

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

**29 MARCH 2016**

### **ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Report from: Portfolio Holder for Business Management Councillor  
Turpin

#### **Summary**

This report sets out progress made within the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Business Management which fall within the remit of this Committee.

#### **1. Background**

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered by the Portfolio Holder for Business Management are:

- Community Wardens
- Emergency Planning
- Community Centres

1.2 Achievements for 2015/16 are detailed by services area below.

#### **2. COMMUNITY WARDENS**

2.1 The Community Wardens attended 70 PACT meetings. From these meetings they resolved 182 issues of concern to residents by direct action. A further 112 issues were passed onto other departments within the council.

2.2 50 Community Engagement events were attended, including healthy walks, student engagements, library forums, PCSO meetings, Police surgeries, town centre forums, residents associations, neighbourhood panels and community fun days.

2.3 The Community Wardens organised 43 Community Cleanups and litter picks, encouraging the local community to take ownership of the problem and do

something about it. Many of these were reported in the local press, including one in which the local Warden gave up his day off in order to facilitate it.

- 2.4 8 school visits were undertaken. These presentations target year 6 pupils and focus on messages concerning personal safety, responsible dog ownership and littering.
- 2.5 The team conducted an operation in Gillingham highlighting the issue of identity theft. The operation consisted of leaflet dropping, door knocking and radio coverage as well as targeting individuals. The message was around not putting refuse out for collection any sooner than necessary, as well as being careful not to put any personal details in your refuse.
- 2.6 This year saw the introduction of two tipper trucks, which enable the Community Wardens to work more closely with the Environmental Enforcement Team.
- 2.7 By attending the scene of a fly tip in a tipper truck, the teams have the ability to clear the fly tipping once they have searched for evidence and completed local enquiries. In the past, they would have had to report it to a contractor for collection, which was sometimes as long as a week later.
- 2.8 This new practice obviously gets the rubbish off of the street quicker but it also prevents it from being added to as well as reducing the number of duplicate complaints from the public.
- 2.9 The combined tonnage removed by the teams totalled just less than 126 tonnes.
- 2.10 Wardens organised 22 community clean-ups over one week as part of the Clean for the Queen campaign. They coordinated almost 400 volunteers working in all of the 22 wards and collected a total of 434 bags of litter. The event was reported in the local paper and made the front page.
- 2.11 The Community Wardens dealt with 724 stray dogs. 293 were taken to the kennels and 431 were scanned for microchips on street and returned directly to their owners.
- 2.12 Our Day for Every Dog programme was extended to nine events throughout Medway in July and August.
- 2.13 A total of 264 dogs were microchipped free of charge at these events.
- 2.14 The team also supported the Kennel Club's Safe and Sound scheme and approximately 250 children were taught the key elements of how to interact safely with dogs.
- 2.15 Battersea Dogs Home also worked with us on these events and provided 342 engraved dog tags to owners free of charge.
- 2.16 The Community Wardens introduced a new free of charge service whereby dogs can be chipped in the owner's home.

- 2.17 77 dogs were chipped using this service bringing the total for the year to 341. This has significantly reduced the number of dogs taken to kennels.
- 2.18 The Community Warden Team was awarded a Gold Footprint Award by the RSPCA in recognition of their excellent stray dogs policies and procedures.
- 2.19 A new Dog Control Order was introduced, meaning that dogs must now be kept on a lead on any footpath adjacent to a carriageway. To date, no enforcement has been necessary.
- 2.20 A dog fostering scheme was introduced. This enables dogs to live in a foster home while efforts are made to re home them permanently. This frees up kennel space after the statutory 7 days have elapsed and reduces costs.

### **3. EMERGENCY PLANNING**

- 3.1 Heatwave and Cold Weather Emergency Plans were written to cover seasons from 1 June– 15 September 2015 and 1 November 2015 – 31 March 2016. These plans are refreshed each season to reflect the arrangements set out in NHS National Emergency Plans.
- 3.2 The Emergency Planning team continues to monitor the warnings and alert service, jointly run by the Met Office and NHS, and advises Council services and voluntary organisations when trigger levels are met. To date this has been necessary on 3 occasions.
- 3.3 A collective working agreement is in place between Emergency Planning and Public Health in relation to emergency planning activities, including the above.
- 3.4 Two officers from the Council took part in a Marine and Coastguard Authority (MCA) consultation workshop on proposed draft guidance in relation to Oil Pollution. This guidance is now part of the National Oil Pollution Plan.
- 3.5 Locally a joint Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Council Shoreline Pollution Plan has been written by KCC in consultation with Medway's Emergency Planning Officers.
- 3.6 A small stock of oil pollution response equipment for rapid deployment in the immediate response stage has been assembled into "grab bags".
- 3.7 The Kent Resilience Forum's (KRF's) Emergency Mass Fatality Plan has been jointly reviewed with KCC. Currently work is underway to procure a joint contract between KCC and Medway Council for the provision of a service in relation to the provision of temporary mortuary facilities in the event of a major incident involving large numbers of fatalities.
- 3.8 On 5 June 2015 the Emergency Planning team ran an internal command and control exercise (Exercise Brook) for the Council. The aim of the day was to test the arrangements in the Council's Major Emergency Plan (MEP). This involved contacting officers from across the Council and implementing the management structures that would need putting into place to manage the Council's response to the emergency, whilst continuing to provide Council

services. The exercise was run in real time, with officers reacting to scripted scenarios. Participants in the exercise included the Chief Executive, his extended management team, Service Managers and a range of officers from various Council services who were supported by administrative officers. The Traffic Operations Room was used as the Council's Emergency Centre.

The key lessons learnt from the exercise were:

- The need to extend the emergency centre capability to enable it to provide a better focus for gathering and sharing information. This will be addressed as part of future office moves.
- Officers with specific roles in the MEP need clarity on what these roles require. Quick reference guides are being developed for these roles which will assist in the immediate decision making.

3.9 In preparation for the exercise, training was provided to officers nominated as Initial Co-ordinators, Silver (Tactical) and Gold (Strategic) Commanders and Service Managers.

3.10 In August, following the feedback from Exercise Brook the Council's MEP was finalised and published.

3.11 A live test was conducted on the alerting systems that would be used in the event of an external emergency associated with an emergency at the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) site on the Isle of Grain. This test is carried out on an annual basis.

3.11 Emergency plans have been written in relation to responding to a flood event and the establishment of welfare facilities and rest centres that may be required in during an evacuation.

3.12 The two External Emergency Plans for BP Oil and Grain LNG have been reviewed and updated in line with new legislation. Work is in progress on running two exercises in April 2016 to test aspects of these plans, as required under the legislation.

3.13 The Emergency Planning Team has arranged for senior officers from across the Council to attend the following multi-agency events:

- Log Keeping – July 2015
- Winter Preparedness Exercise – September 2015
- Hazard Warning – Severe Weather Events - September 2015
- Kent Resilience Seminar – October 2015
- Peel Ports Exercise – October 2015
- Operation Fennel – October 2015
- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) October 2015
- Hazard Manager – December 2015
- MCA Oil Pollution Officer training – January 2016
- MCA Beachmaster training – January 2016

3.14 The Emergency Planning team, in addition to providing training in relation to Exercise Brook has delivered the following;

- Multi-agency exercise for Safety Advisory Group Members and Gillingham Football Club to test emergency planning and contingency arrangements.
- Emergency Planning and the roles of Administrative Officers – February 2016

- 3.15 The Emergency Planning team has represented the Council on nine separate standing Kent Resilience Forum Groups and task and finish groups, which are established as and when necessary to undertake specific projects.
- 3.16 Arrangements have been put in place with the multi-agency Kent Resilience Team to provide a facility for Medway's Emergency Planning Officers to hotdesk at Kent Fire and Rescue's headquarters in Tovil. This allows for more efficient use of time for officers attending meetings in Kent as well as improved information sharing and closer working relations across the Kent and Medway area.

#### **4. COMMUNITY CENTRES**

- 4.1 The Council owns the freehold of four Community Centres. There is currently an arrangement that Medway Norse manage those assets, charging a fee to the Council and keeping rental income.
- 4.2 The responsibility for the Community Centres has now passed to the Property portfolio under the Chief Legal Officer in the Business Support Division from Social Regeneration team in the Regeneration Department.
- 4.3 I have been working with Officers from the Social Regeneration team and the Property team to consider whether the current model for Community Centres is sustainable. I have also been liaising with Medway Norse, local faith organisations and charities to understand how best to run these centres in the short to medium term.
- 4.4 I have established that the Centres cost the Council £219,000 to run last year. I am currently exploring with the Chief Legal Officer a range of options to reduce the costs of this subsidised service whilst maintaining the provision of low costs bookable community space.
- 4.5 The Centres all have a number of groups and organisations that use them regularly for a wide range of community activity. I am keen to see this maintained."

#### **Appendices**

None

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**Background documents**

None