

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2014

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CUSTOMER CONTACT

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Summary

This report details the area covered by the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, which falls within the remit of this Committee.

1 Background

1.1 The area within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by Councillor Hicks, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, is:

- CCTV
- Community Officers
- Community safety
- Emergency Planning
- Enforcement (executive functions only)
- Environmental health
- Trading standards
- Travellers.

2 Achievements for 2012 – 2013

2.1 Community Officers

- The total number of PACT meetings attended since April is 25; 100% of PACT meetings were attended when notified a fortnight in advance. 166 other Community Engagements were undertaken.
- In conjunction with Dog's Trust, a programme of workshops has started, and is being rolled out to every Primary School in Medway, to

make children aware of responsible dog ownership, dog fouling and its consequences and how to behave around a stray dog that they do not know.

- As a part of the team's new focus to encourage civic pride, involvement and responsibility a programme of SACTS is being rolled out that allows us to work with Medway's schools and interact with the pupils to help them understand what we do, why we do it and how we do it and what they can do to help us keep Medway clean and safe.
- To encourage responsible dog ownership we ensure that no dog leaves our custody un-chipped, we offer advice on security when a dog has absconded from a property, and provide information on dog fouling and its consequences.
- 361 stray dogs were removed from Medway's streets and taken to kennels (a 28% reduction on the previous year); 258 dogs were reunited with their owners. The team received a Gold award from the RSPCA in recognition of its excellent stray dog procedures.
- The commercial premises compliance process has been streamlined utilising the new admin hub. Letters and questionnaires are sent to business premises so that necessary information required to manage risk is gathered in the most efficient way. Those premises from which no response is received are visited by the Community Wardens, who establish if the premises are still trading, and if there are any potential risks of which the Food Safety team should be aware. This process means that work is screened before it is allocated to officers, and ensures that expensive professionals only spend their time on work that requires their attention.

2.2 Community Safety

- The Community Safety Partnership continues to co-ordinate and supports the PACT Chair Forum, which is chaired by a PACT Chair. During the year there have been a number of topics discussed with guest speakers – Kent Police / 999 call-outs and Neighbourhood Policing update; Waste and Recycling; Joint Family Management Programme (Police team addressing persistent ASB offenders); Noise and Nuisance Team; Cllr Hicks also gave a presentation on the work of the Community Safety Partnership.
- Seventeen partnership community engagement and consultation days were coordinated by the Community Safety Partnership, these were held in different Wards across Medway.
- In partnership with Kent Probation's Community Payback team, 423 jobs have been completed this year, all coordinated by the Community Safety Partnership.
- The DWP-led Community Engagement Hub runs out of the Community Safety Partnership office at Medway Police Station. 'Streetweek' is a multi-agency approach, and is the operational name of the approach that draws agencies together to provide a more effective way of collectively tackling issues that impact on residents and the community within identified Wards and then specific streets. The team has the capability to undertake the work required to improve and sustain the well being of residents, tackling key issues, such as health, worklessness, poor education/truancy and anti-social behaviour.

- Medway has entered into joint commissioning arrangements with the Kent district and county councils, criminal justice partners and health to provide independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA) support to high-risk victims of domestic abuse. The service is provided through a consortium of voluntary sector organisations, known as Kent Domestic Abuse Consortium (KDAC). A key benefit from commissioning through the voluntary sector is that KDAC, through accessing other income streams, is able to lever in additional support for lower risk victims of domestic abuse.
- In the first two quarters, KDAC has engaged with 165 Medway clients, 146 of whom have been referred by MARAC (high risk). There are 173 children in the households of those high-risk cases.
- 62 cases have been closed. 88% of clients experienced a significant or moderate reduction in risk. CAADA (Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) has set a benchmark figure for combined Significant and Moderate Reduction at 74%. The assessment of very positive or positive impact on children's wellbeing stands at 100%. CAADA's benchmark figure is 45%.

2.3 Enforcement

- 17 convictions to date for littering. Fines and costs totalled £6,490. 4 cautions were issued.
- 12 convictions for fly tipping and waste related offences. Fines and costs totalled £13,700. Three cautions were issued as well as an 18-month conditional discharge. Two warrants for arrest were also issued.
- One conviction for untidy land. Fines and costs totalled £1,235.
- The Street Scene Enforcement Team was created in June as a product of BfL phase 3a and now sits within Environmental Enforcement. The team has served 293 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering since June (6 months). This exceeds the 287 served in the whole of 2012/13.
- The team also has its own caged tipper truck to permit the removal of fly tipping as soon as it has been searched for evidence. 75% of reported fly tipping is removed on the same day.

2.4 Environmental Health

- 502 responses to planning consultations this includes major projects such as Chatham Waters and Rochester Station; 123 Licensing consultations and 413 Temporary Events notices have been responded to.
- During 2013 we undertook 950 interventions in food premises. These resulted in five premises agreeing to close voluntarily and another five being closed formally through the Courts due to the imminent health risks found by officers. A further 9 improvement notices were served on food business operators. 263 interventions resulted in written warnings. The team also received 283 food hygiene service requests.
- Medway was re-visited by the Food Standards Agency in October following their audit in 2012. The outcome of the revisit was positive; commenting on good practice, competent and well-supported officers and good risk management now that the number of unrated food premises has been reduced from 557 in April to 96 now.

- On 31 December 2013 there were 2,056 food premises operating in Medway. Of these, 1,825 (89%) were found to be broadly compliant with food hygiene law. This has increased by 18% since April (from 71%) due to the team working with businesses to help them to comply and reducing the number of unrated food premises on our database.
- Since 1st February 2013, when the scheme was launched in Medway, 608 food businesses have been rated in accordance with the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme during their routine food hygiene inspections. Under the scheme, eligible food businesses are rated from 0 (urgent improvement necessary) through to 5 (very good). 87.5% were satisfactory or better, 12.5% required some improvement of which only 0.5% required urgent improvement action by the business.
- The team has been involved in the production of the tattooing and body piercing guidance toolkit - working alongside specialists from Public Health England, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) and the Health and Safety Laboratory. The best practice toolkit was published by the CIEH in September 2013 for use by local authority officers across England and Wales.
- In 2013 the team served 22 immediate health & safety prohibition notices and eight improvement notices. The team also received 283 health & safety service requests and 168 accident notifications.
- A week long dog chipping campaign, A Day For Every Dog, was conducted at five sites across Medway. 393 dogs were chipped. This campaign has been nationally recognised and has received awards from both the Kennel Club and the RSPCA.
- Five filthy and verminous premises were cleared in default of notice, removing around 50 tonnes of waste.
- 2,774 noise and nuisance calls were responded to, resulting in 53 three noise abatement notices being served. There is one court case pending for failure to comply with the abatement notice.

2.5 Trading Standards

- The service has introduced a new approach to tackling doorstep crime where individual householders can declare their homes 'No Cold Calling' properties. This has the advantage over previous initiatives by being both legally enforceable and empowering homeowners. Over 11,500 self help packs have been issued through a variety of community engagements across Medway and via support from community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch. This year has seen a reduction by approximately 35% of complaints from the victims of doorstep crime.
- Medway continues to have a high profile nationally in the area of toy and nursery goods safety, recently highlighted by its work to control the dangerous 'Fruit head' dolls this Christmas, and which came to the attention of local, national and international media. The dolls that were offered for sale in Medway tested positive for carcinogenic compounds.
- The progression of our local sampling plan and the Food Standards Agency's national food sampling project helps to ensure that local residents are not subjected to unfair and unsafe trading practices. The range of samples taken included: processed meat products, melamine plates and fresh turkeys.

- 2014 marks the 10th anniversary of the Trading Standards team operation of Medway's Fair Trader Scheme, which currently has 206 locally approved businesses. This scheme, which is well appreciated by both local consumers and businesses, helps the Trading Standards team to ensure that residents have access to reliable tradespersons.
- The service continues its work in addressing illicit tobacco in Medway and deployed teams with sniffer dogs in 2013 to reveal hidden stocks of counterfeit and non-duty paid tobacco. Their work has seen a reduction in the levels of local traders stocking the harmful niche oral tobacco products.
- The Trading Standards service is developing its work in tackling illicit tobacco in partnership with the Public Health team and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Tobacco sniffer dogs were used on six days during 2013.

2.6 CCTV (Public Surveillance & Commercial)

- In 2012 four Local Authorities in Kent entered into the CCTV Partnership – making it the UK's largest CCTV collaboration. Since inception, this unique CCTV shared service model has reduced Partners' operating costs by approximately 25% with the Host Authority reducing overhead costs by approximately 50%. For the period 4/12 – 8/13, the CCTV Partnership identified 15,191 occurrences of crime and anti social behaviour, of which 2,138 resulted in arrests. A total of 1,793 DVDs were retrieved from the Police to use in evidence.
- CCTV management for multiple Healthy Living Centres continue to embed 2013/14.
- MCC have received two LGC Award Nominations – in Public to Public and Governance categories.
- MCC invited as a Key Speaker at CCTV User Group Annual Conference following their 2012 Excellence and Innovation Award for the creation of Medway, Swale, Maidstone and Gravesham's CCTV Partnership.
- Throughout the year, there has been a range of positive media surrounding the CCTV service – including newspaper and television coverage.

2.7 Travellers

- The response to unauthorised encampments in Medway is co-ordinated and lead by the Council's Strategic Housing Service, which liaises with the police and landowners and responds to such encampments. The number of unauthorised encampments in Medway has continued to reduce. In the last year we have been informed of just one encampment.
- This was at the Riverside Country Park on the 30 August 2013. There were approximately 12 - 15 caravans with associated vehicles. The group agreed to move on voluntary so no enforcement action was needed.

2.8 Emergency Planning

- Continue to work with partner organisations on the Multi-agency Resilience Forum (KRF) to progress County wide emergency planning.
- Review of the KRF's Mass Fatalities Plan which deals with the response to high numbers of fatalities resulting from a no-notice incident and facilitates the identification process to assist the Coroner.
- We have successfully negotiated a contract to manage large-scale Oil Pollution incidents. To support this we have organised training for six staff to be certificated Oil Pollution Officers and three staff certificated as Oil Pollution Beach-masters.
- We successfully designed, organised and managed Exercise Combine, a multi-agency exercise held over a four-day period in April 2013 that tested the revised off-site emergency for all three Medway COMAH sites. In total over a hundred and fifty people took part in the exercise which consisted of:
 - Two live alerting exercises (one for Grain LNG & SGN followed by one for BP Oil);
 - A tabletop exercise;
 - A live test of Grain village siren and the emergency notification message service.
 - A rest centre training exercise which was put into practice in early December during the Flood Storm Surge .
- Coordinated the early stages of the Flood Storm Surge and supported the Council's on-going response during the emergency.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a 4x4 vehicle response to emergencies.

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Background documents

None