DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

CRIME AND DISORDER (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on Wednesday 24 July 2013.

PRESENT:  Councillor R J Wells (Chairman)
         Councillor A S Sandhu, MBE (Vice-Chairman)
         Councillor M J Bryant
         Councillor Mrs S P Butterfill
         Councillor D J Mote
         Councillor Mrs J A Rickwood
         Councillor M J Street

Dartford Borough Council Officers:-

Sheri Green – Strategic Director
Matt Roberts – Community Safety Officer, CSU
Kit Weller – CS&TF SO, CSU

LEAD MEMBERS:  Councillor Mrs A D Allen

ALSO PRESENT TO RESPOND TO ISSUES RAISED BY THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

C.I. Roscoe Walford – Dartford District Commander, Kent Police
Inspector Paul Cook – Neighbourhood Inspector, Dartford CSU
Jim Parris – Community Safety Manager, KCC
Mat Honeysett – Area Manager, West Kent, KCWS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Vice-Chairman advised that the Chairman was delayed, but that Councillor R J Wells hoped to join the meeting as soon as possible.

There were no apologies of absence from Committee members.

The Vice-Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the Committee’s guests from Kent County Council (KCC); Jim Parris (Community Safety Manager) and Mat Honeysett, Area Manager (West Kent) for the Kent Community Warden Service. Councillor Sandhu also welcomed Kent Police representatives C.I. Roscoe Walford, Dartford District Commander and Paul Cook, Neighbourhood Inspector, Dartford /CSU.
The presence of the Strategic Director and the Community Safety Officer, together with the Community Safety and Troubled Families Support Officer from Dartford CSU was also noted.

Lead Member Councillor Mrs Ann Allen (Community and Tax Payer Involvement) was in attendance by standing invitation of the Committee, with apologies being received from Councillor Dave Hammock (Lead Member for Licensing, Obligations and Enforcement).

Councillor R J Wells subsequently joined the meeting during the presentations. At Councillor Wells’ invitation, Councillor Sandhu continued as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2013

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held 13 February 2013 be confirmed as accurate.

4. URGENT ITEMS [IF ANY]

There were no urgent items to consider.

5. TO CONSIDER REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES (IF ANY)

There were no references from other Committees.

6. REGULATION 9 NOTICE

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Regulation 9 Notice for the period 15 June to 31 October 2013 be noted.

7. PRESENTATIONS ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND THE KENT COMMUNITY WARDEN SERVICE

The Vice-Chairman renewed his welcome to Jim Parris and Mat Honeysett from KCC and invited them to make their presentations.

Community Safety
The Community Safety Manager gave Members a brief overview of the KCC community safety operation before expanding on the detail of his presentation.

He advised Members that KCC’s community safety effort concentrated on ‘front-end’ delivery, based on a county-wide assessment and commissioning process. This covered all areas of community safety operation and need, with the increasing support and involvement of Kent’s Police and Crime Commissioner. KCC’s current priorities were based around the ‘Trouble Families’ initiative, with increasing emphasis being placed on addressing the underlying issues ‘Troubled Families’ faced both in the short and long-term.

Members were advised that KCC’s key community safety roles were to: provide partner data packs to district Community Safety Partnerships for their Strategic Assessments; produce the county level Strategic Assessment and draw-up Kent Community Safety Partnership Priorities; formulate the KCC Community Safety Framework Document 2012-15; initiate Domestic Homicide Reviews; host and support the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) plus a variety of Monitoring and Reporting duties. Specific details of these roles included:

**Strategic Assessments (SAs)**

SAs are a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Each of the 11 Kent Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) produced a district level Assessment document. The District Assessments were then used to inform the county-wide KCC Assessment for Kent. The data used to inform the individual SA documents was collected and collated by the KCC Community Safety Unit, based on data supplied by the 9 separate organisations plus 8 services within KCC.

**Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR)**

DHRs were commissioned following particularly serious or complex domestic homicides and aimed at providing important learning points for future operations. DHRs were conducted by an appointed Chairman and involved all relevant Agencies involved in the original case conducting Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) as part of the DHR process. The final DHR report was sent to the Home Office for qualification, with ‘lessons learnt’ posted on Agency websites and used in media feedback exercises as appropriate. It was confirmed that no DHR had been conducted in Dartford.

**Kent Community Safety Partnership: CSA Priorities**

The 6 CSA priorities had been developed by Kent Police for use across the County and were incorporated into Strategic Assessments at District level. The 6 identified priorities were:
• Anti-Social Behaviour inc. Environmental
• Domestic Abuse
• Substance Abuse
• Acquisitive Crime (i.e. thefts/shoplifting)
• Violent Crime
• Road Safety

Cross-cutting themes for the 6 priorities were:
• Early Intervention, Prevention & Education
• Priority Neighbourhoods / Geographic Focus
• Vulnerable Households & Individuals
• Safeguarding Children & Young People
• Reducing Re-offending

Police and Crime Panel (PCP)

KCC hosted the PCP and provided both policy support via the KCC Community Support team and secretarial and administrative support via KCC Member Services. The PCP comprised 20 Members from Kent and Medway District Authorities plus 2 independent Members. The principle role of the PCP was to:
• Review, report and recommend on the plan, budget and decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC);
• Hold confirmation hearings for the Chief Constable, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer.

Monitoring and Reporting

• The Safer Communities Portal was used to distribute data sets from Kent CSP agencies, including the Kent Police Data Pack;
• KCC also sourced and collated datasets for inclusion in District Strategic Assessment documents;
• KCC also produced the Kent Community Safety Agreement on a triennial basis;
• Kent CSA produced monitoring reports for the 11 Kent District CSPs based around the 6 County priorities.

It was agreed that Member’s questions would be taken following the presentation on the Kent Community Warden Service.

Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS)

Members received a second presentation from Mat Honeysett, Area Manager (West Kent) on the key themes and core objectives of the Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS), in contributing to community safety and social inclusion and helping to combat crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Members were advised of the importance of partnership working between the KCWS and other Agencies across Kent including: Kent Police, British

Examples of partnership working included flood warning & response; hate crime; domestic abuse; the Troubled Families and Community Payback initiatives; Emergency Planning exercises; CSU tasking’s e.g. RVs, EVAs and Predictive Policing, multi-agency referrals/support.

In June 2013 the Kent Chief Constable had granted two basic Police powers to be used by KCC Wardens to help them work more closely with Police and District authorities. KCC Wardens were now able to ask a person’s name and address in relation to acts of ASB e.g. littering, noise and dog fouling. Wardens will not be issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), but will supply statements to District authorities to enable prosecutions to be made. Wardens have also been given the power to legally and responsibly direct traffic in an emergency and help with emergency road closures and events when directed to do so by Police partners. Wardens have been issued new Hi-Vis clothing and their vehicles adapted with flashing beacons and graphics to enable them to safely undertake their new responsibilities.

Members were advised that the role of the Community Warden would continue to evolve and develop in response to changing partner needs and other strategic requirements, however the Core Objectives remained:

- To provide a reassuring conspicuous presence in the communities;
- To tackle anti-social behaviour;
- To act as the ‘eyes and ears’ for other Agencies;
- To be a trusted friend for the community;
- To improve access to local authority services;
- To promote social inclusion by working with excluded and disaffected members of the community;
- To reduce actual crime and the fear of crime.

The Dartford District Warden team presently comprised 3 members based at Darenth & Bean, Longfield & New Barn and Stone & Greenhithe respectively. The Temple Hill & Joyce Green areas were covered from within the team which also had a vacancy for a District Support Warden. Overall supervision of both the Dartford and Sevenoaks District Warden teams was undertaken by the Warden Supervisor based in Sevenoaks.

In a subsequent joint Q and A session covering both presentations, the following points were confirmed by Officers and Kent Police colleagues:
• Wardens remained separate to Community Police Support Officers (CPSOs), they were not enforcement officers;
• Wardens retained a balanced role within their communities, employing a softer touch and operating as a community tool, acting as the ‘eyes and ears’ of their communities and directing residents to services provided by other Agencies;
• Warden’s new Police powers would enable them to engage more in countering examples of ASB and traffic management in the Parishes in support of Police colleagues;
• The Dartford District Support Warden slot had been granted KCC funding and a recruitment drive was underway. Filling the vacancy would enhance the management resource of the Dartford team and facilitate greater inter-action within the Dartford CSU;
• Wardens participated in Emergency Planning up to Bronze Commander status and were Rest Centre trained, their local knowledge was also used in search and rescue operations; they assisted the KF&RS following fires by checking on the elderly and vulnerable in their communities and in periods of extreme weather helped the vulnerable with basic coping and safety mechanisms and warm food packs;
• Police and Crime Panel (PCP): the working of PCPs had been subject to Parliamentary scrutiny by the Home Affairs Committee, under the Chairmanship of Keith Vaz M.P. The work of the Kent PCP was evolving, with more scrutiny orientated questions being asked of the PCC. The Panel had no powers of veto over the PCC, except for the appointment of the Chief Constable;
• The ‘Troubled Families’ initiative was co-ordinated in Dartford by the Community Safety Officer based in the CSU;
• The ‘Turnaround Project’ was the Dartford branding for the ‘Troubled Families’ initiative run from the CSU, with KCC funding following submission of a business case. The Project is recruiting (Via Voluntary Action in West Kent) volunteer mentors to work with families following initial assessment and where appropriate, interventions by Council and other Agency staff.

The Vice-Chairman and Members thanked all Officers and Police partners for participating in the Q and A session, and the KCC guests for their presentations.

8. PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the Performance Progress Report detailing reductions in various crime types and perceptions of anti-social behaviour for the rolling financial year period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, against the corresponding period in 2012-13. The report had previously been discussed and approved by the Dartford & Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) on 13 June 2013.

The Community Safety Officer (CSO) summarised the headline figures for Members.
He advised that total recorded crime in Dartford in the period April 2012-March 2013 compared to the previous period in 2011-12, had fallen by 3.0%. This compared to an increase in Gravesham of 6.2% for the same period. Dartford had recorded decreases in virtually all crime categories however, along with most other Kent Districts, both Dartford and Gravesham had seen an increase in the number of recorded incidents of domestic abuse reported to the Police. Support of domestic abuse victims and reducing the number of repeat victims were priorities with a range of options being considered including an increase in ‘1 stop shop’ facilities to address all aspects of victim’s needs.

The Dartford District Commander, Kent Police echoed the concerns of the CSO over the increase in reported incidents of domestic violence. Of particular concern was the fact that in over 50% of cases, the victims subsequently withdrew their complaint and disengaged with the prosecution process. In part this was explained by the fact that victims generally continued to co-habit with the offender and were reluctant to pursue complaints against them. The District Commander advised that on average, a victim suffered 24 separate incidents of domestic abuse before reporting the crime. An 8 month back-log in Court proceedings considering domestic violence cases added to victims concerns and encouraged their disengagement from the judicial process. The Kent Justice Board had been asked to review the delay in Court proceedings. Supporting victims through a multi-agency approach was deemed essential.

The Strategic Director advised that whilst reported incidents of domestic violence were up, repeat offences were down. She agreed that subsequent disengagement from the judicial process by 50% of victims of domestic violence was a major cause for concern and advised that the CSP had commissioned a study by the North Kent Domestic Abuse Forum, to enable the CSP to better understand the factors that might contribute to that statistic.

The following points were confirmed for Members in subsequent discussion of individual crime statistics:
- The rise in ‘Violence against the person’ incorporated figures for domestic violence and witness intimidation;
- Bluewater statistics had been separated out and accounted for a third of all acquisitive crime in the Dartford area, but overall crime at the complex had fallen by 19% and acquisitive crime by 16%;
- Fraud and Forgery and Vehicle crime had also decreased significantly.

The CSO advised that from 1 April 2013, following changes in Police Force policy, crime statistics would be calculated on an ‘anticipatory’ basis rather than the present method of reported crime. It was not yet clear whether the new statistical method would allow the CSP to conduct a comparison performance exercise between the 2012-13 and 2013-14 rolling financial years.
The Dartford District Commander said that in his view the most important element to be measured under the new ‘anticipated crime’ methodology would be customer satisfaction. He noted that resident satisfaction rates in Dartford had risen to 95%: this was the real measure of success to work towards.

In response to Member concerns over cuts to Police resources and funding in the continuing economic climate; the District Commander advised that some 500 police officers and 1,000 back-room staff had already been cut across Kent as a whole. He estimated a further 200-400 police officers would be cut following the latest Comprehensive Spending Review measures. In contrast demand on Police resources had not diminished, active crime had increased as had police officer’s case-loads, requiring constant prioritising of resources. Responses to major incidents remained appropriate but effective Neighbourhood policing was becoming increasingly difficult and coordination with partner agencies e.g. the Warden Service increasingly important. He estimated that Dartford had suffered a 50% cut in Police staffing levels over the past 6 months: further prioritising and the managing of public expectation would be required. He added that whilst effective Neighbourhood policing remained the priority, Police resources were also committed to tackling firearms offences, traffic control, and prisoner management whilst in custody. Offences committed by persons with mental health issues continued to be a drain on Police resources: a co-ordinated multi-agency effort was required to address the housing, job and benefit needs of these offenders and release police officers from undertaking these tasks.

The Strategic Director commented that, through continuing commitment to community safety and the CSU, the Council provided effective support to Kent Police and maximised the resources available to tackle crime.

In response to a specific question from a Member, the District Commander confirmed that the rehabilitation of offenders was a priority for the Prison Service and tackled through the Integrated Offender Management Unit, including support to combat drug, alcohol and drug dependency. However, the rehabilitation of life-long criminals was a long and difficult process.

The CSO highlighted the efforts being undertaken by the Probation Service through the new Reducing Re-offending Group as advised to Members in a recent presentation. Securing accommodation and work for released offenders was recognised as critical elements in the successful fight against re-offending. He advised that under a proposed re-organisation of the Probation Service, the management of offenders given less than a 12 month tariff would be undertaken for the first time, but delegated to the private sector.

The Vice-Chairman concluded debate by congratulating the Dartford District Commander, the Neighbourhood Inspector and the whole joint CSU team under the guidance of the Strategic Director on an excellent set of figures and another reduction in Dartford’s crime rate in the face of reduced resources.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.
9. **COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2013-14**

Members were asked to consider the Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2013-14 attached as Appendix A to the report and comment accordingly.

Previously, at its meeting on 13 February 2013, the Committee had considered the annual Strategic Assessment (SA) document prepared by and for the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership. The priorities identified and views expressed in the SA by the Partnership’s individual agencies, together with those of residents and elected Members in both Boroughs, had been taken forward into the Community Safety Plan 2013-14. The Plan would guide the work of all partner agencies and ensure that the Partnership’s focus on its agreed priorities was maintained.

Members were advised that the CSU were responsible at District level for implementing the CSP’s identified priorities for 2013-14, which were set out on page 3 of the Plan [agenda page 31] as:

- Anti-social behaviour;
- Violent crime including domestic abuse;
- Substance misuse (alcohol and drug-related crime and ASB);
- Property crime (domestic burglary and theft offences);
- Safety on the road;
- Reducing re-offending.

**RESOLVED:**


10. **OUTCOMES REGARDING CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY TO DISPERSE GROUPS (DISPERSAL ORDER)**

The Committee considered a report detailing the outcomes achieved from the Dispersal Order imposed on the Temple Hill area of Dartford during the period 31 January to 30 April 2013. The report had been considered by Cabinet on 4 July, following initial presentation to the CAP B Committee on 24 June 2013.

The Committee had previously considered the background to the imposition of the Dispersal Order and received an update on its initial implementation, at its meeting on 13 February 2013 [Min. No. 21].

Members were reminded that the Order to disperse groups of two or more persons under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 had been approved by Cabinet on 24 January 2013 and subsequently co-signed under delegated authority by the Managing Director and the Kent Police District Superintendent. The aim was to actively engage with young people in response to a significant increase in anti-social behaviour and low-level
criminal activity in the Temple Hill area in the weeks preceding 31 January 2013.

Members were advised that the Dispersal Order combined with the effects of Operation Beethoven; a high visibility Police patrol and enforcement operation instigated immediately prior to the Dispersal Order and continuing throughout the Order period; had produced significant results in terms of crime reduction, providing respite to the wider Temple Hill community and addressing the needs of individually assessed victims. Operational successes detailed in the report included: the dispersal of 26 groups; 350 stop checks of individuals and cars; 7 Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs); 1 Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO); 5 arrests for possession or cultivation of cannabis; 5 cannabis cautions; 5 arrests for criminal damage and 5 arrests for shoplifting.

In concluding their update, Officers and Police partners emphasised to Members that Dispersal Orders were a one-off tool employed as a last resort to meet a short-term crisis: they were not a long-term solution. The reduction in crime and ASB achieved under the Dispersal Order was noticeable, but the Neighbourhood Police team and the Council’s Community Safety team would have to continue to work to ensure that the reduction was maintained.

The following points were confirmed in subsequent discussion with Members;

- No displacement of ASB or low-level crime to adjacent areas of Dartford or the town centre had been noted following imposition of the Dispersal Order. Crime figures for the adjacent Newtown Ward (not included in the Order) indicated a positive impact resulting from the measures;
- The Youth Engagement day held at the Living Well Centre during the Order period had been well supported by providers with some 15 youth service providers attending and expressing a wish to become involved in providing activities for young people in the area, but less well attended by young people;
- The Neighbourhood Team and the Community Safety Team in conjunction with KCC Youth Services, were working hard to build on the initial success of the Youth Engagement day;
- The Council, Kent Police and other partner Agencies were using the positive outcomes of the Order to ‘learn lessons’ for the future, target resources and maintain the reduction in low-level crime and ASB the Order had achieved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

Members were asked to agree the contents of a rolling Work Programme for the 2013-14 municipal year and beyond, as set out in Appendix A.
Members noted that the Work Programme included a review of the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Police and Crime Panels (PCPs), proposed for the Summer 2014 meeting of the Committee. The Shadow Chairman suggested that the Committee would find it helpful to have input from Dartford’s representative on the PCP, particularly in the lead-in to this review and asked if a standing invitation could be extended to the Member.

The Strategic Director confirmed that Dartford’s representative on the PCP was Councillor Martin and advised the Committee that Councillor Martin had already expressed an interest in attending the Committee proceedings, but was otherwise committed on this occasion.

Members sought clarification on the inter-action between the PCC and the Dartford and Gravesham CSP and the PCP and the Committee.

The Strategic Director advised that the PCC was not a responsible authority on the Dartford and Gravesham CSP but that there was a statutory requirement for the PCC to take note of the CSP’s priorities and for the CSP to take note of those of the PCC. She further advised that the Committee had no locus in the affairs of the PCP but agreed that a greater understanding of its business might assist the Committee in its review of the impact of the new regime.

RESOLVED:

1. That the rolling Work Programme for 2013-14 and beyond as set out in Appendix A to the report be noted;
2. That a standing invitation be extended to the Deputy Leader, Councillor A R Martin, to attend Committee meetings as Dartford’s representative on the Kent PCP and update Members on that bodies activities.

12. ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 2012-13 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Committee received a draft report detailing its work during the 2012/13 municipal year, together with Appendices setting out the Committee’s current Protocol, Terms of Reference (ToRs) and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Crime and Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee Draft Annual Report 2012/13 be noted and submitted to the next meeting of the GAC without amendment.
The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Councillor R J Wells
CHAIRMAN