

Medway Council
Meeting of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2014

6.30pm to 9.40pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: Carr (Chairman), Etheridge, Griffin, Griffiths, Hubbard, Juby, Mason, Osborne, Stamp and Turpin

Substitutes: Councillors:
Avey (Substitute for Bright)
Iles (Substitute for Mackinlay)
Mackness (Substitute for Adrian Gulvin)

In Attendance: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Tim England, Head of Safer Communities
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director, Housing and Regeneration
Dave Harris, Head of Planning
Mick Hayward, Chief Finance Officer
Councillor Peter Hicks, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact
Anna Marie Lawrence-Lovell, Performance Manager
Mark Lawson, Environmental Services Manager
Catherine Smith, Planning Manager (Policy)
Christine Wilson, Head of Legal Services
Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer

Representing the Community Safety Partnership

Mike Adams, Assistant Director Service Delivery - Kent Fire and Rescue Service
Cynthia Allen, Director – Community Rehabilitation Company
Dr Alison Barnett, Director of Public Health
Keith Gulvin, Youth Offending Team Manager
Councillor Peter Hicks, Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership
Neil Howlett, Community Safety Partnership Manager
Chief Inspector Vaughn Lukey, Kent Police
Superintendent Thomas Richards, Kent Police

608 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 2 October 2014 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

609 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bright, Adrian Gulvin and Mackinlay.

610 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

611 Declarations of interests and whipping

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

Councillors Mason and Turpin advised the Committee that as members of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority they would withdraw from the Committee for the consideration of the annual scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership, including the findings of the Annual Strategic Assessment and refreshed Community Safety Partnership Action Plan.

Whipping

There were no declarations of whipping.

612 Annual Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership, including the findings of the Annual Strategic Assessment and refreshed Community Safety Partnership Action Plan

Discussion:

The Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership, Councillor Hicks introduced a report on the operation of the Community Safety Partnership for the period April – October 2014, the findings of the strategic assessment and the proposed action plan for 2015/16.

The Committee was reminded that the scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership was last carried out in June 2014 at which time it was agreed that the date of the annual scrutiny be moved to December each year to enable Members to scrutinise more effectively the findings of the strategic assessment, the proposed revisions to the Community Safety Partnership Plan and review the actions of the Community Safety Partnership.

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The current Community Partnership Plan covering the period 2013 – 2016 identified the following priorities:

- Priority 1 – Tackle drug and alcohol abuse
- Priority 2 – Tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and enviro-crime
- Priority 3 – Reduce re-offending
- Priority 4 – Tackle domestic abuse
- Priority 5 – Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions

The report set out performance against these priorities since April 2014 at Appendix 1.

The key findings of the strategic assessment were outlined within the report and the proposed action plan for the financial year 2015/16 was set out at Appendix 2.

The Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership drew specific attention to the following initiatives:

- A Domestic Abuse Conference held at the Corn Exchange, Rochester
- The temporary provision of a Community Safety Shop in the Pentagon Centre, Chatham
- The launch of the Medway Safer Gambling Partnership in early December and subsequent publicity in the Municipal Journal.

Superintendent Tom Richards provided a brief update on recent events involving Medway Police including the recent by-election and the placement of a PCSO at Medway Maritime Hospital.

The Committee then discussed various elements of the report and the action plan including the following:

- In response to concerns raised as to policing levels in the urban areas of Medway and, in particular those Wards referred to in paragraph 4.48 of the report, Superintendent Richards confirmed that all areas of Medway were policed and he advised that the Police had a resource allocation model used to measure demand across the Police Force based on crime, anti social behaviour (ASB) and calls from the public. He confirmed that Medway received an equitable share of overall resources. It was also confirmed that all figures and percentages stated within the report related specifically to Medway not Kent.
- A Member referred to problems experienced by residents in the area of Rochester and Chatham, particularly late at night when there was a transition of people moving from one area to another. He expressed concern that residents were not minded to keep reporting these issues to the Police as the public perception was that no action was taken. He

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requested that he be afforded the opportunity of discussing this with the Police outside of the meeting.

- An incident in Balmoral Road, Gillingham on Saturday 13 December 2014 and the police response. Superintendent Richards advised that he was unable to comment specifically on this incident as enquiries were ongoing.
- In response to questions relating to PCSO's, Superintendent Richards confirmed that a number of new PCSO's were currently undergoing training and would be joining Medway in January and March 2015. Councillor Hicks confirmed that he had an up to date list of PCSO's for Medway and he agreed to circulate this to all Councillors within the next few days. It was also noted that a full list of PCSO's was available on the Kent Police website.
- A Member referred to paragraph 4 of the report and stated that he wished to have an understanding of the scoring matrix and how items were prioritised. In particular, he referred to paragraph 4.25 of the report and asked for information as to the actions that would be undertaken to achieve improved results. It was agreed that this be circulated via a Briefing Note
- In response to requests for further information on substance misuse services, Dr Alison Barnett informed that Committee that Medway had re-commissioned its substance misuse service from July 2014 and this was now an integrated service for drug and alcohol services. She outlined the services available in respect of treatment, recovery, intervention, assisting return to work and reducing consumption. She advised that the reported statistics would take time to reflect these improved services.
- A member referring to paragraphs 4.60, 4.61 and 4.62 sought clarification on the figures quoted within these paragraphs. Cynthia Allen was requested to provide further clarification on this issue.
- A member referred to the reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents and sought information as to action taken to raise awareness of these issues. In response, Martin Adams from Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue provided information on the Police and Fire joint initiative 'Licensed to Kill'.
- A Member sought an assurance that where possible the various members of the Community Safety Partnership work strategically with other partners and charities.
- A member sought information on Police response times and Superintendent Richards agreed that this could be provided to the Member direct outside of the meeting.

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- A Member requested information on the involvement of Kent Police on alcohol licensing issues and, in particular, licensing of supermarkets. In response Superintendent Richards stated that whilst he was unable to discuss individual cases at the meeting, if supplied with the relevant information he could report back to the individual Member direct. He did however confirm that Medway Police had an effective and robust Licensing Team that assessed all licensing applications. The Chairman of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee explained that Licensing Hearing Panels were quasi-judicial bodies and, as he served on these Panels, he could confirm that the Police were actively involved in Licensing applications. However, he stressed that there were rules and regulations to be followed in the licensing process and he commended the Council's Licensing Team in their knowledge of the licensing functions.
- A Member asked for information as to the budgetary implications for Kent Police in the light of the recent announcement that there was to be a 5.1% decrease in the Police budget for 2015/16 and, in particular, whether this would result in reduced Police personnel in Medway. In response Superintendent Richards confirmed that the 5.1% decrease in budget equated to a £20 million reduction for Kent Police as a whole which would be shared equally across the Force according to resource allocation models. The level of savings equated to a reduction of 300 personnel with approximately 100 of these being police officers and 200 civilian employees. It was not possible at this stage to advise upon the potential level of reductions in Medway.
- A Member asked for further clarification on how priorities were identified and it was agreed that this information be included in the Briefing Note to be sent to members on the scoring matrix, referred to above.

The Committee also discussed the issue of comparing Police statistics with those of previous years having regard to the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's criticism of the past reporting statistics of Kent Police. In response, Superintendent Richards confirmed that whilst HM Inspectorate had previously given Kent Police a 90% accuracy rate for the recording of crime, following a range of improvements and a subsequent re-examination, this figure had now increased to 96%. This had placed Kent Police in the top two thirds nationally of Police accuracy in recording crime.

He stated that it was difficult to undertake comparisons with previous years as the way in which information had been recorded had changed. However, since June 2014, the records could be compared like for like.

He also reminded the Committee that the 'Saville' Investigation had been a major factor attributing to the increased levels of reported historic crime.

Councillor Hicks advised the Committee that arrangements were in hand for the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner to attend an all Member briefing in 2015

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and Victim Support would be one of the topics covered. In addition, the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator would be undertaking a presentation on the same evening.

In considering the report, some members expressed concern that the Committee was being asked to refer the proposed action plan for 2015/16 to Cabinet on 13 January 2015 without having had sight of the information requested during the debate on this item. In response, the Chairman gave an assurance that when the item was referred to Cabinet, the Cabinet would also receive a full list of the points raised by this Committee.

Decision:

- a) The Members of the Community Safety Partnership be thanked for attending the meeting and answering Members questions;
- b) The actions of the Community Safety Partnership for the half year April – September 2014 be noted;
- c) The findings of the annual strategic assessment be noted;
- d) The proposed action plan, having been considered in the light of the findings of the annual strategic assessment be referred to Cabinet on 13 January 2015, but that Cabinet be advised that this Committee has requested or noted the following:
 - That Superintendent Richards has offered to meet with Councillor Mackness outside of the meeting to discuss his concerns regarding problems for local residents when there is a transition of people moving from Rochester to Chatham late at night.
 - That all figures and statistics within the report relate to Medway and not the whole of Kent.
 - That Councillor Hicks, as Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership will circulate a list of PCSO's across Medway to all Members in the next few days.
 - A Briefing Note be provided to Members setting out further information as to the scoring matrix used to formulate the statistics in the report and how priorities are identified.
 - Future reports from the Community Safety Partnership include trajectory projections where possible.
 - A Briefing Note be provided to Members clarifying the information relating to figures provided within paragraphs 4.60 and 4.61 and 4.62 of the report.

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- It be noted that Superintendent Richards will be providing Councillor Etheridge with information on response statistics.
- It be noted that there will be an all Member presentation from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner in early 2015.
- The Community Safety Partnership look to strategic working with other partners/charities where possible

613 Attendance by the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact

Discussion:

Members received an overview of progress on the areas within the terms of reference of this Committee and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact as set out below:

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

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, responded to Member's questions and comments as follows:

- CCTV – A member referred to an incident in Balmoral Road on Saturday 13 December and sought clarification as to whether this had been captured on the Council's CCTV cameras. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact was unable to respond to this specific request but assured the Committee that the CCTV service was highly regarded and operated in partnership with Maidstone, Swale and Gravesham. He confirmed that both the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable had visited the CCTV Control Room and had been impressed with the services provided. The service had also been the recipient of a number of awards.

Referring to the CCTV Partnership, whilst noting that the CCTV Service covered a wider area than Medway, a Member requested that information be supplied to Members specifically relating to criminal activities and Anti Social Behaviour in Medway identified by the CCTV Service and whether these statistics were on the increase. He also referred to the existence of CCTV warning signs in Leybourne and asked

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whether Medway had considered erecting similar signs to make people feel safer. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact confirmed that he would arrange for this information to be supplied direct to the Member concerned.

Another Member asked for information as to how many CCTV cameras were out of action at any one time. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact advised that all CCTV cameras required maintenance and repair but very few were out of action. He referred to an incident at The Vineries in Gillingham where one CCTV camera had been vandalised and advised that subject to obtaining evidence, vandalism of CCTV cameras would result in prosecution.

- Food Safety – In response to a question as to the regularity of food safety inspections and, whether Officers actively looked for evidence of bush meat, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact confirmed that the Food Safety Team regularly inspected food premises, provided advice and if necessary served notices. He confirmed that should the proprietor not comply with the notices, Officers had the powers to close the premises. He confirmed that whilst Officers were aware of the issue of bush meat, none had yet been found in Medway.
- Trading Standards – In response to comment from a Member about the lack of Trading Standard prosecutions, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact advised that Committee that there had been a number of instances of traders selling illegal cigarettes that had recently been investigated by HM Customs and Excise.

A member then sought clarification as to the position in Medway on the sale of legal highs. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact confirmed that there were 4 - 5 premises within Medway licensed to sell legal highs and he confirmed that all of these premises were regularly inspected.

- Emergency Plan – In response to a question as to where the Emergency Plan is publicised, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact advised that this was available on the Council's Website.
- Dog Control Orders – In response to information as to the issue of Dog Control Orders, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact confirmed that the Council served notices and prosecuted irresponsible dog owners.

Another Member sought information as to who was responsible for the cost of chipping stray dogs. It was confirmed that this was undertaken by the Dogs Trust at no cost to the Council or the dog owner.

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- A Member requested that information be supplied as to why Medway's parking penalty income had increased and whether officers were set targets to increase Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) issue.
- Travellers – A Member requested whether the Council was looking to provide another Traveller Site within Medway. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact confirmed that the whole of Kent and Medway had underused authorised traveller encampments as it was the case that not all travellers wished to live on a permanent site. He suggested that if any Member had a site in their Ward that they considered suitable for a Traveller Site, he would welcome this information being provided.

A Member expressed concern regarding the recent illegal camp of Travellers on the Strood Market Car Park. She stated that not only did the Travellers take up valuable car parking spaces but this has also resulted in loss of trade for the market traders. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact agreed that this had been unfortunate but advised that there was a legal process to be followed in removing illegal camps of Travellers and that this took a set period of time to complete.

- Whether the Council prosecutes landlords who rent out sub-standard properties – Whilst not within his portfolio, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact confirmed that the Council has recently prosecuted a landlord of a sub-standard property and that the Court imposed a high penalty. Unfortunately, the fine would go to the Court and was not paid to the Council.
- Domestic Abuse – In response to the question as to whether sufficient action was being carried out regarding the effect that domestic abuse has on children, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact advised the Committee that he took the issue of Domestic Abuse very seriously as he used to undertake work for Kent Women's Aid. He referred to the existence of two Women's Refuges in Medway and advised that a legal team was available at the One Stop Shop at the Sunlight Centre in Gillingham to provide advice to victims of domestic abuse. It was intended that this service would be extended to cover Rochester and Strood in the near future.

He also reminded the Committee that under the scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership, he had advised that the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator would be undertaking a presentation to all Members in early 2015.

In addition there was a Domestic Abuse Forum that met regularly.

Decisions:

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The Committee thanked Councillor Hicks for attending the meeting and answering Member's questions and it was noted that:

- a) CCTV statistics and information on CCTV signage will be provided direct to Councillor Osborne;
- b) It be noted that there were plans for the One Stop Shop for Domestic Abuse advice, currently provided at the Sunlight Centre in Gillingham to be extended to Rochester and Strood in the near future.

614 Council Plan - 2014/15 Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring

Discussion:

The report summarised the performance of the Council's Key Measures of Success for July – September (Quarter 2) 2014/15 as set out in the Council Plan 2013 – 15.

Members raised a number of points and questions including:

- Traffic light modifications - A Member expressed disappointment that it had been necessary to undertake modifications to the traffic lights by the Chatham Waterfront Bus Station and Whiffens Avenue.
- Satisfaction levels - Concern was expressed as to the way in which the satisfaction levels were regarded insofar as they related to Road Maintenance and Street Cleansing.
- Road Maintenance - A member requested information as to the cost of road maintenance publicity in the latest edition of Medway Matters.
- Rochester Airport Planning Application - A Member asked when the Rochester Airport planning application was to be submitted to the Planning Committee and was advised that this would be submitted to Committee on 7 January 2015. It was confirmed that the comments of Tonbridge and Malling District Council were available on the Council's Website.
- Journey times across Medway - A Member expressed concern as to the satisfaction levels as they related to average journey times across Medway and questioned how this information had been obtained. The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture advised that this information had been obtained through use of automatic number plate recognition of vehicles undertaking a specified journey between 8am – 9am. He confirmed that the target time was 4 minutes and the majority of vehicles had completed the specified journey in 2 minutes 15 seconds. However, it was recognised that there were some areas of road network that required attention, in particular the Medway City Estate and Four Elms Hill roundabout. He confirmed that the Council had received £28

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million from the Local Enterprise Partnership to tackle congestion and this funding would be available from 1 April 2015. Work had been already undertaken by a Member's Working Group on identifying potential areas to benefit from this funding and the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture agreed to circulate a briefing note setting out the areas identified for potential works.

Furthermore, the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture advised that the CCTV Control Room monitored traffic movement across Medway and should there be a build up of traffic, it was possible for traffic signals to be activated to help alleviate the problems.

A Member referred to the traffic lights at St Mary's Island and the previous request that they be turned off at night and he requested that the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture provide information as to when this would be introduced.

- Recycling – It was suggested that when people move into Medway and are sent Council Tax information, they also be sent information on the Council's recycling scheme.

Decision:

The Quarter 2 2014/15 performance against key measures of success used to monitor progress against the Council Plan 2013/15 be noted and it be agreed that Officers undertake the following:

- a) Ensure that when new residents move into Medway, in addition to receiving information on Council Tax, they also be provided with information on the Council's recycling scheme.
- b) A briefing note be circulated providing information as to the areas of road network identified by the Member's Working Group to benefit from funding to alleviate congestion.
- c) The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture inform Councillor Mackness when the traffic lights at St Mary's Island roundabout will be turned off at night.
- d) Information be supplied to Councillor Osborne as to the cost of the publicity for road maintenance in the latest issue of Medway Matters.
- e) It be noted that the Rochester Airport planning application is due for submission to the Planning Committee on 7 January 2015.

615 Capital and Revenue Budget 2015/16

Discussion:

The Committee received a detailed report setting out the draft capital and revenue budget for 2015/16 as it related to this Committee.

A member expressed concern as to the limited information submitted relating to the Committee's budgets to aid meaningful discussion at this meeting. In

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response, the Chief Finance Officer informed the Committee that Appendix 1b to the report set out all proposed changes to the Directorate's budgets as they related to this Committee.

Decision:

The Committee noted the current draft capital and revenue budget for 2015/16 insofar as they affected this Committee and noted the opportunities and implications of any other efficiencies or revenue generating measures for the Committee.

616 Community Wardens

Discussion:

The Committee received an information report setting out the impact of the changes made to the Community Officer Service by Better for Less.

A Member referred to the issue of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) and sought an assurance that Officers had not been directed to raise revenue from the issue of PCN's. The Head of Safer Communities advised that the Community Wardens were responsible for the issue of Notices relating to litter and flytipping and that PCN's were the responsibility of Parking Services. However, he confirmed that Officers were not provided with targets for the issuing of PCN's.

A Member advised that the Friends of Broomhill, whilst not a PACT had not had a visit from a Community Warden for some time and he requested that a Community Warden make contact with the Group.

A Member drew attention to the list of Community Wardens appended to the report at Appendix 2 and questioned whether this information was up to date. The Environmental Services Manager agreed to circulate a revised list of Wardens.

The Environmental Services Manager advised upon the processes followed in respect of removal and investigating flytipping and referred to the use of the Community Payback Scheme and the engagement of the community for the clearance of alleyways and other land.

Decision:

The report be noted and a revised list of Community Wardens be circulated.

617 Local Plan: Authority Monitoring Report

Discussion:

The Committee received a report on the Medway Local Plan Authority Monitoring Report that was produced annually.

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The Monitoring Report consisted of three volumes:

- Volume 1 (Appendix 1 to the report) provided an overview of key population and development trends, social, economic and environmental indicators, and a commentary on progress with the preparation of the new Medway Local Plan;
- Volume 2 comprised detailed data tables summarised in Volume 1 and whilst not produced as part of the agenda was available at the following link

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningpolicy/authoritymonitoringreport.aspx>;

- Volume 3 was the Local Aggregate Assessment, that assessed the supply of mineral aggregates from land won, imported and secondary and recycled sources in Medway in 2013 and was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

A Housing Implementation Strategy was also presented (Appendix 3 to the report) to set out the position on the supply of housing land and actions being taken to boost the supply of housing.

A revised copy of the Housing Implementation Strategy had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. This corrected a small number of errors since the publication of the agenda.

The Committee was advised that the Local Plan: Authority Monitoring Report had been considered by Cabinet on 16 December and an extract from the record of decisions was circulated at the meeting.

Decision:

The Committee expressed its appreciation to Officers for their presentation on the report and noted the report along with the decision of Cabinet on 16 December 2014 and, in particular, the amendment to paragraph 1.14 to explain the increase in the housing target from 815 to 1000 dwellings per annum.

618 Petitions

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out details of four petitions relevant to the work of this Committee where the Director's response had been accepted by the petitioner.

In respect of the petition requesting the removal of unsuitable large trees planted too close to property boundaries on the south side of Kingsfrith Playing Field, the lead petitioner, whilst requesting that his petition be referred to this Committee for consideration, had agreed that this be deferred until the meeting on 29 January 2015.

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Decision:

The Committee noted the Officer's response to the petitions and that the lead petitioner for the removal of unsuitable large trees on the south side of Kingsfrith Playing Field has requested that his petition not be referred to the Committee until January 2015.

619 Work programme

Discussion:

The Committee received and considered its work programme.

The Democratic Services Officer drew attention to a change of report title for a report on the Cabinet Forward Plan in that the South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan now read 'South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan and expansion of the Partnership'

Decision:

The work programme be noted and the following reports be added to the work programme for the 29 January 2015 meeting:

- Report on the provision of a Twydall Community Hub
- Member's item from Councillor Etheridge on Town Centre Markets
- Chatham Waterfront.

Chairman

Date:

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