X), there is also an arrow beside the circle. The arrow shows whether the percentage of respondents who agreed with a statement increased, decreased or stayed the same, over time, compared to the results from earlier timepoints.

↗ = Increased agreement compared to midpoint/baseline

⇒ = Same agreement compared to midpoint/baseline

↘ = Decreased agreement compared to midpoint/baseline

Finally, the outcomes are shown along a timeline running from left to right. This is a rough estimate, informed by the LCSP members survey results, of when and in what order the evaluation team believe outcomes produced by the LCSP might reasonably be expected to become noticeable to most LCSP members. The timeline is not definitive as it is not possible for the evaluation team to estimate with absolute certainty. In the real world, whether LCSPs actually achieve these outcomes, in what order and after what time-period will vary from partnership-to-partnership depending on how well each partnership functions and how supportive their environment is.

Figure 31: Perceptions and trends amongst LCSP member survey results on the LCSPs contribution to improved outcomes

(Outcomes related to) **Partnership-Working & Service Delivery**

The LCSP has improved working relationships between different agencies and organisations in our community — 74% agreed

The LCSP has improved the identification & prioritisation of community safety issues that matter to the local community — 74% agreed

Characteristics of the outcome 'Better, More Effective Service Delivery'

The LCSP has improved the amount & quality of multi-agency services/initiatives on community safety — 65% agreed

The LCSP has made services on the partnership more transparent about the actions (or lack of actions) they have taken to improve community safety — 56% agreed

The LCSP has improved the focus on 'prevention & early intervention' amongst its members when addressing community safety — 62% agreed

The LCSP has made services on the partnership more accountable about the actions (or lack of actions) they have taken to improve community safety — 47% agreed

(Outcomes related to) **Community Engagement & Relations**

The LCSP has improved community involvement in the identification & prioritisation of community safety issues that matter to them — 68% agreed

The LCSP has improved community awareness of local activities around community safety — 65% agreed

The LCSP has improved community participation in local activities around community safety — 59% agreed

The LCSP has improved trust of the local community in local service providers — 50% agreed

The LCSP has improved the confidence of the local community in local service providers to tackle/deal with community safety issues — 41% agreed

(Outcomes related to) **Community Safety**

The LCSP has improved the sense of safety in the local community — 33% agreed

The LCSP has improved how safe the local community is — 32% agreed

Time →

Shorter-term outcomes (beginning at least 6-12 months after the establishment of an LCSP)

Longer-term outcomes (2-3+ years after the establishment of an LCSP)

67

There are some notable patterns in the results shown in Figure 31:

1) The levels of agreement with each outcome statement varied considerably by endpoint. For example, the results ranged from 74% agreement that the LCSP had improved working relationships between different agencies, to 32% agreement that the LCSP has improved how safe the local community is.

2) By endpoint, there was majority agreement that the LCSP was improving 8 of the outcomes. Five of these were related to partnership-working and service-delivery, and 3 outcomes were related to community engagement and relations.

3) Of the 9 intended outcomes that were asked about at more than one timepoint, the results for all 9 were trending in a positive direction at endpoint. This indicates that respondents believed their LCSP was continuing to make progress over time.

These patterns lend support to the conclusion that the LCSP is a "marathon, not a sprint". Clearly, not all outcomes had reached a majority agreement by endpoint. Yet, over time, an increasing proportion of respondents agreed their LCSP was improving outcomes, indicating a growing belief that progress was being made.

Some outcomes may happen in a short time frame but many key outcomes -- such as improving trust, confidence, safety and sense of safety in local communities – are likely to require sustained effort over a longer period of time before noticeable improvements are seen. Just how long a period, however, remains an open question that the evaluation cannot answer from the data available at this point in time.

Figure 31 shows the overall results of the survey of LCSP members. The results by pilot site (see Appendix 1, items 7.1. - 7.7. and 7.10. - 7.15.), also show interesting patterns and trends. For instance:

i. The levels of agreement on almost all intended outcome statements varied considerably across the pilot sites. Pilot Z consistently had the highest proportion of agreement with the outcome statements, often followed by pilot Y and then pilot X. At endpoint, the gap in levels of agreement between the pilot sites ranged from 68 percentage points[37] to 5 percentage points.[38]

ii. The number of intended outcomes that reached majority agreement by endpoint varied across the pilot sites. In pilot Z, a majority of respondents agreed their partnership had improved 10 intended outcomes by endpoint, compared to 3 in pilot Y and 1 in pilot X.

iii. The results for all three LCSPs were trending in a positive direction at endpoint compared to previous timepoints, on almost all of the 9 intended outcomes that were asked about at more than one timepoint. For instance, by endpoint, levels of agreement had increased amongst pilot X respondents on 6 outcomes compared to previous timepoints, and on all 9 outcomes for pilots Z and Y.

These patterns and trends at the pilot-level lend further support to the conclusion that the work of the LCSPs takes time, however, some LCSPs will likely contribute to improved outcomes sooner than others. This makes it impossible to accurately estimate the time that will likely be needed for LCSPs to contribute to longer-term outcomes, except to say that it will vary across locations.

The pilot level survey results also indicate that improved outcomes are not guaranteed. For a small number of outcomes in pilot X, the survey results at endpoint actually trended in a slightly

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[37] On item 7.3. ('*the LCSP has improved community participation in local activities around community safety*'), 93% of pilot Z respondents agreed compared to 25% of pilot X respondents.
[38] On item 7.6. ('the LCSP has improved the confidence of the local community in local service providers to tackle/deal with community safety issues'), 43% of pilot Z respondents agreed compared to 38% of pilot X respondents.

negative direction compared to previous timepoints. As was detailed in the interim report, the sequencing of activities, functioning of each partnership, and unique context of each partnership can all work to influence if, and to what extent, a partnership contributes to improved outcomes.

Potential unintended negative outcomes

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

    A. The LCSP has led to greater duplication of services in our community

    B. The LCSP has diverted time and resources away from more useful activities or services.

Figure 32: Perceptions amongst LCSP members on potential unintended negative outcomes of LCSPs
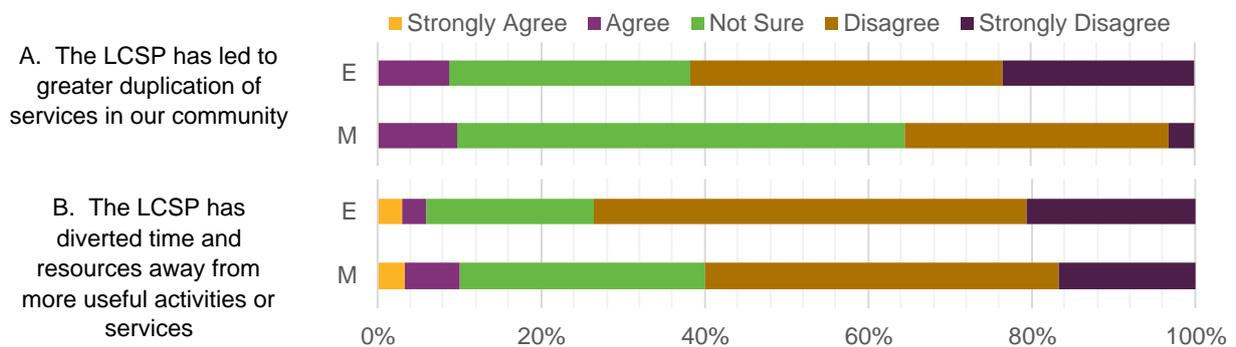
Overall, the results, at endpoint, indicate that most respondents *disagreed* that their LCSP has led to greater duplication of services (62%) or has diverted time and resources from more useful activities or services (74%). Both these results also trended in a positive direction, with a 27 percentage point increase in *disagreement* with item A at endpoint and a 14 percentage point increase with item B.

Some differences and similarities emerge when the results are broken down by pilot site (see Appendix 1, items 7.8. and 7.9.). In terms of similarities, all 3 pilot sites saw growing *disagreement* that their LCSP had contributed to unintended negative outcomes by endpoint. However, this growth varied across the pilots and not all LCSPs reached majority *disagreement* on both items. For example, all 3 LCSPs had majority *disagreement* at endpoint (ranging from 58% - 86%) that the LCSP had diverted time and resources away from more useful activities. When asked whether their LCSP has led to greater duplication of services though, only one pilot site reached majority *disagreement* at endpoint despite the improved perceptions compared to midpoint.

3.7 Overall Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that the LCSPs have pressed ahead with their work since the Interim Report and continue to work to enhance community safety.

The findings highlight the importance of time as a factor. This includes acknowledging the time it takes for the LCSP to come together and prepare the Community Safety Plan and to move into the implementation phase. This does not preclude an LCSP from initiating action *whilst* they are preparing their Community Safety Plan.

Each pilot site was at a different point in the implementation of their community safety plans by endpoint, varying from one year in to just beginning to implement. This variation is natural given the dynamic nature of the partnership set up in each location and progression to formal preparation of an agreed community safety plan. It is important that the LCSPs initiate action, from setup, in response to local community safety issues so that people experience results on the ground.

The survey findings suggest growing confidence amongst LCSP members that their goals and objectives can be achieved. The majority believe that the LCSP has improved the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues that matter to the local community. The majority of respondents (74%) believe their LCSP brings added value in the management of local community safety issues when compared to other existing arrangements. The majority (77%) are satisfied with their community safety plans and (63%) are satisfied with the actions their LCSP has taken so far to address community safety.

In terms of engagement and involvement, there have been gradual increases at each timepoint in LCSP members reporting feeling part of the decision-making process within the LCSP and satisfaction with their influence in their pilot sites. The experience of collaboration and participation have improved across the three LCSP over the lifetime of the pilot. The results suggest the benefits of community-focused, collaborative-working are being experienced amongst most members.

The results indicate that the practice of partnership requires specific intentionality and processes to encourage and facilitate the *active* participation of all LCSP members. The challenge of ensuring good strong engagement in the LCSP and its work, on the part of all representatives was a recurring theme through the evaluation, right through to endpoint.

At all three timepoints of the evaluation, the majority of respondents *agreed* that LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment, though the trends indicate a small decline between baseline and midpoint before recovering somewhat between midpoint and endpoint. This points to the continued attention and vigilance that is necessary to steer and support the partnership structure and process.

Trust is a vital enabler, and the findings indicate that, through communication and relationship building, the trust between LCSP members has strengthened across all three sites over the lifetime of the pilot.

Whilst the findings indicate shared themes across all three pilot sites there are further insights to be gleaned by looking at the results for each site separately. This highlights subtle differences or variation across the pilot sites. Examples include leadership, the preparation of the community safety plans and the way in which community engagement unfolded. The variance in results across sites confirms the unique and individual setting/context or location of each LCSP, the different personalities that get involved and the process and practice of partnership working. It is important to note this variance across LCSP sites and prepare for the likelihood of a somewhat similar experience during the rollout.

The results confirm recurring themes and areas that require attention in preparation for rollout. These include good leadership, preparation of guidelines and resource materials for the LCSPs, careful recruitment and selection of staff and LCSP members, and community engagement and participation.

It is still too early to gain a robust sense of the impact of the LCSP on the community. This will take time and careful monitoring as the community safety plans are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

4 Learning

This section sets out the main learning that has accumulated from the two-year evaluation of the LCSP pilot. The intention of the evaluation is to inform the rollout of the LCSP nationwide, as planned, in accordance with the *Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill.*

It is important to bear in mind that the three pilot sites will continue to pave the way and be learning sites, at least in the early years of the national rollout of the LCSP. They, along with other community safety initiatives such as the Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB), offer examples of how the LCSP model can unfold in practice and in the reality of contemporary society.

The LCSP model is a distinct and specific response to community safety issues and building safer communities. The model is versatile and flexible, and yet the evaluation has identified learning and enablers to successful implementation. All LCSP sites require ongoing monitoring and evaluation to continue to inform good practice partnership working into the future.

The learning presented in the Interim Evaluation Report (and summarised below) was largely confirmed in the final phase of the evaluation. It is also important to note that the learning at baseline and midpoint was considered by the Department of Justice and other relevant stakeholders. This is the dynamic nature of formative evaluation informing decision-making about the LCSP and the preparations for implementation of national rollout. For example, this was facilitated through events at each point[39] during which the evaluation findings were shared and discussed with relevant stakeholders.

A number of adjustments were made to the LCSP model based on the learning and related pointers set out in the Interim Report. For example, the Department of Justice decided to adjust upwards the grade of the LCSP coordinator, from grade 6 to 7, and to enhance administrative support for the LCSPs. This further reflects the formative nature of the evaluation process as it accompanied the pilot in real time.

4.1 Reminder of Pointers in the Interim Report

The Interim Report drew attention to areas that warrant specific attention in preparing for the national rollout and implementation of the LCSP model. These areas are set out below and in the main still hold true as requiring attention and inclusion in the implementation plan for rollout.

- Preparing a **stated vision for the LCSP**, post pilot and bringing to life the concept of community safety and its implementation to ensure safer communities. This will form part of the preparation of the National Strategy for Community Safety.
- The role of the Sponsors' Groups and the transition to the national governance structures, including the National Office for Community Safety and the National Steering Group for Community Safety, to support the national roll out of the LCSP.
- Optimal membership of the LCSPs and options to facilitate representation that is active and inclusive.

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[39] The baseline report feedback event was held on 28th June 2022, and the interim report feedback event on 13th April 2023.

- Statutory agencies involvement in the LCSP and high level cross departmental cooperation in service to creating safer communities as well as achieving better coherence, coordination and targeting of resources across the range of different partnership structures and interventions in a county/location.
- Community engagement, active participation, and the practice of partnership within the unique context of each LCSP location.
- Implementation of the Community Safety Plans, including community safety priorities, pertinent to the needs of the local community.
- Data gathering, data-sharing, commitment, and competency to advance the optimal use of information and sharing to inform, progress and monitor community safety work. This includes the reality of data gathering, and the specific skills and dedicated time required to monitor and evaluate the impact of an LCSP.
- Developing a process and metrics for measuring community safety outcomes, in collaboration with relevant research partners, and drawing on best practice internationally.
- Links to other community development initiatives, community education and social justice as the LCSP fits within the sustainable development goal 16 – peace, justice and strong societies in which people feel safe as they go about their lives whatever their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation.

4.2 Learning aligned with Enablers of Effective Partnership

The Baseline Report drew attention to what the academic literature is telling us about the enablers of effective partnership. The seven enablers serve as a checklist to assess and ascertain both the extent to which favourable conditions exist and the work required for partnership to be effective. These enablers were tracked through the evaluation over the lifecycle of the LCSP pilot. There are further details of this in the Baseline Report.[40]

The learning from the evaluation is set out below and discussed in relation to the seven enablers of effective partnership. The intention is that this will inform the implementation plan for rollout of the LCSP, over the next three to five years.

Enabler One: Context

The literature cites that a conducive context to partnership working is an enabler of effective partnership working. A conducive context to partners hip-working is one that has adequate resources and a history of good collaboration.

The contemporary context is complex. Partnership working has been a feature of government responses to policy imperatives for a number of years. Examples include the Children and Young Peoples Services Committees (CYPSC) and Local Community Development Committees (LCDC). While not specific to community safety, they are related and similar in intention in terms of working towards a common purpose within a specific location/county. There are also other community safety initiatives underway, such as the Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB).

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[40] CES/UL Evaluation Team, 'Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot Baseline Evaluation Report' (Dublin, 2022).

The context for an LCSP is an important determinant of the success of the partnership's work. The context includes features such as the size/geography of the area that an LCSP serves, population density and diversity, crime rates and feelings of community safety, as well as the history and range of interagency and collaborative working within the area.

The pilot site locations were chosen based on various factors including geography, crime rates, as well as being three distinct population density areas (e.g., medium, low, and regional).[41]

Waterford is a big landmass with significant differences between the western side of the county and the east. Dublin NIC is a smaller area within the inner city of Dublin with its own history and context and Longford is characterised by its rural aspect.

The evaluation shows that there was variation across each pilot site and yet each worked within its context, set up and convened a partnership structure, and prepared and launched a community safety plan. The three pilot sites all had distinctive features, as do their community safety plans, and this helps to show that the model can work across different areas, sizes, and contexts.

There were similarities in the context in which each LCSP pilot site operated, and yet ultimately each is unique. This is notwithstanding the fact that each LCSP is working to similar terms of reference. Eight contextual factors were identified at midpoint as particularly influential in the pilot sites, including the number of partnership structures that already exist in an area (e.g., LCDC, CYPSC), the legacy and learning from previous JPC structures, and the resourcing and capacity of LCSP member organisations.

The absence of a statutory obligation compelling engagement by state agencies in the LCSP was also an important contextual factor noted at midpoint. This factor will be addressed by the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill which will place the LCSPs on a statutory footing. This will be a new and distinctive feature of the LCSPs to watch into the future and will be particularly important in terms of the way it does (or does not) strengthen the engagement of statutory agencies. The learning from the evaluation is that, to stay true to the vision of the LCSP, it is important to draw in high level commitment and involvement of the full range of statutory agencies.

The influence of the different factors will vary in each LCSP location. It is important that future LCSP sites consider the extent to which these and other contextual factors are present in each area and could affect an LCSP. This will involve scoping the potential locations for each LCSP to ascertain the history of partnership-working in the county or area. This could include an assessment of existing partnership structures, gauging how these are faring, and ascertaining opportunities for alignment with the LCSP. There are opportunities for closer alignment, sharing of resources and data, and co-location of offices with other complementary initiatives such as Healthy Ireland. The fits with the work of the Programme Board, driven by the Department of the Taoiseach, through appropriate consultation, to derive more benefit from existing targeted programmes and services by achieving greater coherence and co-ordination between different interventions and partnership structures locally.[42]

From the outset, particularly at formation stage, it is important for an LCSP to identify ways to mitigate potential negative effects and work with and enhance the positive effects of known contextual features, all in the interests of strengthening community safety.

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[41] Department of Justice, 'Community Safety: Policy Paper', 2021.
[42] Programme Board for Building Stronger and more Integrated Responses to Local Area Challenges. Department of the Taoiseach, December 2022.

The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout is that there is a need to conduct a careful scoping of each location/county/context in advance of, and to inform preparations, for the setting up of each LCSP. This is important preparation for implementation. It includes scoping out the population demographics and diversity, features of the local community safety situation, mapping existing partnership structures and alignment, as appropriate, with their strategies and plans.

The role of the National Office for Community Safety, in consultation with the Local Authority, AGS and other relevant government departments and agencies, will be central in supporting the scoping and preparation phase for the LCSP rollout and implementation. Bringing organisations together and people around the table for a common purpose is the starting point and this requires a driver.

Enabler Two: Vision, Leadership and Champions

The literature indicates that a clear vision, mission and aims that unify and are agreed by all stakeholders, are enablers of effective partnership. Good leadership and strategic direction are vital success determinants for partnership working. This includes leaders at senior levels in government departments focused on encouraging buy-in and enhanced coordination across all the relevant agencies, and local-level champions advocating for the LCSP. It is also important that aims and actions set out in the Community Safety Plan (CSP) are agreed by members and align, where appropriate, with the work priorities of partner organisations.

The LCSP members survey found the majority of respondents feel that LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment for the partnership.

National Structures

The learning from the evaluation is that Department of Justice and the Department of the Taoiseach each played central roles in leading out on the LCSP pilot. Both departments were represented on the Dublin NEIC Sponsors' Group, along with representatives from the relevant Local Authorities. The Sponsors' Groups and the Department of Justice were a significant support to the LCSP chairpersons and coordinators during the pilot phase. The Sponsors' Groups met regularly and responded to questions arising and the immediacy of decision making as the pilot unfolded. This was a resource intensive support that was central to the success of the pilot phase. Until comprehensive guidance is developed on various key aspects of LCSPs, it is likely that similar levels of support will be required for rollout and will need to be designed into the structures, regionally and/or nationally, overseen by the National Office for Community Safety.

The AGS and Local Authorities in each of the pilot sites played pivotal leadership and support roles. The AGS locally and nationally were in regular contact working together, and with the Department of Justice, to support the LCSP pilot. The Policing Authority was also active in a brokering role, building communication about the LCSP into briefings and events around the country. The Local Authority in each pilot hosted the LCSP coordinator role, was represented on the Sponsors' Groups and sourced and/or provided office space.

Into the future and as the rollout of the LCSP proceeds, the role of the National Community Safety Steering Group, as set out in the draft legislation, will hold a significant high-level leadership function. It is imperative that the members of this Steering Group are committed to the LCSP model and champion the work throughout their own organisations. This shared cross-

departmental leadership requires more specificity and intensification in the implementation plan for roll out. The National Community Safety Steering Group is a key component of the proposed structure in this regard.

LCSP Chairperson

The role of the chairperson, particularly in terms of leadership competence and experience, is central to the LCSP, as set out in the Interim Report. It is a significant high-level volunteering role, within their own community/county, that requires dedication and time. The findings from the evaluation indicate that the qualities of the chairperson are a vital success determinant. This is confirmed in the DIB experience also. These qualities include relational competence, local knowledge, and experience of large partnership processes, strategic leadership, and facilitation skills. It is imperative that the chairperson is experienced and confident to facilitate the LCSP, strategically and relationally, bringing in and involving stakeholders at all levels.

Given that all three chairpersons in the pilot sites were independent, it was not possible to observe or assess how an elected chairperson would compare. The results suggest that the independence of the chairperson is an asset to the role and yet the results of the evaluation point towards the *qualities* as being the most important success determinant. Recruitment and retention of chairpersons was noted as a challenge to be addressed during rollout. This is because it is a time-consuming, volunteer role requiring a high specificity of qualities and experience coupled with the high-profile and often sensitive, local nature of the work.

The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout at a national level is to set up the National Office for Community Safety and the relevant governance structures to guide and support the LCSPs nationwide. The National Office will hold a significant leadership function as will the National Community Safety Steering Group, through its terms of reference, chairperson and membership. It is important that all the relevant government departments and agencies are represented, by senior policy and decision makers, on the National Steering group. This includes the Department of the Taoiseach, Department of Justice, Department of Community and Rural Development, AGS, Policing Authority, the Department of Education and the Department of Health, HSE and Tusla.

At a local level the task will be to recruit and retain experienced chairpersons, in a volunteer capacity, who are independent[43], strong and skilled facilitative leaders with capacity to guide the LCSP strategically and relationally to achieve its work. The role of the National Office for Community Safety is important in this regard in terms of agreeing the details of the recruitment and selection process and contractual arrangements for the chairpersons. This will include length of service, how and when they are appointed, e.g., by the Department of Justice. Consideration could be given to seeking expressions of interest for the role or working through Volunteer Ireland in a process of consultancy led by the Department of Justice, the National Office for Community Safety and the National Community Safety Steering Group.

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[43] By independent we mean that LCSP chairpersons are not currently working for a statutory organisation or agency nor are they currently an elected member of a political party.

Enabler Three: Resources and Data Sharing

The literature names resources including funding, people, and time as enablers of effective partnership working. Data sharing policies and protocols, and regular exchange of relevant information are also a key enabler.

Resources

The learning from the evaluation is that adequate resourcing is vital. This includes LCSP funding and staff. Resources also include the capacity of agencies and organisations to commit energy, people, and funding to the LCSP and the community safety plan and ensuring representatives have enough time, built into their core work to provide input to the partnership.

In terms of financial input, the overall spend was €1,675,521.06 across the three sites over the lifetime of the LCSP pilot to date[44]. This figure includes Dormant Accounts Funds and funding from the Crime Prevention Fund and CSIF 2022. It does not include the cost of the time on the part of Departmental officials involved in joint engagement meetings with the AGS and the pilot sites, supporting the LCSPs through Sponsors' Group meetings and other support for the LCSP Chairpersons and Coordinators. It will be important to determine the full cost of the LCSP rollout and implementation.

The evaluation findings tell us that recruitment and retention of good people, particularly in the LCSP coordinator role, is a significant success determinant for the LCSP. Recruiting and selection is resource intensive and will be a significant body of work during rollout. The finer details of this process need to be further clarified and is the responsibility of the National Office for Community Safety in consultation with the Local Authority in each county/location.

The CSIF was an important resource for the LCSP pilots and will continue to be for other LCSPs as they are set up. Careful monitoring of the CSIF is necessary to ensure focus and coherence across community safety policy imperatives. Given the importance of ensuring adequate resources, as well as coherence and oversight, it is worth considering confining the disbursement of the CSIF to the 30+ LCSPs and managing this through the National Office for Community Safety.

> **The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout is** to fully resource the LCSP from a staffing perspective. This includes the LCSP coordinator at Grade 7 or equivalent, a full-time administrator and dedicated research support to take responsibility for the data analytics, monitoring and evaluation requirement. The research support could be centrally resourced in the National Office for Community Safety. The learning is that it is vital that each LCSP is fully resourced to gather, collate and analyse local data to inform the work of the LCSP. It is also important that this data fits within the larger data sets for a county/region and feeds into national data sets.
>
> In terms of the statutory agencies and organisations involved in the LCSP each needs to consider its budget/resources and align with the community safety plan as relevant and appropriate. It is important that they include provision for community safety in their budgets and protected time for senior staff members, and others, to participate in the LCSP.

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[44] A further 33K funding was approved for Longford LCSP for the UL Executive Leadership Programme as part of a Youth Justice team package.

> Other resources to account for include induction, training and support which are covered further under Enabler Seven – Experience and Capacity Building (page 82).

Data Sharing

The learning from the evaluation is that data sharing is important and took some time to work through. The findings at interim indicated that data and information sharing was an area that required attention.

By endpoint the AGS Quarterly Reporting Template was completed having been codesigned with the Department of Justice, AGS and the LCSPs. This is described as a living document that is now being used by the three pilot sites and can be added to over time. It is imperative that all the relevant statutory agencies develop similar data sharing templates and mechanisms to inform the monitoring and evaluation of the CSPs and ongoing work of the LCSPs. There is work to be done agreeing the required data whilst also allowing for data specific to each location to be gathered.

As well as codesigning the Quarterly Reporting Template the main stakeholders came together to share learning and discuss the progress of the pilot. Three joint engagement sessions were convened by the Department of Justice over the course of the pilot. These were important information sharing events involving the AGS, LCSP coordinators and sometimes guests such as the Newry Mourne Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

Monitoring and metrics are important and the learning from the Activity Tracker shows that monitoring is a specific skill and requires dedicated resources. It proved impossible, and unrealistic to expect the LCSP coordinators to keep on top of data gathering, collation and analysis, along with all the other tasks within their role.

> **The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout is** the need to define and measure what it is for citizens to feel safe within their communities and to develop a monitoring system that is user friendly and usefully tracks the work of the LCSPs as set out in their CSPs.
>
> The learning from the Activity Tracker is important in this regard as it draws attention to specific skills and resources necessary to ensure a thorough and useful monitoring system across all 30+ LCSPs. It is imperative that specific resources are dedicated, within the National Office for Community Safety, to ongoing data analytics, monitoring, research and evaluation.
>
> It would also be useful, over time, to create a central profiling arrangement for each county/area, one that all services, structures and partnerships contribute to and can draw from for the full range of data[45]. This includes the CYPSC, LCDCs, Primary Care, Healthy Ireland, the Sports Partnerships, amongst others. This fits with the role of a Programme Board, envisaged by the Department the Taoiseach, to support the medium-longer term mainstreaming of a more coordinated and data-informed approach[46] to responding to local challenges.
>
> Given that community safety is a specific and complex concept, we need to be imaginative and innovative in terms of how we measure it and share stories about how it works in practice, over time. It is also important to keep **community safety** bounded and specific as the definition has potential to expand into all areas of human life.

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[45] Including population, socio-demographic, economic, environmental, crime, etc.
[46] Work in underway in this regard, driven by the Department of the Taoiseach, to set up the Programme Board on Local Area Challenges.

Enabler Four: Problem, Solution and Evidence Focus

The literature tells us that having a focus on specific problems and working together to find and implement solutions is an enabler of effective partnership working. This includes clarity regarding the problems that are to be tackled and achieving this clarity through research and analysis. It also includes involving researchers within the partnership and being committed to evidence-informed practice and solutions, with continual evaluation to review and inform the activities of the partnership.

The learning from the evaluation is that LCSPs are working to identify problems and issues that affect safety and the felt sense of safety in their local communities. This coming together for a shared purpose was a noted strength of the LCSP pilot. It is evident in the community safety plans wherein each pilot site has set down the actions that they believe are required to address specific community safety issues in their area. The variety and range of shared and different actions is evidence of the true effort to respond to local needs and expand the understanding of community safety beyond being the sole responsibility of AGS.

The review of the community safety plans shows the work that went into local consultation, researching and naming local priorities. A central feature and noted strength of the LCSP model is that it brings people together locally and seeks to identify and address local problems and issues. Each Community Safety Plan (CSP) is unique and a response to needs identified in the specific area. It is early days in the implementation of the community safety plans in each site and each has a different timeline, ranging from one year in Longford, three years in Dublin NIC to five years in Waterford. It is too early to say how the plans are being implemented and to what extent the actions are providing solutions to the local problems identified. It will be important to track progress of each plan and ascertain the impact overtime.

The learning from road testing the Activity Tracker during the pilot is that monitoring, and evaluation are specific skills that require dedicated resources in terms of experienced research staff and bespoke data gathering systems. This needs to be separate and distinct from the LCSP coordinator role as the skills required are different and specific to data gathering, collation, analysis and reporting.

One partnership had a researcher on the staff team and others drew in consultancy support. The learning is that the data gathering, monitoring and evaluation aspect of the LCSP model needs further strengthening for rollout, led out by the National Office for Community Safety. There also needs to be consideration for the fact that, for a variety of reasons, the research shows that most crimes and community safety issues are not officially reported to the police or other agencies. This can be due to fear of reprisal, apathy or a belief that nothing can or will be done by the authorities. The Community Crime Impact Assessment (CCIA) tool was developed so as to ascertain local crime concerns in a safe and confidential manner to inform and monitor problem-solving responses. Any future information gathering approach needs to consider such innovative ways of accessing the local perspective of community safety.

> ***The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout*** is that it is necessary to define and fully resource the monitoring system(s) for the LCSP locally and nationally. The role of the National Office for Community Safety will be central to determining the shape and scope of the monitoring system for the LCSP with a particular focus on data specifically relating to community safety. It is also important to situate the monitoring system, and the data gathered, in the wider context, locally and nationally, e.g., CSO Census data.

Enabler Five: Relations and Communications

The literature reminds us that partnership is relational and effective partnership requires good communication between partners. This includes regular face to face contact and co-location of agencies, partners, and staff. The effectiveness of partnership is determined by commitment of partners to the work and the development of trust and respect for one another.

The LCSP model is relational. The evidence for this is in the three CSPs. All have at their centre names and faces of the people and figures working together locally for a common purpose. The learning from the evaluation is that the LCSP plan brings together a wider variety of stakeholders with greater sharing of the responsibilities for community safety actions. It significantly reduces the number and proportion of community safety responsibilities assigned to An Garda Síochána, broadening out to the local authority mainly at this point. Other agencies, including the HSE and Tusla are involved to different extents in each location. There is significant scope to clarify and strengthen their roles, at national and local levels during implementation.

The evaluation confirmed that building collaborative relationships and ways of working, and active participation on the LCSPs, is a gradual process that takes time and purposeful effort. There is learning from other partnership structures, such as the CYPSCs in this regard. There is an expectation that placing the LCSP on a statutory footing, through the legislation, will endorse the initiative and strengthen the engagement and involvement of senior decision makers across the relevant government departments and agencies. This is one aspect that will contribute to strengthening awareness and acceptance of the LCSP, which in turn could serve to strengthen engagement of all partners. It is important, along with other deliberate measures, including champions of the LCSP within the structures to convey the message that the relevant government agencies and departments are interested, engaged and accountable within the structures of the LCSP model.

Engagement with the community is also key. It is important that communication is open and transparent including public sharing of LCSP progress on websites. Developing a clear communications strategy will support this. The pilot sites will continue to be learning sites as they will, for a while anyway, be ahead of the national roll out. Therefore they, as well as the DIB, will continue to be sources of learning during the national rollout of the LCSP.

> ***The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout*** is that the LCSP model is targeted, collaborative and relational. Relationships matter as does good communication at all levels. This is particularly important given the outward-facing nature of the work and the central intention of involving the local community. A key output and driver of the work is a coproduced community safety plan in each LCSP location, with shared vision, values, principles and actions amongst all stakeholders, particularly the local community. Vigilance and transparency, with due diligence, is required in all communications.

Enabler Six: Structures and Processes

The literature tells us that structures and processes matter a lot to effective partnership including the oversight and governance structures nationally and locally. The structure is made up of 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. Involvement of the appropriate agencies and continuity in partner representation and participation are required.

It is important that there are clear lines of communication and accountability supported by monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Good practice features include partnership structures

that are flexible, and solution focused with shared understanding of common purpose, roles, responsibilities and a clear process and documentation for decision making.

LCSP Structure*s (National)*

The learning from the evaluation is that the national structures were an important source of oversight, guidance and support during the pilot. They developed and strengthened as the pilot unfolded. For example, at the start of the pilot there was one Sponsors' Group for the Dublin NIC. By interim stage the need for a second Sponsors' Group arose, and was created, combined for Longford and Waterford LCSP. The Department of Justice, as the lead Department, met regularly with the Chairpersons and responded to questions and requests for support as they arose. The Department of the Taoiseach also played a pivotal role, as did AGS, the Local Authorities and the Policing Authority.

National oversight and guidance will continue to be necessary to support the implementation nationwide. It will need to be scaled up, regionally and/or nationally, over time to respond to the 30+ LCSPs. The role of the **National Office for Community Safety,** as set out in the legislation, will be key in this regard, providing training, guidance and support to community safety partnerships, monitoring the implementation of local community safety plans and promoting public awareness of issues affecting community safety.

The Bill provides for:

- a **National Steering Group for Community Safety** to monitor the implementation of the national strategy for community safety and to promote and monitor compliance by public service bodies with their duties under the Act. The learning from the pilot is that full engagement of all the relevant stakeholders, on this steering group, is necessary to realise the vision of community safety.
- the **restatement of the function of An Garda Síochána** to provide policing services and security services, including vetting, sees a restatement of section 7 of the Act of 2005 but amends the function to "explicitly" include: the prevention of harm to individuals, especially those who are "vulnerable" or "at risk" as defined by the Bill.
- the **establishment of the Policing and Community Safety Authority** and its role in providing oversight of AGS's performance in relation to policing, including its role in preventing crime and preventing harm to individuals.

LCSP Structures (Local)

The LCSP structures in the three pilot sites are characterised by a main board of 30 members and subgroup structures that varied across each of the three sites. The findings at interim stage drew attention to mixed views on the size and structure of the LCSP which was described as a tension and trade off. This is a reality to prepare for during roll out and implementation of the LCSP. Clarity around the roles of chairperson and vice chairperson and accountability are also important in this regard.

The evaluation findings suggest that the size of the LCSP, (i.e., circa 30 members) is appropriate and necessary to allow space to draw in and include as full and representative a membership as possible into the structure. This is particularly important during the formative stages of any LCSP as inviting, encouraging, and bringing people around the table is a core feature of the process of the LCSP model. This means that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary to facilitate an open and meaningful response to local needs. In essence being inclusive, engaging, listening and responding to local needs is more important than the size of the LCSP membership.

The learning is that it was a challenge to engage some groups or cohorts. Young people are a specific example in that all three pilots encountered challenges bringing the voice of young people to the table. It is important to find creative ways of drawing in the voice of young people in ways that suit and work for them. It could be possible to work through Comhairle na nOg, partner with the local CYPSC and/or innovative work with local schools and third level institutions. The same applies for other members of a community or grouping that may benefit from innovative and inclusive ways of encouraging them to come to the table.

LCSP Processes

The process of preparing the plan is important particularly in drawing people in, owning the plan and being accountable locally. This takes time, research and expert facilitation. It is important to align, as far as possible, with the work priorities of member organisations, whilst also taking account of local needs and priorities relevant to community safety within a given county or location. The findings indicate the preparation of the community safety plan has a grounding effect on the LCSP and can bring a sense of accomplishment and shared purpose. It must also be noted that the learning from the Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB) is that it can also work well if a partnership is given a plan to implement within a certain timeframe and resource allocation. In the case of the DIB the plan was informed by specific bespoke research (i.e. the Geiran Report (2021) Scoping Community Safety and Wellbeing in Drogheda[47]) and thus differs in approach from the LCSP pilot model.

Representation is what matters most in the context of the LCSP model and there are many ways to achieve inclusive and diverse representation. It is about developing a process whereby people can be and feel included in developing and implementing a community safety plan that is a meaningful response for their area. In the initial phase of any LCSP the larger size/structure is important to allow for representativeness. As the LCSP settles and matures into its work it is likely to naturally progress to identifying who else does it need to engage with and who or what is missing around the table? In reality the LCSP will be dynamic, responding and maximising efficiencies locally. Community engagement and involvement is a specific and purposeful practice and there is learning from other collaborative/partnership structures.[48] Returning to the principles and practice of community development is helpful in this regard.

It will be important to revisit and refresh the LCSP Terms of Reference in advance of rollout, e.g., include more detail on the decision-making processes preferably through consensus seeking which is a hallmark of effective partnership working. This could be supported by other methods such as the proposer seconder method, so long as these methods are used appropriately and in an agreed manner, in the spirit of good practice partnership working.

> *The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout* is that broad representation matters and can be achieved in a variety of different ways, including through membership of the LCSP. The reality is that each LCSP will hold some flexibility of membership, in terms of numbers, makeup and process depending on their local context and the principles of participation. This will require further attention and evaluation as the rollout unfolds and could usefully be further informed by ways of working in other initiatives such as the DIB.

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[47] Department of Justice, 'Scoping Report into Community Safety and Wellbeing in Drogheda', 2021.
[48] See: Department of Rural and Community Development et al., 'A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making (2nd Edition)' (Dublin, 2023).

Enabler Seven: Experience and Capacity-Building

The literature tells us that careful recruitment and selection of skilled staff and appropriate partners are vital success determinants for an effective partnership. This includes recruitment or secondment of people with prior experience, motivation and interest in working in partnership for a common purpose. Access to joint training and capacity building for partners and technical assistance is necessary to build competency at the individual, organisational, programmatic, and relational levels.

The evaluation confirms that the LCSP is relational and that the quality and competence of the people involved are key success determinants. There is a significant body of preparation, recruitment, and selection work necessary to roll out the LCSP. This will be a key early step in the implementation plan. The National Office for Community Safety is responsible for providing training, guidance and support to safety partnerships in their operation (S.108 (3) (c).

The results call for the preparation and dissemination of an LCSP guidance document for induction of LCSP members and staff that includes:

- Working definitions of LCSP terminology including, community safety, community safety plans and collaborative working.
- Description of the responsibilities, and expectations of key roles, such as chairpersons, vice chairpersons, coordinators, and community and public service members.
- Details of accountability sources of support as issues arise, e.g., National Office.
- Guidance to support agencies and organisations to identify and select people to represent them on the LCSP.
- A framework and guidance for developing community safety plans.

> ***The main learning to inform the implementation plan for rollout*** is that capacity building for all members of the LCSP are important contributors to successful partnership working. Capacity building includes resources, guidance, handbooks, briefings, induction, training, and continuous professional development (CPD). It also involves the preparation of LCSP terms of reference, job/role descriptions and recruitment and selection processes.
>
> The required areas of specific training and development of competency are facilitation, leadership, problem solving, running effective meetings, working well with group dynamics and diversity, and conflict resolution to support working well in partnership.
>
> Data also fits in here and includes building specific capacity to gather, collate, analyse, and interpret data that is useful to support the ongoing work of the LCSPs.

4.3 Strengths of the LCSP

The results of the evaluation indicate that the noted strengths of the LCSP, as a purposeful and collaborative response to community safety, are:

- Building on the learning from the JPCs.
- Generating an opportunity to bring all the relevant stakeholders around the table and advancing a shared vision of community safety.
- Placing a specific emphasis on the community voice and
- Placing a deliberate focus on local issues and the generation of a shared solution focused response to local problems, through the actions set out in the community safety plan.

4.4 Risks to be prepared for

The following is a reminder of the risks to consider so as to inform the development of a comprehensive implementation plan for the LCSP nationally. It is important that these risks are considered, taking account the learning from the evaluation of the pilot and addressed in the implementation plan for the rollout of the LCSP nationwide.

- Risk of duplication and fatigue given that 'partnership-land' is a busy space already, and the reality of advancing a whole-of-government approach is a large body of work across many policy domains.
- Risk of an uneven commitment and/or possible resistance to the LCSP model across the range of stakeholders, including community, statutory and elected representatives. The signs are that the concept of community safety and community safety partnership working comes naturally to some and is a leap of faith for others.
- Risk of diminished staying power if partnerships lose energy and/or enter any turbulence locally.
- Risk of frustration experiencing the trickiness around the incentives and mandates of working in partnership when agencies have their own commitments and do not have responsibility for certain areas.
- Risk of power differentials and struggles within the LCSP, and beyond.
- Risk of breakdown of trust locally and/or nationally.
- Risk of attrition, burn out and/or exhaustion amongst the main doers, e.g., LCSP Chairpersons, coordinators and volunteers.
- Risk of data and relevant information not being shared enough, useful enough or specific enough to facilitate good decision making and prioritisation for a locale or community.
- Risk of a lack of capacity and expertise to gather, manage, analyse, and interpret data and other information sources usefully and practically to capture progress and inform decision-making.
- Risk of the LCSP getting lost in the range of existing initiatives and the challenge of distinguishing the LCSP from all other initiatives whilst at the same time working in an integrated way with other initiatives within a location/county.
- Risk of disillusion and/or impatience waiting for proof of concept of the LCSP in the short term as relationships and systems take time to establish and nurture. This is linked to the importance of having a clear vision, being realistic about what can be achieved and the importance of grounding the concept of community safety through clear communication and education.
- Risk of communities feeling abandoned and a loss of energy and trust if the pilot sites lose momentum as the pilot phase ends. This risk was addressed, to an extent, through the decision to extend the timeframe of the three pilot sites into 2024.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section draws conclusions arising from the two-year independent evaluation of the LCSP pilot. It takes account of the findings, learning, potential challenges and risks that might arise during the national rollout of LCSP's. Recommendations are set out to support implementation and mitigate these risks.

This Final Evaluation Report marks the movement towards formal closure/end of the pilot and transition to full implementation in 2024. Using this Final Report as a live document, open for discussion and feedback, will maintain focus on the immediacy of the learning and inform the implementation plan for the planned national roll out of the LCSP.

5.1 Conclusions

The pilot was a specific time bound exercise to test the LCSP model as experienced in real time in three different sites. The independent formative evaluation accompanied the pilot and captured the learning arising from the pilot to inform national rollout and implementation of the LCSP across Ireland.

The overall conclusion of the evaluation is that the LCSP model fits well with the Government's vision for building stronger and safe communities[49] and community safety as a whole of Government responsibility with the community voice/involvement as a core feature.

The LCSP model fits with the vision of the Department of Justice, for collaborative working and the forthcoming national strategy for community safety.

> *'The problems of our day cannot be resolved alone and collaborative working with other government departments, agencies and civil society will be key to delivering successful outcomes for Irish society.*[50]

The pilot sites broadly achieved what they set out to do and there was tremendous work done with a challenging start during COVID 19. All set up their LCSP structures and produced community safety plans, albeit at different times and in slightly different ways. This is reflective of the reality of the situation in each local area and, notwithstanding the provisions set out in Part 3 of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill, 2023, it is likely to be reflected in national rollout. This will not be neat and will require work and carefully phased planning.

Each site sought the support of the Department of Justice and the Sponsors' Groups to resolve issues as they arose. These include expanding the LCSP membership, recruitment of replacement chairpersons and coordinators, setting up of the second Sponsors' Group (combined for Waterford and Longford) and addressing engagement on the part of some statutory agencies.

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[49] Department of the Taoiseach, Strategy Statement 2023-2025.
[50] Department of Justice, 2023.

The majority of stakeholders are positively disposed towards the LCSP model, particularly as it honours the government's commitment to a whole of government approach to community safety and the details set out in the Bill. There is commitment to drawing in and listening to the community and determining local solutions to local problems. The challenges associated with this are acknowledged.

The majority of LCSP members perceive their partnership as bringing considerable benefits and added value, by building relationships locally, capturing a more authentic and representative community voice and planning and delivering holistic, community driven, solution-focused responses to local safety issues. The proof of concept of the LCSP model in relation to community safety planning was confirmed in the Longford LCSP plan which, when compared with that of the JPC, successfully abided by the principle that community safety is not the responsibility of the police alone. This set a foundation for improved collaboration and more holistic responses to community safety in Longford. This has followed through in the community safety plans for Dublin NIC and Waterford both of which illustrate a more even sharing of actions and tasks, across the range of agencies and community organisations.

Challenges and Risks

The evaluation cannot answer all questions and yet gives a comprehensive indication of the implementation work required to plan, support and resource partnership working in practice as the LCSP is rolled out nationally. It also points clearly to further work necessary to understand, inform, resource and embed the practice of partnership as a shared response to community safety priorities in a given location.

The contemporary context is complex and dynamic and requires a robust response, bringing together multiple partners in collaboration, towards coherent action to enhance community safety. Partnership working has been a feature of the government's response to policy imperatives for a number of years. Examples include the CYPSC, and the LCDCs, not specific to community safety and yet related and somewhat similar in intention across their high-level goals for communities and wider society. There are also other community safety initiatives underway, such as the Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB). These examples confirm the reality that responding to the complex issues facing contemporary society requires collaboration across multiple partners in a coherent way over a sustained period of time.

There are also risks associated with this way of working, as set out in section 4.5 (p. 84). These include the risk of unnecessary duplication, the risk of the LCSP getting lost in the range of existing initiatives and the challenge of distinguishing the LCSP as a response to community safety whilst at the same time working in an integrated way with the other partnerships and initiatives within a location or county.

The evaluation findings draw attention to chief areas of concern and that require attention as the LCSP model is rolled out nationally including:

- setting up the national structures and oversight arrangements to ensure good leadership, governance and accountability
- drawing in all the agencies and achieving cross departmental leadership and active involvement, nationally and locally
- the size, structure and process of the partnerships to maximise active involvement in decision making to inform the local community safety plan, its implementation and evaluation
- recruitment and retention of the right people, including the independent chairperson and LCSP coordinator and volunteers

- achieving good strong community engagement to inform and advance the community safety plan for each county/location
- supporting the development and coproduction of community safety plans whilst also encouraging early actions and initiatives that are relevant and responsive to local community safety needs
- resourcing the LCSP through the national rollout and beyond.

The rollout of the LCSP is progressing in accordance with the Bill and the main stakeholders are advancing the vision of community safety beyond the pilot to full implementation. The role of the Department of Justice and the National Office for Community Safety is crucial in this regard.

The setting up of the three pilot sites and preparation of their community safety plans took time and effort, particularly on the part of the Department of Justice as the lead department. The reality is that the national implementation of the LCSP is likely to take three to five years before full implementation.

The learning from the evaluation is that the pace of set up will vary, as will the challenges that arise, across LCSP locations/counties during rollout. The pressure points are likely to centre around:

- recruitment and retention of the volunteer chairpersons, the coordinator, administrator and other key staff
- achieving appropriate levels of involvement and buy in from the range of relevant agencies, community representatives and elected officials
- local oversight and alignment of the LCSP's with other partnership structures and processes, maximising shared impact and avoiding unnecessary duplication
- ensuring representation that mirrors the issues, population density and diversity of each location
- engaging the community in strong and inclusive ways and bringing in the community voice to inform the preparation and implementation of local community safety plans and
- Striking a balance between comprehensive and inclusive consultation in the development of the community safety plan whilst also ensuring that people see and experience tangible progress in relation to community safety issues that are a priority in their area
- Providing resources, training and tools to support the practice of partnership.

Implementation readiness and preparation for national rollout

The pilot has demonstrated that the LCSP as a model can work across different settings and contexts. The results of the evaluation indicate that it takes a lot of work, relational, strategic and operational. The national rollout will require a detailed cross department implementation plan, led by the National Office for Community Safety.

The evaluation findings indicate that the partnership approach makes it possible to target resources, *locally*, towards finding solutions, working towards preventing crime and enhancing feelings and experiences of community safety.

The results show that it takes careful and purposeful work, time, commitment, resources and government support to advance an interagency endeavour as complex as the LCSP. This will be even more pronounced as the rollout happens and the LCSP is implemented across 30+ counties/locations.

The LCSP is distinctive and purposeful in its intent and objectives relating to community safety. That said, it will be important to situate the LCSP implementation plan, for rollout and beyond,

within a framework of other partnership structures and align with these to work together with a common purpose for each location/county. This includes local data sharing, e.g., economic, social, population health and environmental data. There are examples of this sharing in the compiling of data across a county in the community safety plans developed during the pilot phase.

It is also important to ensure the LCSP model aligns with the AGS operating model and the 21 divisions across the country including the commitment to community policing.

5.2 Recommendations for LCSP roll out

The recommendations are set out below. These are based on the conclusions arising from the evaluation of the LCSP pilot phase, including the benefits of the LCSP model, as well as the possible challenges and risks to prepare for during the rollout nationally.

Recommendation One:

Implementation Plan for LCSP national roll out

We recommend that the Department of Justice, through the National Office for Community Safety, and in consultation with the National Community Safety Steering Group, and other relevant stakeholders, draw up a detailed Implementation Plan for roll out of the LCSP over the next five years (2024-2029).

The LCSP Implementation Plan should be written down and anchored on the seven enablers in the literature and informed by the learning from the evaluation of the pilot, as set out in section four of this report.

The intention is to facilitate preparation and readiness for implementation of the LCSP nationally and in each location. This will be a dynamic and experiential process that will evolve over time and continue to inform the evolving policy and practice of partnership in contemporary Irish society. The Implementation Framework set out in the CES Equality Strategy Evaluation[51] is recommended as a useful resource in this regard.

We recommend that the **LCSP Implementation Plan** 2024-2029 is **phased** over five years and includes comprehensive detail on the following points:

- Ensuring geographic spread across the four provinces
- Aligning as far as possible with the boundaries and operating models of statutory agencies at a national level, including the operating model of the AGS and the 21 divisions across the country
- Outlining the specific actions and tasks for implementation
- Setting out who or what organisation or part of the structure has responsibility for the delivery of each action within the implementation plan

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[51] Kavanagh, L,, Sweeney, L., Farahani, Z., Radomska, A. and Bailey, I. 'Realising the Promise of Equality Policy: An Evaluation of the Processes of Implementation of Three National Equality Strategies'. Dublin, 2023.

- Giving realistic timeframes and milestones for consultation with and transition from the JPC arrangements to LCSP in each county/location
- Providing estimates of the costs involved, including best use of the CSIF
- Articulating the inputs, outputs and intended outcomes of the implementation plan
- Considering the possible risks (including those laid out in section 4.4) and setting out risk management strategies informed by the learning from the evaluation of the pilot
- Providing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Implementation Plan
- Drawing on tools and resources to support best practice partnership working
- Producing guidelines and protocols for the establishment of the LCSPs including:
  - Description of the governance and accountability structures nationally and locally including the necessary oversight arrangements, at regional and/or county level, to ensure the specificity of purpose of the LCSP as well as its alignment/coherence, as appropriate, with existing partnership structures and practice in each county/location.
  - Recruitment and selection processes for the LCSP roles, including the independent chairperson and LCSP coordinator, administrative supports and volunteers who will be involved in the LCSP.
  - Description of the above LCSP roles and responsibilities
  - The size, structure and oversight arrangements for the LCSPs to maximise active involvement of all stakeholders in decision making to inform the coproduction of the local community safety plan, its implementation and evaluation.
  - The process(es) to ensure effective community engagement to inform and advance the local community safety plans for each county/location.

Recommendation Two:

Oversight for LCSP Implementation

We recommend careful consideration be given to the oversight required for the Implementation Plan for LCSP rollout 2024-2029.

Oversight is necessary to bring coherence and create stronger and more integrated responses to local area challenges, including community safety. This fits with the policy intention to advance more integrated interventions in response to local needs and the work of the Programme Board on Building Stronger and more Integrated Responses to Local Area Challenges. The work of the Programme Board aims to strengthen the alignment of the LCSP work with the other area-based approaches already in operation. We recommend that the Programme Board and the National Office work closely to this end and that the National Office be represented on the Programme Board.

The oversight required for implementation of the LCSP in each county/location includes:

- Ensuring alignment of the LCSP, as far as possible, with the relevant agency boundaries (e.g., LA, AGS)
- Gauging the usefulness of existing datasets and evidence to inform decision-making relating to the work of the LCSP
- Achieving coherence, integration and efficiencies across the plans and actions of the range of partnerships operating in an area, where relevant to advancing community safety
- Promoting co-location of service provision to facilitate and naturalise collaboration between the people leading and working within the range of partnership structures, organisations and initiatives.
- Honouring the specificity of the LCSP model as a creative and collaborative response to community safety priorities in each location.

Recommendation Three:

Data Informed LCSP Model – National and Local

We recommend that the Implementation Plan for the national roll out of the LCSP is informed and supported by reliable and useful data. This could build on the work already underway within the Department of the Taoiseach, 'supporting data driven local planning'.[52]

The recommendation is to build a data set for each county that is set within a nationally agreed framework and shared as relevant across all the structures, e.g., small data sets fitting into bigger data sets. For example, ascertain common or shared data within the range of local area and county plans e.g., Children and Young People's Services Committees, Local Community Development Committees, Local Economic and Community Plans and Community Safety Plans.

We recommend that specific measures such as Community Crime Impact Assessments be conducted to ascertain local community safety issues and to monitor responses.

Recommendation Four:

Preparation of Community Safety Plans

We recommend that the LCSPs, with the support of the National Office, draw from the findings of this evaluation when preparing their local community safety plans. This could be achieved through guidance materials/resources and a roadshow of workshops and/or national conference during 2024/2025 to prepare the ground for ongoing implementation/roll out of the LCSP.

In summary, it is important that the preparation of a local community safety plan brings the relevant people together to plan their agreed response to local safety issues. It does **not** preclude an area from initiating immediate actions on the ground. It is a 'both and' situation in that the LCSP can be preparing their plan *and* at the same time working in an integrated way with other initiatives/partnerships responding to local community safety issues.

We recommend that a balance is struct between local consultation and the development of the local community safety plan and ensuring that people see and experience progress on the ground in relation to the community safety issues that are priority for their area.

Recommendation Five:

Further Work to inform the Implementation of LCSP

There is further work to be done, post pilot, to continue informing the practice of partnership. Therefore, in addition to, and in conjunction with, the preparation of the LCSP Implementation Plan 2024-2029 we propose the following recommendations.

These recommendations will give coherence to the combined efforts and initiatives that fall under the umbrella of community safety and the implementation of the LCSP model nationally. They will also inform practice in the ever-evolving area of partnership working.

1. **Conduct a review, for sharing, by end of 2025,** of the progress of and learning arising from implementing the three community safety plans across the original pilot sites, i.e. Dublin North Inner City, Longford and Waterford. This should include consultation with the representatives of the statutory agencies and other main stakeholders in the original

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[52] Department of the Taoiseach, 'Strategy Statement 2023-2025' (Dublin, 2023).

pilot sites. The purpose of the review is to contribute to the bank of learning that will continue to emerge about inter-agency/partnership working in practice through the LCSPs. The results should be used to further inform the Implementation Plan for the ongoing rollout of the LCSPs.

2. **Conduct a review of the CSIF in 2024**, including an analysis of all the different initiatives and projects funded. The purpose is to ascertain how the CSIF is bringing the concept of community safety to life and effecting change in a local way that is also part of a larger coherent strategy for community safety over the next five years. This will ensure that the CSIF remains focused on advancing the concept of community safety and is strategically developmental rather than piecemeal.

3. **Consider confining the CSIF to the LCSPs** as they form over the next five years and giving responsibility for the administration of the CSIF to the National Office for Community Safety.

4. **Share the learning** arising from the evaluation of the pilot to inform practice, through a national conference or event along the lines of the first *Beyond Borders All Island Community Safety Conference* held in Dundalk November 2022.

5. **Conduct a review of how the pilot Small Grants Scheme** of €50,000 worked out and how this can usefully inform the Implementation of the LCSP rollout and beyond. This funding was to be administered by the Waterford LCSP to allow for small grants of up to €5k. The purpose was to test how a small discretionary grant aid fund might be utilised by a LCSP to advance community safety in the area.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Results

Profile of respondents

Table 5: Number of respondents to the LCSP members survey, per pilot site, at each data collection phase

Area	Baseline	Midpoint	Endpoint
Pilot Z	15	11	14
Pilot Y	7	11	12
Pilot X	8	9	8
Total	**30**	**31**	**34**

Table 6: Number of respondents to the LCSP members survey, by membership group, at each data collection phase

Representatives	Baseline	Midpoint	Endpoint
Community	19	19	17
Public Service	11	12	17
Total	**30**	**31**	**34**

Table 7: Average (mean) length of time (months) respondents had been a member of their LCSP when responding to the LCSP members survey, per pilot site, at each data collection phase

Area	Baseline	Midpoint	Endpoint
Pilot Z	3	12	17
Pilot Y	6	14	21
Pilot X	8	13	25
Average	**6**	**13**	**21**

Results of questions asked in the LCSP members survey at endpoint, by pilot site

Items 1.1. - 1.3. were questions about the profile of the respondent and the results are shown above in Tables 5-7.

The results for items 2.1. - 7.15. are reported below and indicate the perceptions of LCSP members in each pilot site about their LCSP. The survey of LCSP members was conducted over three timepoints:

- Baseline (B)

- Midpoint (M)
- Endpoint (E).

The items asked about at each timepoint are listed in table 8 below.

Table 8: Evaluation phase that each item of the LCSP members survey was asked at

Item Number	Baseline	Midpoint	Endpoint
Profile of Respondents			
1.1.	✓	✓	✓
1.2.	✓	✓	✓
1.3.	✓	✓	✓
Purpose and Vision of the LCSP			
2.1.	✓	✓	✓
2.2.	✓	✓	
2.3.	✓	✓	✓
2.4.	✓	✓	✓
2.5.	✓	✓	✓
2.6.	✓	✓	✓
LCSP Membership and Participation			
3.1.	✓	✓	✓
3.2.	✓	✓	✓
3.3.	✓	✓	✓
3.4.	✓	✓	✓
3.5.	✓	✓	✓
3.6.	✓	✓	✓
3.7.	✓	✓	✓
3.8.	✓	✓	✓
3.9.		✓	✓
3.10.		✓	✓
3.11.			✓
3.12.			✓
3.13.			✓
3.14.			✓
3.15.			✓
Resources			
4.1.	✓	✓	✓
4.2.	✓	✓	
4.3.	✓	✓	✓
4.4.		✓	✓
4.5.		✓	
4.6.		✓	✓
4.7.		✓	✓
Developing and Implementing the Local Community Safety Plan			
5.1.			✓
5.2.			✓
5.3.		✓	✓
5.4.			✓
5.5.			✓
5.6.			✓
5.7.			✓
5.8.			✓

Item Number	Baseline	Midpoint	Endpoint
Satisfaction with the LCSP			
6.1.	✓	✓	✓
6.2.	✓	✓	✓
6.3.	✓	✓	✓
6.4.			✓
6.5.		✓	✓
6.6.			✓
Benefits, Drawbacks and Added Value of LCSPs			
6.7.		✓	✓
6.8.		✓	✓
6.9.			✓
6.10.1.			✓
6.10.2.			✓
6.10.3.			✓
6.10.4.			✓
Impact of LCSPs			
7.1.	✓	✓	✓
7.2.	✓	✓	✓
7.3.	✓	✓	✓
7.4.		✓	✓
7.5.		✓	✓
7.6.		✓	✓
7.7.		✓	✓
7.8.		✓	✓
7.9.		✓	✓
7.10.		✓	✓
7.11.		✓	✓
7.12.			✓
7.13.			✓
7.14.			✓
7.15.			✓

Items 2.2., 4.2. and 4.5. were asked at baseline and midpoint. They were removed from the endpoint survey and are not reported here. Their results are reported in the Interim report. The items were removed from the endpoint survey to shorten the survey and because their results were either consistent at baseline and midpoint with little reason to believe they would change at endpoint, or else they were no longer considered relevant at endpoint.

Purpose and vision of the LCSP

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
2.1. The goals and objectives of the LCSP are clear			
2.3. The goals and objectives are understood by all LCSP members			
2.4. The goals and objectives of the LCSP are realistic			
2.5. All LCSP members are committed to achieving its goals and objectives			
2.6. All LCSP members are committed to working in partnership			

LCSP membership and participation

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
3.1. The roles, responsibilities and expectations of LCSP members are clearly defined and understood by all			
3.2. LCSP leaders are committed to fostering a positive environment where LCSP members can work together to address community safety issues			
3.3. All LCSP members are actively involved in planning and setting priorities			
3.4. There is good communication between LCSP members			
3.5. People in the LCSP trust one another			
3.6. I feel part of the decision-making process in the LCSP			

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
3.7. Some members of the LCSP seem to have more power in making decisions than others	E, M, B	E, M, B	E, M, B
3.8. There is good communication and engagement between the LCSP and local communities in this area	E, M, B	E, M, B	E, M, B
3.9. The LCSP members share similar ideas about how to address the concerns of the local community	E, M	E, M	E, M
3.10. Tasks are distributed fairly between LCSP members	E, M	E, M	E, M
3.11. The LCSP is governed/managed effectively by individuals on the partnership	E	E	E
3.12. The LCSP is effective at holding individuals on the partnership accountable	E	E	E
3.13. There are adequate opportunities for LCSP members to collaboratively problem-solve community safety issues	E	E	E
3.14. Service providers on the LCSP are represented by individuals at the right grade/level	E	E	E
3.15. The LCSP makes decisions in a timely way	E	E	E

Resources

Chart legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
4.1. There is sufficient funding to ensure that the LCSP can do its work			
4.3. There is sufficient training and support available to LCSP members to help them carry out their role with the LCSP			
4.4. There is sufficient staffing to ensure that the LCSP can do its work			
4.6. There is sufficient information and data sharing between LCSP members to ensure the LCSP can do its work			
4.7. LCSP members and organisations share resources to ensure the LCSP can do its work			

Developing and implementing the Local Community Safety Plan

Most items below were considered too early to be applicable to pilot X as they were still in the process of developing their community safety plan at the time of endpoint data collection.

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
5.1. The local community safety plan reflects the concerns and priorities of the local community	E	E	N/A.
5.2. There is/was sufficient engagement with the local communities in this area when developing the local community safety plan	E	E	N/A.
5.3. The members of the LCSP worked/are working together to develop the local community safety plan	E / M	E / M	E / M
5.4. There are adequate processes in place to track the implementation of the local community safety plan	E	E	N/A.
5.5. The members of the LCSP worked/are working together to implement the local community safety plan	E	E	N/A.
5.6. People from the local community are involved in the implementation of the local community safety plan	E	E	N/A.
5.7. Implementation of the local community safety plan is going to plan	E	E	N/A.
5.8. LCSP members take responsibility for implementing actions in the local community safety plan relevant to them/their organization	E	E	N/A.

Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Satisfaction with the LCSP

Legend: ■ Completely Satisfied ■ Mostly Satisfied ■ Somewhat Satisfied ■ A Little Satisfied ■ Not At All Satisfied

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
6.1. Your role in the LCSP	E / M / B	E / M / B	E / M / B
6.2. Your influence in the LCSP	E / M / B	E / M / B	E / M / B
6.3. The way LCSP members work together	E / M / B	E / M / B	E / M / B
6.4. The LCSPs plans for addressing community safety	E	E	N/A.
6.5. Actions the LCSP has taken so far to address community safety	E / M	E / M	E / M
6.6. The way the LCSP is implementing its plans for addressing community safety	E	E	N/A.

Benefits, drawbacks and added value of LCSPs

6.7. Please name the main benefits and/or drawbacks you have experienced through your participation in the LCSP so far.

*Note: The tables below present the '# of Responses' in bold (e.g. **7**) and in brackets (e.g. (7)). The bold numbers represent the number of individual people (respondents) who made a comment related to a particular theme. The bracketed text represent the number of times that a particular theme or sub-theme was mentioned, regardless of the number of individual people who mentioned it. For this reason, the number of responses in brackets does not always add up to the number of responses in bold (e.g. one individual might have mentioned a three benefits under a single theme. This is counted as one individual response in the bold text (e.g. **1**) but 3 separate responses in the bracketed text (e.g. (3))).*

Benefits	# of Responses	
	Midpoint	Endpoint
Pilot Z		
(Forum for) Multi-stakeholder collaboration/partnership-working	**7**	**8**
• As long as aims and resources are clarified	(1)	
• To improve networking, understanding of, and engagement with other organisations	(2)	(5)
• To share ideas, information, resources, knowledge/skills and workload	(1)	(4)
• To highlight the work agencies are doing	(1)	(1)
• To collaboratively agree actions and priorities	(1)	
• To (collectively) address issues and challenges (through a plan)		(1)
• To reduce duplication		(1)
Acknowledgement and recognition	**3**	
• Of the voices of members and stakeholders	(2)	
• Of issues and challenges	(1)	
Opportunities to bring relevant issues and expertise to the table		**1**
Enhanced resources for community safety		**1**
Positive community safety initiatives		**1**
Pilot X		
Multi-stakeholder collaboration/Partnership-working	**2**	**3**
• To network with other organisations and representatives	(1)	
• To bring together residents, community groups and statutory agencies		(1)
• To develop a shared vision and plan for the community	(1)	
• To address local community safety concerns	(1)	
• That has a good mix of agencies and residents		(1)
Safety plans that reflect community priorities	**1**	

Community safety responses	**3**	
• That are more holistic	(1)	
• That are actually being actioned and completed via the LCSP	(1)	
• Improved community safety in certain specific locales	(1)	
Positive community engagement	**4**	**1**
• And community involvement/empowerment	(1)	
• Forum for local communities to have their voice heard and influence community safety	(2)	
High-level support for, and engagement with, LCSPs	**1**	
Accountability for service providers	**1**	
Enthusiasm and commitment of LCSP members	**1**	**1**
Information coming from sub-groups		**1**
Knowledge, understanding and openness of LCSP staff		**1**
Placing a focus on safety in the community		**2**
• By having a specific team dedicated to it		(1)
• By being part of a national priority and pilot on community safety		(1)
"Being a force to improve the city"		**1**
Facilitates decision-making		**2**
• By representatives from statutory agencies having decision-making power		(1)
• By providing access to decision-makers		(1)
Pilot Y		
Multi-stakeholder collaboration/partnership-working	**4**	**4**
• To improve networking with, and understanding of, broad mix of stakeholders across the community	(3)	(1)
• Sharing information and experience	(1)	
• Working collaboratively with community and agency representatives	(1)	(1)
• To resolve local issues		(1)
Balance of membership between different stakeholder groups	**1**	
Detailed planning and discussions	**1**	
Involvement in a holistic new community safety approach	**1**	
Meeting others passionate about local community safety	**1**	
Participation of minority communities		**1**
• In developing the local community safety plan		(1)
Opportunities to highlight work of some organisations		**1**
Improved understanding from some stakeholders of how they help their communities		**1**

Drawbacks	# of Responses	
	Midpoint	Endpoint
Pilot Z		
Limited capacity/resources	**1**	**3**
• To engage those most marginalised	(1)	
• To roll out community safety initiatives to more geographic areas		(1)
• For Gardaí		(1)
• In terms of time and availability to engage with partnership		(1)
• In terms of funding and staffing to drive LCSP objectives		(1)
Perceived dismissiveness or arrogance of some members towards ideas of other members	**1**	
Challenge of adapting to new ways of working for previous JPC members	**1**	
Online meetings due to Covid-19 public health restrictions	**1**	
Poor engagement or absence of critical stakeholders from LCSPs	**3**	**3**
• Marginalised and/or minority groups not on the membership	(2)	
• Challenge of getting full participation from all LCSP members	(1)	(1)
• Vagueness or lack of clarity from some organisational members in how they can help resolve issues	(1)	
• If organisations do not follow through on collaborative activities		(1)
• Some agencies less accountable or interested in engaging than others		(1)
• When replacements for some representatives have little knowledge of past LCSP work		(1)
Gatekeeping of some services	**1**	
Pilot X		
Difficulty moving beyond policing-focused approaches to community safety	**1**	
Poor understanding of minority communities	**1**	
Limited capacity/resourcing	**3**	**3**
• Under-resourcing	(2)	(1)
• Impact of LCSPs on resource management for service providers	(1)	
• In terms of time requirements for effective participation		(1)
Lack of community support or involvement	**1**	
Uneven spread/accessibility of LCSP across whole LCSP area	**1**	
Limited communication between sub-groups		**1**
Significant increase in workload for some members		**1**
The need to balance organisational and LCSP agendas can leave some community residents frustrated or misunderstood		**1**
Pilot Y		

Process moving too slowly	**6**	**2**
• Slow translation of discussions into action, processes perceived to be too bureaucratic	(2)	(1)
• Slow development of community safety plan	(2)	
• Slow establishment of subgroups	(1)	
• Perceived lack of achievement to date in improving/empowering communities	(1)	(1)
• Time taken to see benefits	(1)	
Poor engagement or lack of inclusiveness	**4**	**3**
• Poor communication from LCSP leaders, decisions taken without consultation and/or perceived "frustration of process in preventing open dialogue"	(3)	(1)
• Perceived poor engagement of, "lack of respect" towards, or differential treatment for, community members	(3)	(1)
• Some stakeholders not fully engaged	(2)	
• LCSP leaders perceived to be following their own agenda		(1)
Impact of Covid-19 and public health restrictions	**1**	

■Benefits greatly exceed the drawbacks ■Benefits exceed the drawbacks ■Benefits and drawbacks are about equal ■Drawbacks exceed the benefits ■Drawbacks greatly exceed the benefits

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
6.8. So far, how have the benefits of participating in the LCSP compared with the drawbacks for you?			

■Yes ■Not Sure ■No

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
6.9. Overall, based on your experience so far, do you believe your LCSP brings added value in the management of local community safety issues compared to other existing arrangements?			

6.10. Following on from your answer above, to what extent do you believe your LCSP has added value(if any) in the specific areas below:

Legend: ■ To a Great Extent ■ Somewhat ■ Very Little ■ Not at All ■ Not Sure

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
6.10.1. Capturing a more authentic and representative community voice			
6.10.2. Being 'proactive' and 'getting things done' in the community; being more than a 'talking shop'			
6.10.3. Planning and delivering community-driven responses to local community safety issues			
6.10.4. Planning and delivering more holistic responses to community safety			

Impact of LCSPs

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
7.1. The LCSP has improved community awareness of local activities around community safety			
7.2. The LCSP has improved the identification and prioritisation of community safety issues that matter to the local community			

Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
7.3. The LCSP has improved community participation in local activities around community safety	E / M / B	E / M / B	E / M / B
7.4. The LCSP has improved community involvement in identifying and prioritising community safety issues that matter to them	E / M	E / M	E / M
7.5. The LCSP has improved the trust of the local community in local service providers	E / M	E / M	E / M
7.6. The LCSP has improved the confidence of the local community in local service providers to tackle/deal with community safety issues	E / M	E / M	E / M
7.7. The LCSP has improved working relationships between different agencies and organisations in our community	E / M	E / M	E / M
7.8. The LCSP has led to greater duplication of services in our community	E / M	E / M	E / M
7.9. The LCSP has diverted time and resources away from more useful activities or services	E / M	E / M	E / M

A chart comparing survey results across Pilot Z, Pilot Y, and Pilot X. Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

Survey Item	Pilot Z results	Pilot Y results	Pilot X results
7.10. The LCSP has improved the sense of safety in the local community	E / M	E / M	E / M
7.11. The LCSP has improved how safe the local community is	E / M	E / M	E / M
7.12. The LCSP has improved the amount and quality of multi-agency services/initiatives on community safety	E	E	E
7.13. The LCSP has improved the focus on 'prevention and early intervention' amongst its members when addressing community safety	E	E	E
7.14. The LCSP has made services on the partnership more transparent about the actions (or lack of actions) they have taken to improve community safety	E	E	E
7.15. The LCSP has made services on the partnership more accountable for the actions (or lack of actions) they have taken to improve community safety	E	E	E

This evaluation is to be cited as follows:

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