

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 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor C S McLean (Chairman)
Councillor S P Butterfill (Substitute)
Councillor B Garden
Councillor K J Grehan
Councillor R A S Jones (Substitute)
Councillor D J Mote
Councillor T Oliver

ABSENT: Councillor A S Sandhu, MBE
Councillor A Gaskin
Councillor P M Harman

Dartford Borough Council Officers:-

Sheri Green	– Strategic Director (External Services)
Mark Salisbury	– E&RS/CSU Manager
Tony Henley	– Community Safety Manager, CSY
Karen Radford	– DTAC Intelligence Manager, CSU
Jade Ransley	– Community Safety Officer, CSU

CABINET MEMBERS: By standing order of the Committee; Councillor Ann Allen MBE, Portfolio Holder for Youth, Health & Wellbeing and Cllr. Richard Wells, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Dartford representative on the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel (PCP)

PRESENT TO RESPOND TO ISSUES RAISED BY THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Chief Inspector Louden	– Dartford & Gravesham District Commander, Kent Police
Sergeant Horsley	– Dartford CSU, Kent Police

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors; A Gaskin (Substitute Cllr. R Jones), P M Harman (Sub. Cllr. S Butterfill) and from Inspector Gavin Wade, Dartford CSU Inspector, Kent Police.

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The Chairman extended a warm welcome to all new Members and returning Cabinet Member Councillor Ann Allen, in her new role as Portfolio Holder for Youth, Health & Wellbeing. The former Chairman of the Committee Cllr. Richard Wells was welcomed in his new role as Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, and in his continuing role as Dartford's representative on the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel (PCP). Both Cabinet Members were invited to continue to attend and contribute to the Committee's proceedings in their respective roles.

The Chairman also welcomed the attendance of the District Commander, Chief Inspector Loudon, and Sergeant Horsley from Kent Police, and noted the presence of the Strategic Director (External Services), the EARS & CSU Manager, the Community Safety Manager and Officer, and extended a special welcome to the Council's recently appointed Dartford Town Against Crime (DTAC) Intelligence Manager, who was attending her first meeting of the Committee.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2019

The Chairman confirmed, as the only Member present who had attended the last meeting of the Committee on 12 February 2019 that he was content that the Minutes as presented in the agenda papers, were a true and accurate reflection of those proceedings.

4. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for Members to note.

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

There were no references from other Committees for Members to note.

6. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman advised for the particular benefit of new Members; that he had been a Member of the Committee since 2015 prior to being appointed Chairman by the Leader of the Council on 22 May 2019; a position he was honoured to fill. In addition to his experience on the Committee, his working life in the enforcement field as a Manager working in London Councils over several years, had given him further insight and background into the crime and disorder portfolio.

He advised that the Committee acted as 'critical friend' to the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and worked closely on Borough matters under the guidance of the Strategic Director (External

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Services). The Committee were closely advised and supported by the Council's Community Safety Unit, and liaised regularly with Kent Police through the Dartford CSU Police Inspector, and the District Commander.

7. REGULATION 9 NOTICE

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Regulation 9 Notice for the period 14 June 2019 to 31 October 2019 be noted.

8. KENT POLICE AND CRIME PANEL (PCP) UPDATE

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, addressed the Committee in his role as Dartford representative on the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel (PCP).

For the benefit of new Members he advised that the PCP was the Kent-wide body co-ordinated by Kent County Council which held Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Mr Matthew Scott to account. The PCP comprised representatives from all Kent Districts, plus one Member from KCC, one Member from Medway Council, plus two Independent Members.

The detailed terms of the PCP were to:

- Review all aspects of the Police and Crime Commissioner's work and review and report on the PCC's actions and decisions;
- Approve the precept (the money the PCC wants to raise through Council Tax to pay for policing);
- Review the person the PCC proposes to appoint as Chief Constable and the appointment of a Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer;
- Review the PCC's Police and Crime Plan and Annual Report documents.

The last meeting of the PCP had been held on 19 July 2019. Principal subjects considered by the Panel had included:

- The PCC's annual report for 2017/18 which had confirmed that finances were sound and that good progress had been made towards meeting the objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan;
- The number of police officers had increased and PCSO numbers had been maintained. Some 200 additional police officers had been recruited, fully trained and warranted to take up their duties in the period under review. Plans to recruit a further 180 police officers and 50 civilian staff in 2019 were well in hand;
- An increase in the numbers of Sexual Offence Liaison Officers to operate across 38 Town Centres in Kent with an additional focus on Domestic Abuse (DA);

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- Complaints regarding Kent Police's 101 response service had been prioritised by the PCC, with a dramatic improvement in response time achieved from 5 minutes in 2018, to under 1 minute by June 2019;
- The Panel had commended Kent Police for its performance in recent years and noted that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) had assessed the Kent Force as Good to Outstanding;
- No complaints had been received against the PCC in the past 12 month period that merited consideration by the Complaints Sub-Panel.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for his comprehensive verbal update concerning the PCP meeting held on 19 July 2019 and the background he had provided for new Members regarding the role of the PCP.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the contents of the PCP Minutes for the Panel meeting held on 6 February 2019 [agenda pages 23-29 refer];
2. That Members note with thanks, the oral summary provided by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety as Dartford PCP representative on the Panel proceedings held on 19 July 2019.

9. DARTFORD TOWN AGAINST CRIME (DTAC) PROGRESS REPORT: JULY 2018 TO JULY 2019

The covering report from the Community Safety Manager (CSM) set out for Members the background to the current Dartford Town Against Crime (DTAC) operation, including the following key elements:

- DTAC operated to support the aims of both the Dartford Town Centre Partnership and the Dartford & Gravesham Community Safety Partnership, but with its own terms of reference, Board of Management and Steering Group;
- DTAC promoted the concept of a safe and secure town centre, and enabled partners to adopt a proactive approach to identifying, target and focus on the most serious, prolific and professional criminals operating in Dartford, in addition to those engaged in petty crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB);
- The DTAC Intelligence Manager co-ordinated the dissemination of information to the network of DTAC partners and promoted activity that would result in action being taken against persistent offenders;
- The objectives outlined in the 2016-18 Business Plan for DTAC had been to:
 - (i) Install the infrastructure required for Borough wide coverage to facilitate membership growth and reinforce the Council's emergency planning procedures;
 - (ii) Increase the number of people reporting crime through Disc (Secure Information Sharing System) used by DTAC partners;

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- (iii) Undertake radio training, Counter-Terrorism training and Conflict Management training.

The CSM advised Members that the Council's recently appointed DTAC Intelligence Manager, Karen Radford, was attending her first Crime and Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) meeting, having travelled that day from Wales to do so.

She had taken up her role in May 2019 following the departure of her predecessor in December 2018. He asked that the outstanding contribution made by Mike Morgan as DTAC Intelligence Manager from 2015 to 2018 be noted, and advised that his successor had a similar 30 year background as a Kent Police Officer reaching the rank of Inspector, and had previously served in Dartford CSU in a police capacity in 2014. The 5 month interregnum between Intelligence Managers (IMs) had been unfortunate, but in her short tenure to date, the new IM had established 6 priorities to which she was working:

- To re-establish a robust radio network across the Borough;
- To personalise the current NABCP (National Association Business Crime Partnership) national forms for distribution to DTAC members to include Data Protection Act 2018 requirements;
- To achieve NABCP accreditation;
- To refresh the DTAC Business Plan;
- To increase DTAC membership and work with the Dartford Town Centre Partnership.

Members then received a PowerPoint presentation which expanded on the following principal themes in greater detail:

- What is DTAC;
- Role of the Intelligence Manager (IM);
- Data Protection including effect of 2018 GDPR Act;
- New Members;
- Disc – Intelligence database;
- Shop Safe Scheme;
- Crimestoppers;
- DTAC Meetings, Board, AGM and Members;
- Way Forward

Key points in the presentation included:

- DTAC was developed in 2003 as a combined partnership between local businesses, Kent police, the local authority, town centre management and other agencies, with a Board of Management derived from the membership and was a non-political and non-profit making group;
- DTAC's crime reduction strategies to identify local and travelling criminals, manage their offending behaviour and reduce criminal

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opportunity, was aimed at both the day-time and night-time economies in Dartford;

- The key role of the IM was to facilitate the effective flow of information between Dartford Council, DTAC members, supporting agencies and key partners including Kent Police, and to provide a 'heads-up' to businesses to check customers via the Disc intelligence database;
- The IM was able to use civil powers to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and worked closely with the Council's CCTV operation, the Shopping Centre Managers (and their CCTV operations), security staff, Council accredited Officers and business managers to ensure public safety, and proactively deal with offenders who affected businesses in Dartford on a daily basis;
- Effective management of the DTAC radio system linked all members to the Council's CSU operation [and by extension Kent Police];
- The Government's Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) implemented on 25 May 2018 was the primary legislation which regulated how companies protected EU citizens personal data and applied to DTAC members. DPA 2018 had required all DTAC members to be contacted to sign new GDPR compliant agreements and membership packs, and all DTAC forms to be altered. DPA 2018 also related to staff/membership usage of DTAC radios and the passing of intelligence, information and personal data using DTAC's Disc database;
- DTAC membership benefits now included; access to the GDPR compliant intelligence database (Disc), with instant messaging to enable members to communicate with each other quickly and effectively to combat crime and identify known perpetrators. Weekly newsletters and bulletins, radio linkage to a network of CCTV cameras, security staff and Kent police. Regular DTAC meetings, staff training and Partnership support to address offending behaviour affecting local businesses;
- Full DTAC membership cost **£360 + VAT** per annum (or pro-rata monthly), Associate membership cost **£200 + VAT** per annum (or pro rata monthly) for those who did not require access to the Disc database. DTAC membership was good with 9 (nine) more businesses waiting to join the Partnership's current 83 members of which 61 were businesses. It was hoped to extend the present DTAC radio coverage to include Longfield Parish and the Tree Estate, once the present transmitter had been upgraded to encourage businesses in those areas to join;
- The free '**Shop Safe I.D. Scheme**' introduced to protect the elderly, vulnerable and persons with learning difficulties visiting the town centre, was also being made GDPR compliant to conform to DPA 2018. The Scheme currently had 82 members with 10 more waiting to join. Members' details were kept on a database, together with emergency contact details of a carer/relative, and were held by CSU staff, Orchard Centre Security, and the Memory Café in the Orchard Centre. Members were given a personal I.D. tag which could be

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attached to a key ring to identify them, and allow their carer/relative to be called in time of need;

- Dartford Town Centre had been chosen by Kent Police '**Crimestoppers**' to host a new initiative whereby images of 'Kent's *most wanted*' criminals were displayed on 2 digital media screens in the town centre, and was understood to be the first such initiative in England. The initiative had started on 25 June 2019 with 2 screens located in the Orchard Shopping Centre. The screens rotated several times each hour throughout the day, 7 days a week and had since led to 2 (two) arrests;
- Way Forward: increase membership of DTAC and of the Shop Safe Scheme, increase radio coverage testing and training across the Borough. Encourage all DTAC members to use the Disc system and phone app to share information and intelligence. Put Dartford on the national map for running an effective DTAC partnership scheme.

In response to subsequent questions the Strategic Director (External Services), the EARS/CSU Manager, the CSM and the DTAC IM, confirmed the following points for Members:

- DTAC presently concentrated on the town centre and was a Council assisted scheme. It was proposed to expand the present DTAC operation to include Swanscombe, Ebbsfleet and Longfield and make it an independent operation. Bluewater had a separate policing team, but shared a common database and vehicle I.D. camera technology with DTAC;
- Details of the DTAC and Shop Safer Schemes should be on the Council website for Members and their constituents, but Officers would confirm this;
- Once DTAC was extended to Swanscombe, increased co-ordination with the Town Council and their Safer Community Committee was proposed;
- The Crimestoppers initiative in the town centre was operated by Kent Police with the aid of PCC funding, the first such initiative in the UK. The present Crimestoppers operation was going well and had helped to increase footfall in the town centre. It was hoped that a future long-term '*Kent most wanted criminals*' scheme would be funded by shop owners;
- The CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) precept could be used to fund CCTV infrastructure, but *not* running costs;
- The town centre retained a dedicated Police Constable, supported by a PCSO. It was confirmed that the town centre was to receive an additional dedicated Police Constable who was yet to be recruited.

The Chairman thanked the DTAC Intelligence Manager for an excellent presentation and all Officers for their positive responses to Members' questions.

RESOLVED:

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1. That Members note the report and presentation recording the achievements of the DTAC scheme in Dartford for the period 1 July 2018 to 1 July 2019.

10. UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF DARTFORD'S SAFER STREETS POLICY

Members received an oral update from the District Commander, Chief Inspector Neil Loudon, regarding his continuing review of Kent Police's Safer Streets Policy for Dartford.

The District Commander reminded Members that the primary aim of the policy was to provide a visible police presence to re-assure the public and contribute towards an invigorated town centre for public benefit and enjoyment.

He advised that previously (prior to reductions in Police staffing levels) the Dartford Town Centre police team had comprised 1 Sergeant and 8 Constables. Reduced resources had dictated a reduction in police officers entirely dedicated to town centre duties. Current patrol patterns for the town centre comprised an early intervention patrol by 2 uniformed officers prior to midnight and full night-time economy activity. This was supplemented by random visible uniform patrols to premises and known 'hot-spots' after midnight. A 'knife-arch' had been purchased and operated in Dartford and Gravesham town centres at week-ends at various premises and locations designated for 'knife-arch' operations. Customers could not be required to pass through the 'knife-arch' by the police, but commercial venues could make passage through the 'knife-arch' by patrons a condition of entry to their premises. Refusal to pass through the 'knife-arch' would, in addition to barring entry to venues, also bring those refusing to participate in the scheme to the attention of the police. A further new initiative was increased co-operation between British Transport police and police officers in Dartford CSU, to target criminals from the Metropolis and elsewhere in Kent travelling to Dartford by train.

Kent Police had received good feedback from the public via their twitter-feed over these new measures and initiatives, and directly to their officers patrolling in the town centre. It was hoped to increase the week-end police presence in Dartford following the next tranche of Kent Police recruitment.

The CSM advised Members that increased PCC funding had been secured to help finance the current CCTV operation in Westgate car park in town. Whilst the strictures of the Government's 2018 Data Protection Act made successful prosecutions more difficult, it should be noted that there were no reported incidences of drunken behaviour, public urination, car racing or significant noise in relation to the car park. He also asked Members to note that, in support of the present police patrols in the town centre, all police officers in the Borough were able to tap into DBC's CCTV coverage to enable a rapid response to any incidents that did occur.

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The Chairman and Members commended the use of the Police twitter-feed to update and encourage the public with 'good news' stories. Police use of Snapchat and Instagram was suggested to capture the attention of younger members of the community.

In response to specific questions the District Commander, the E&RS/CSU Manager and the CSM confirmed the following points for Members:

- PSPOs (Public Space Protection Orders) were used primarily in the town centre during the hours of the 'night-time' economy;
- Dispersal Powers were only used on an intelligence-led basis, *not* as a blanket measure, and could only be used by the police;
- CPWs (Civil Protection Warnings) were the pre-cursor to Civil Protection Notices (CPNs) and were served on specific individuals. 85% of the CPWs issued in Dartford proved effective and did not escalate to the CPN stage. As a civil procedure, CSU Officers rather than Kent Police led in the issue of CPWs, which were the preferred and most effective measure to combat ASB given the focus on named individuals, rather than the wider-ranging PSPO measure which targeted a general area where ASB was being committed;
- The Council used the full range of available powers to combat crime and ASB in Dartford and good Officer/Councillor co-operation was part of that effort. PSPO powers had been used recently by the Council's Park Ranger service to seize alcohol in Central Park; DBC's CCTV operation had been used to tackle the dumping of nitrous dioxide canisters with the offenders subjected to £400 FPNs by CSU Enforcement Officers; CCTV was useful but not a universal panacea, was expensive to operate and maintain and not universally welcomed by residents, particularly in public parks and open spaces, where protection of privacy became an issue. Extension of current CCTV coverage in the town centre to include new developments in Dartford across the main railway tracks (as proposed by one Member) would require careful consideration and costing analysis;
- The Council's decision to retain its CCTV operation 'in-house' was paying real dividends in terms of local knowledge being used to tackle local issues. However, DBC's current CCTV operation remained a major cost centre for the Council, particularly in terms of the fibre cable for the system supplied by BT. Purchasing its own fibre cable was a possible option for the Council to reduce costs in the future.

The Chairman thanked the District Commander for updating Members and CSU Officers for responding to Members questions. He judged that the Safer Streets Initiative had made real progress in the preceding 4 years and that Kent Police and the Council's CSU team were to be congratulated over their efforts on behalf of the Dartford public.

**11. DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CSP)
COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2019-2022**

The Committee agreed to consider the Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) new Community Safety Strategy 2019-2022 document, prior to the July 2019 Performance report, to give new Members in particular a greater insight into the structure and workings of the CSP.

The covering report from the Dartford Community Safety Manager (CSM) enclosed two documents for Members' consideration and comment:

- Dartford and Gravesham CSP's Community Safety Strategy 2019-2022 [Appendix A - written jointly with Gravesham CSU];
- CSP's 'Plan on a Page' document [Appendix B also jointly agreed]

The CSM advised Members that under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 the Council had a legal duty to carry out all its various functions with regard to the need to prevent crime and disorder and re-offending in its area.

The subsequent Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 granted the Council the power to scrutinise both crime and disorder matters through the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (the CSP). Those legislative powers also enabled the Council to exercise an overview and scrutiny function through the Committee to hold the CSP and other partner organisations to account for their performance, including their work with the Council, to meet specific local targets.

The Dartford and Gravesham CSP formed a unique local authority partnership in England, which had enabled it to secure increased funding and benefit from shared common working practices for both Boroughs. The D&G CSP was comprised of seven statutory bodies (partners) plus the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC):

Dartford Borough Council

Gravesham Borough Council

Kent County Council

Kent Police

Kent Fire and Rescue Service

Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Service [formerly Kent Probation Service]

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group

Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner [not a statutory body]

CSP partners had a legal duty to work with other local agencies and organisations to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder, including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment, as well as the misuse of drugs in the area. Those strategy streams were combined by the D&G CSP into a single 3 year Strategy

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document, currently the 2019-2022 Strategy before Members. Each 3 year Strategy document was refreshed on an annual basis, via the 'Annual Refresh' document, which was based on the analysis of crime and disorder in both Boroughs for the previous year, as set out in the CSP's annual Strategic Assessment (SA) document issued each December, and considered by the CSP the following January, prior to presentation to the Committee each February. The CSP's 2019-2022 Strategy document before Members that evening, set out new Objectives for the coming 3 year period [agenda page 43] and 4 Priorities [agenda pages 46-53 refers].

The CSM highlighted the following points for Members in the 2019-2022 Strategy document:

- **Priority 1: Violent Crime including Domestic Abuse** [agenda p.46] change in the CSP's approach from target based to concentrating on better reporting, raising awareness of issues and supporting hard to reach groups e.g. DA victims and VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) and by employing cross-cutting themes to particular effect in tackling Gang Culture;
- **Performance Indicators** [agenda p. 44] enabled the CSP to analyse the effectiveness of its strategies in 12 month building blocks, and were put to the public for comments;
- **Priority 2: Persistent Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime and Priority 3: Preventing Offending and Reducing Re-offending** [agenda pages 48-51] the vulnerability of young people to organised crime was a continuing concern requiring multi-agency co-operation over a number of cross-cutting themes and initiatives;
- **Governance** [agenda p. 45] the organogram set out the structure of the joint CSP in terms of the Forums, Panels and Teams operating under the umbrella of each borough's Community Safety Unit (CSU). The Chairmanship of the CSP alternated on an annual basis, with the Leader of Dartford Council, Councillor Jeremy Kite MBE occupying the CSP Chairmanship for the 2019/20 municipal cycle;
- **Plan on a Page** [agenda p.55] was a new feature to the Strategy and enabled readers to view the CSP's Priorities and Aims 'at a glance'.

In response to subsequent questions from Members the CSM confirmed the following points;

- DA and Violent Crime were combined under **Priority 1**, but treated differently;
- Safeguarding training was available to the public via the St. Giles Trust but there was a case for more training to be made available to the public on e.g. 'Gangs';
- PREVENT and safeguarding training was given to licensed cab and mini-cab drivers in Dartford by CSU Licensing Officers in co-operation with Kent Police and Kent Fire & Rescue Service, to make drivers more aware of child and human trafficking issues, county-

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- lines drug offences, and indications of terror-related offences by its passengers, and to report their observations to the CSU/Kent Police;
- The CSO attended the meetings of London authorities who were considering housing gang members and other youth offenders in Dartford, to ensure maximum co-operation between authorities both prior to, and after transfer of such offenders to Dartford;
 - The offence of Flytipping in Dartford needed to be tackled on a multi-faceted level and the public re-educated over the offence and the penalties it attracted. A new enforcement Officer had been added to the CSU team and the Waste & Parks Manager was working with the Council's new waste contractor to address the issue on Dartford's streets. Prosecution of unlicensed waste carriers was difficult, and educating the public against using them was key. Publicising the results of successful prosecutions against such unlicensed carriers to deter repeat offenders was also seen as a key deterrent measure.

The Chairman and Members thanked the CSM for his report and presenting the 2019-2022 CSP Strategy and all Officers for their positive responses and suggestions to Members' questions and concerns.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the contents of the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Strategy 2019-2022 (enclosed as Appendix A to the report) and the 'Plan on a Page' enclosed as Appendix B.

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman advised Members that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Committee was required to go into closed session excluding any members of the press or public present, prior to consideration of the CSP's July 2019 Performance report [EXEMPT Item A in the agenda].

It was confirmed that no members of the press or public were present and the Committee formally went into closed session.

13. PERFORMANCE - DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM CSP PERFORMANCE REPORT JULY 2019

The report from the Community Safety Manager (CSM) asked Members to note the Dartford & Gravesham Community Safety Partnership's Quarterly Performance Report (July 2019) enclosed as Item A in the EXEMPT agenda papers.

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The July 2019 Performance Report detailed performance in relation to levels of crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other indicators. It also highlighted the key Community Safety activity that had been delivered or was planned to be delivered in each CSP borough, against the headline priorities agreed in the new Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategy 2019-2022 [Min. no. 12 refers].

The District Commander, Chief Inspector Loudon Kent Police, summarised the EXEMPT material for Members and answered questions of detail relating to specific crime categories, for offences recorded by Kent Police in Dartford for the period April-May 2018 to April-May 2019.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the contents of the July 2019 Quarterly Performance report attached as Appendix A to the report, and enclosed as EXEMPT item A in the Agenda papers.

14. CRIME AND DISORDER (O&S) COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

The Chairman advised that the Committee was now in open session, and that any members of the press or public who wished to observe the remainder of the proceedings were free to do so. None were present.

The *draft* report and appendices compiled by the Committee's Co-ordinator chronicled the work that the Committee had undertaken in the previous 2018/19 municipal year, set in the context of the Committee's Terms of Reference and Protocol.

The Chairman, Members and the previous Committee Chairman (attending as Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety), thanked the Committee Co-ordinator for his annual report and general support of the Committee in the period under review.

Members also expressed their thanks and gratitude to the Strategic Director (External Services), the whole of the CSU Team, and the District Commander and CSU Inspector, for all their contributions to the work of the Committee during the 2018/19 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members approve the report for presentation to the General Assembly of the Council.

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15. CRIME AND DISORDER (OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE PROTOCOL

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the contents of the Committee's Protocol dated June 2019.

16. STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN LOCAL AND COMBINED AUTHORITIES

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities as issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

17. COMMITTEE'S ROLLING WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019-20 AND BEYOND

The report from the Committee's Co-ordinating Officer enclosed at Appendix A for Members consideration and comment, a *draft* Work Plan for the 2019-20 municipal year and beyond.

The Chairman proposed two additions to the *draft* Plan:

- (i) An update on the DTAC Shop Safe Scheme [Min. No. 9 refers];
- (ii) A report from CSU and Kent Police Officers on the rise in the misuse of nitrous dioxide (NO₂) canisters in the Borough which, in the Chairman's Parish, was seen as reaching epidemic proportions.

In response to the Chairman's second proposal, the Community Safety Manager reprised the advice he and Kent Police had given to the last meeting of the Borough & Parish Forum on 2 July 2019.

He advised that it was not an offence to possess nitrous oxide (NO₂) canisters used commercially to operate soda stream drink dispensers, or to use such canisters to achieve a so-called 'high'. It was an offence to supply such canisters to other users for recreational purposes, but difficult to prove unless the offence observed. Inhalation of NO₂ provided a quick 'high' but the effect dissipated quickly: which again made use difficult to prove by the police. The principal offence was littering, with used canisters being dumped in piles of 80-100 canisters from cars in car parks and other public areas.

Following the concerns expressed by Forum Members on 2 July 2019; the CSM, Kent Police and the Council's Waste & Parks Manager; had taken co-ordinated action to map out dumping 'hot-spots' in the Borough. The Council's new waste contractor had software to help monitor the hotspots and would add GEO code references to help better identify the exact locations. PSPO enforcement, enhanced litter enforcement by Council Officers, plus use of

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vehicle I.D. (via the DVLA) were all measures the Council and Kent Police would pursue. However, Members were asked to retain realistic expectations over outcomes, given that the possession and use of NO₂ canisters was not an offence in and of itself.

The Strategic Director (External Services) proposed that the topic be added to the February 2020 meeting of the Committee, when a considered report would be presented to Members. It was also open to the Committee to consider what measures CSP partner agencies could be expected to make to tackle the problem. She would consider this further, and relay her thoughts to Members in due course.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Youth, Health & Wellbeing undertook to encourage her KCC colleagues to address the issue. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Safety praised the work already undertaken by the CSU and Kent Police, despite the lack of enforcement powers over possession or use of NO₂ canisters by individuals.

The Chairman advised that he intended to lead a campaign to tackle the misuse of NO₂ canisters with Cabinet Member support, and that he had already spoken to Dartford's MP, Gareth Johnson, with a view to lobbying Government on the issue.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the contents of the *draft* Work Plan for the Committee for the 2019/20 municipal cycle and beyond [attached at Appendix A to the report];
2. That the additional topics as Minuted above, be added to the Work Plan for the meetings of the Committee in February and July 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Councillor C S McLEAN
CHAIRMAN