

## **REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**18 DECEMBER 2014**

### **ATTENDANCE BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CUSTOMER CONTACT**

Report from: Councillor Hicks  
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact

#### **Summary**

This report sets out activities and progress on work areas within Councillor Hicks's Portfolio which fall within the remit of this Committee. This information is provided in relation to the Portfolio Holder being held to account.

#### **1. Background**

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Community safety and Customer Contact are:

- CCTV
- Community Officers
- Community Safety partnership, including tackling drugs, alcohol and domestic abuse
- Emergency Planning
- Enforcement (executive functions only)
- Environmental Health
- Trading Standards
- Travellers

**Note:** The following services will remain within the remit of the Community Safety and Customer Contact Portfolio

- Tobacco control, excluding smoking cessation services
- Community safety aspects of alcohol and drug misuse
- Public health aspects of promotion of community safety, violence prevention and response.

## **2. Achievements for 2013-14**

### **2.1 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 Medway achieving a reduction in overhead costs of approximately 50%.
- During 2014, the CCTV Partnership identified 14,254 occurrences of crime and anti social behaviour, 1,855 of which resulted in arrests. Since April, the police retrieved a total of 1,127 DVDs to use in evidence.
- CCTV management for multiple Healthy Living Centres continues to grow and in 2014/15 an additional centre was added to the portfolio.
- Medway Control Centre (MCC) has received two LGC Award Nominations – in Public-to-Public and Governance categories.
- MCC was invited as a key speaker at the national 2014 CCTV User Group Annual Conference, regarding how the wider CCTV Partnership at MCC is progressing.
- Throughout the year, there has been a range of positive media surrounding the CCTV service – including newspaper and television coverage.
- Maintenance of CCTV infrastructure has been kept up to date during 2014 and camera upgrades have been completed for each Partner area – ensuring that a high quality infrastructure is sustained.
- Invitations have been accepted in 2014 to speak on CCTV Partnership at MCC and innovation at Westminster Briefings and Local Government Public Policy Conference.

### **2.2 Community Officers**

- The total number of PACT meetings attended since April is 29; 100% of PACT meetings were attended when notified a fortnight in advance. From these meetings, the team has resolved 117 issues of concern raised by members of the community. A further 70 issues were referred to other departments within the council.
- 38 other Community Engagements were undertaken including the universities' freshers' fairs, surgeries, healthy walks, community fun days, residents' associations and neighbourhood panel meetings.

- In conjunction with the Dog's Trust, a programme of workshops 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 is being rolled out to help us to work with Medway's schools and interact with the pupils to help them understand what we do, why we do it, 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.
- 173 stray dogs have been removed from Medway's streets and taken to kennels since April. 252 dogs were reunited with their owners. The team received a Gold award from the RSPCA in recognition of its excellent stray dog procedures.
- A new Dog Control Order has been introduced, meaning that dogs must be kept on leads on any footpath adjacent to a carriageway.
- The process for establishing compliance of commercial premises with regulations has been streamlined utilising the new administrative 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 potential risks that the Food Safety team should be aware of. This process means that work is screened before it is allocated to officers, and ensures that more specialist (and expensive) officers can spend their time on work that requires their specific skills.

### **2.3 Community Safety**

- The Community Safety Partnership continues to co-ordinate and supports the PACT Chair Forum, which is chaired by one of the PACT Chairs. During the year there have been a number of topics discussed with guest speakers including parking, noise and Medway Joint Family Management Programme.
- 23 partnership community engagement and consultation days were coordinated by the Community Safety Partnership in wards across Medway.
- The CSP has opened up a partnership safety shop in Chatham town centre for the six weeks leading up to Christmas. During the first four weeks, the centre received over 2,500 visitors. The

Pentagon Centre has allowed the CSP to use the premises rent-free.

- The CSP has worked with probation services to deliver 874 community payback jobs in the past 12 months (106% more than in the previous year).
- Medway has continued to support 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 last four quarters, KDAC has engaged with 416 Medway clients who have been referred by MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) as being at high risk of harm from their abusers.
- A Domestic Abuse Coordinator has been appointed. During the second quarter of 2014, working with the Medway Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB) and Domestic Abuse Health Visitor, the coordinator has delivered a number of training sessions on domestic abuse, safeguarding children and risk assessment.
- The coordinator and MSCB have worked with the Medway Youth Parliament on putting together a training presentation for teachers and children's centres on honour based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- MARACs across Kent and Medway are currently undergoing a restructure due to capacity issues and to ensure sustainability for the future. As part of this a consultant has spoken with partner agencies including the DA Coordinator for views both on MARAC and perpetrator programmes.
- The Medway Domestic Abuse Forum has now further increased in partnership commitment. The MDAF conference was delivered in November. A number of guest speakers were arranged to cover topics including stalking, refuges, Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme and Prevention orders, and a victim of domestic abuse talking about her experience of attending the Freedom programme. In addition, workshops were held on safety planning, adolescent domestic abuse and working with perpetrators.
- The Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop (OSS) has increased capacity by 95% by the DA coordinator seeking additional commitment from multi agency partners; there are now 14 partner agencies attending regularly. The OSS has also moved to larger premises.

## 2.4 Emergency Planning

- Continue to work with partner organisations on the multi-agency Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) to progress County-wide emergency planning on the following subjects:
  - Evacuation & Shelter
  - Flooding, east coast surge, surface and ground water
  - Community resilience
  - Risk assessment
  - Kent Voluntary Sector
- Carrying out a second review of the KRF's Mass Fatalities Plan, due to changes on the group involved in this work resulting in a more positive input from NHS organisations. The plan deals with the response to high numbers of fatalities and supports the Coroner to discharge statutory duties under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.
- Training has been organised for:
  - 14 Incident Liaison Officers 11 went on the attend multi-agency Bronze
  - 7 Shoreline Clean Up Assessment Techniques (SCAT)
  - 5 Oil Pollution (certificated by Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
  - 2 Beach Masters (certificated by Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
  - 2 officers on Evacuation & Shelter
  - 1 Officer on Managing your Reputation in a Crisis
- 3-year maintenance contract for Grain siren and the emergency messaging system
- We carried out a live test of the siren in Grain village. In addition to this the emergency messaging service was also live tested
- The team took part in and arranged for other appropriate officers to attend the following exercises:
  - Medway Maritime Hospital
  - Public Health England -Ebola
  - Home Office - Mass Fatalities
  - Terrorist incident at Dover docks
- Heatwave and Cold Weather emergency plans have been written in conjunction with Public Health
- Worked with Kingsnorth Power station and Kent Police on the community issues related to the demolition of the buildings on their site.
- The Council's Major Emergency Plan has been completely overhauled and the main section approved by CMT. The final Annexes are being drafted before publication.

- The Council's Flood plan is in the process of being reviewed.
- Following the flood surge last December the equipment used during the response has been replaced and stocks enhanced to provide an initial response for up to 50 people.
- The team that responded to the surge tide in December won the Council award Making a Difference to Our Customers lives".

## **2.5 Enforcement**

- There have been 46 convictions to date for littering, fly tipping and waste related offences. Fines and costs totalled £25,058. 6 cautions were issued as well as 1 conditional discharge and 200 hours of community service. 4 warrants for arrest were also issued.
- The Street Scene Enforcement Team was created last year as a product of BfL phase 3a and now sits within Environmental Enforcement. The team has served 380 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering since April. This is an increase in average monthly performance of 142%.
- 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. 84% of reported fly tipping is removed on the same day.

## **2.6 Environmental Health**

- The Environmental Protection Noise and Nuisance Team were recognised nationally during the year for their innovative work to tackle noise nuisance from dogs: the second highest category of noise complaint. The team won the Local Authority category in the Kennel Club's Good Citizen Dog Scheme and was also highly commended in the Noise Abatement Society's John Connell award.
- A licensing scheme for people who board animals in their own home was launched in the summer, accompanied by a campaign to raise the profile and was the subject of a recent interview on BBC Radio Kent. There are currently 10 premises either licensed or in the process of being licensed.
- The team has also made a number of high profile seizures of noise equipment and secured a recent noise prosecution against a pub that has been causing misery to its neighbours over a period of several years.
- Between 1 Jan - 2 Dec 2014 the Environmental Protection Team has returned 604 Planning responses (including major projects such as Lodge Hill, Chatham Waters, Bakersfield, Rainham, Rochester Airport and Gibraltar Farm), 79 Licensing responses and 385 Temporary Events Notices.

- The team has also been involved in the launch of Chatham Big Screen, having been consulted as specialists in relation to acoustic assessments.
- The Food and Safety Team has received complimentary feedback from the Food Standards Agency in achieving sign off from its audit in October 2014, and has completed a major piece of work in cleansing the database, significantly raising Medway's performance in comparison to other local authorities. The team has responded to 100% of complaints about food and maintained a database of around 2000 food businesses. The team has maintained a minimum of 95% that are risk-rated and over 90% are broadly compliant (Food Hygiene Rating of 3 or above). A number of food businesses have been successfully prosecuted for persistent non-compliance, all of which contribute to maintaining public safety in Medway.
- The team has also actively engaged in two national food-sampling surveys this year for food service platters and premises with a low food hygiene rating.
- The number of premises with a food hygiene rating has increased to 1,001, with 827 (83%) rated at 4 ("good") or 5 ("very good")
- The Team also participated in Food Safety Week 2014. This year's key message was "Don't wash raw chicken", as part of the FSA's efforts to reduce the number of cases of Campylobacter. The team arranged a number of community engagement events in all major shopping areas in Medway to help educate consumers and will be carrying out a similar campaign before Christmas to promote food safety around turkey preparation and cooking.
- The Team has issued 7 Ship Sanitation Certificates as part of our port health function. The team has also introduced a service to sample water from vessels in 2014/15.
- The Team has been working in partnership with Public Health to promote healthier eating (Eat Out Eat Well) and in partnership with Public Health England to investigate reports of infectious disease and proactively work to identify and isolate causes to prevent outbreaks.
- The Team has also carried out the annual safety inspection of Gillingham Football Club and have actively contributed in the Safety Advisory Group with partner agencies. The safety certificate has been revised and is due to be re-issued in early 2015. Our work with the Club, Kent Police, the Sports Grounds Safety Agency and other partners has helped to ensure that spectators remain safe. The police have been so satisfied by the safety arrangements that the majority of the matches played at Priestfields Stadium this year have not required police officers to attend inside the ground.
- The team has responded to 100% of complaints about health, safety and welfare issues in Medway businesses. The team has worked in partnership with colleagues from the Health and Safety

Executive, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Councils Private Sector Housing regarding health and safety issues. The team has regularly attended the Council's Safety Advisory Group and supported the Council's Events Team and external event organisers by providing advice regarding food safety and health and safety matters. The team has also supported colleagues in other teams regarding health and safety advice, working in conjunction with the internal health and safety team.

- A number of accidents have been investigated, including one fatality reported to us by Kent Police. We also helped to assist those traders affected by the closure of the Trafalgar Centre and helped to signpost them to sources of support to enable them to continue to trading.

## **2.7 Trading Standards**

- The service continues to tackle doorstep crime where individual householders can declare their homes 'No Cold Calling' properties. Over 24,000 self-help packs have been issued through a variety of community engagements across Medway and via support from community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch.
- As a consequence of our awareness raising activities the service has seen a progressive increase in the level of reports of cold callers operating in Medway. This information is being used to map problem areas, which will be actively targeted.
- The service has also engaged with all the local banks and building societies in Medway to create contact routes for them to refer suspected victims of cold callers to the Trading Standards service.
- Medway continues to have a high profile nationally in the area of product safety, recently highlighted by its work to control dangerous 'novelty hats' this Christmas, which came to the attention of local and national media. The hats that were offered for sale in Medway presented a strangulation risk.
- The service has actively participated in challenging the sale of 'legal highs' and as part of a national Home Office survey tested fifteen products freely available in Medway. The service is also acting as an expert witness in a leading Metropolitan Police case scheduled for this December into the sale of Nitrous Oxide cartridges. These are breathed as an intoxicant.
- 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: Manuka Honey, meat products, 'Thai Dye' restricted food colourings, imported wines and take away curries.
- The service has undertaken a project in partnership with Vehicle Operator Services Agency (VOSA) to ensure that low cost cars



offered for sale in Medway are safe. Ten of the vehicles inspected were subject to immediate prohibition notices. Officers have worked with the business in this sector to implement schemes to ensure only safe vehicles are offered on their forecourts.

- The service has continued its work with the national Illegal Money Lending Team to raise awareness of loan sharks operating in the area. A full weeks promotion culminated with the national mascot Sid the Shark appearing at Gillingham Football Club, guidance material appearing in the club programme and a message on how to report loan sharks being delivered to six thousand attendees.
- 2014 marked the 10th anniversary of the Trading Standards team's operation of Medway's Fair Trader Scheme, which currently has 193 locally approved businesses. The scheme is actively encouraging new members by promoting itself at local building supplies companies.
- 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.

## **2.8 Travellers**

- The response to unauthorised encampments in Medway is coordinated and led 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 increased in recent months. From February to mid November 2014 there have been 16 reports of encampments, which were all investigated. 7 encampments were found to be on Council owned sites, which is an increase from the single encampment on Council land in the equivalent period in 2013.
- Where an encampment takes place on Council land an assessment of the encampment is undertaken along with health and welfare checks of those on the site. This information is then used to inform any decisions to take enforcement action. Should the group not agree to move on following a request to move, the Council has been successful in obtaining orders where enforcement action has been taken to move a group on. There is a clear legal process that has to be followed in all cases. At the time of writing there is a single encampment within Medway and notices have been served on the group requiring them to vacate the site.

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**Background papers**

None