

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 15 February 2017.

**PRESENT:** Councillor R J Wells (Chairman)  
Councillor A S Sandhu, MBE (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs. M B Kelly  
Councillor R Lees  
Councillor M A Maddison  
Councillor C S McLean  
Councillor D J Mote

**ABSENT:** None

**Dartford Borough Council Officers:-**

Sheri Green	– Strategic Director (External)
Mark Salisbury	– EARS/CSU Manager
Tony Henley	– Community Safety Manager, CSU
Kit Weller	– Community Safety Officer, CSU

**CABINET MEMBERS:** Councillor Ann Allen, MBE Portfolio Holder for Community Development

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

INSP Gary Woodward	– Dartford CSU Inspector, Kent Police
Daniel Rudden	– Safer Homes Store Manager Bluewater, Kent Police
Erin Scott	– Neighbourhood Watch & Volunteer Liaison Officer, Kent Police

**15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C J Shippam, Deputy Leader and Dartford PCP representative; one for lateness from the Vice-Chairman and subsequently, direct to Member Services, from Councillor S R Jarnell due to unexpected illness that evening.

Councillor Ann Allen MBE was in attendance by standing invitation from the Committee, in her role as Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development.

Councillor T A Maddison was also in attendance and contributed to Member discussion at the discretion of the Chairman.

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The Chairman welcomed his guests from Kent Police: INSP Gary Woodward, Dartford CSU Inspector; Daniel Rudden, Safer Home Experience Store Manager from the Bluewater Police Office and Erin Scott, Neighbourhood Watch & Volunteer Liaison Officer.

The presence of the Strategic Director (External Services), the EARS/CSU Manager, the Community Safety Manger and the Community Safety Officer was also noted.

### **16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Committee Members, Councillor Allen, Councillor T. A. Maddison or the Vice-Chairman, when he subsequently joined the proceedings.

### **17. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JULY 2016**

RESOLVED:

1. That the Minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 27 July 2016 be confirmed as an accurate account of those proceedings.

### **18. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman confirmed that there were no items of urgency for consideration by the Committee.

### **19. TO CONSIDER REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES (IF ANY)**

There were no references from other Committees to consider.

### **20. REGULATION 9 NOTICE**

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Regulation 9 Notice for the period 17 January 2017 to 31 May 2017 be noted.

### **21. KENT POLICE & CRIME PANEL (PCP) UPDATE**

The Chairman advised that, in the absence of Dartford's PCP representative, this item was for noting rather than discussion.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Minutes of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel (PCP) meetings held on 8 September 2016 and 15 November 2016 [Agenda pages 19-36] be noted.

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**22. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH - SHARING BEST PRACTICE: PRESENTATION BY KENT POLICE**

The Committee received a verbal presentation from Ms Erin Scott, Neighbourhood Watch & Volunteer Liaison Officer, Kent Police.

Principal points advised to Members included:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in England was founded in Cheshire in 1982 as a public response to a local murder;
- There were now more than 1 million Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Schemes operating across the UK with 6,000 in Kent and Medway, including some 600 Schemes in Dartford and Gravesham;
- The NW Scheme represented a partnership between the Police and the Public with individual Schemes led by Volunteers who; following completion of a Police vetting process; were appointed as Scheme Co-ordinators and Deputy Co-ordinators and liaised directly with their local Police forces;
- Individual Schemes could raise money for their activities as required and on average watched over two (2) streets [but could be larger] with NW Notices displayed in the windows of residential home windows usually at either end of a Scheme to deter potential perpetrators;
- Home Office surveys of HM Prisons revealed that NW Schemes played an effective role in dissuading criminals who, when they saw NW Notices in an area, 'moved on';
- As part of the two-way exchange between the Police and the Public, Schemes were encouraged to report their observations to their local Police partners who updated each Scheme with the latest Police intel and statistics, crime trends and scams operating in their areas;
- Police numbers in Kent had increased, including Officers on the beat, but public co-operation and help continued to be vital, with notable successes secured by the Police as a result of observation and feedback from NW Schemes e.g. recent closure of a brothel in Ashford;
- More NW Schemes were needed in Kent with the 600 Schemes currently operating in the Dartford & Gravesham CSP area viewed as a comparatively 'low' figure, with vacancies for Volunteers being carried by individual Schemes;
- Kent Police were undertaking a recruitment drive, including at colleges and other higher education venues, designed to recruit younger members for NW and lower the current age profile of Scheme members. Older traditional members would always have a role to play in Schemes, but younger and more IT savvy members were needed to sustain the NW operation going forward in the face of competition from more social-media based schemes combating crime e.g. 'Country Eye'.

In a subsequent Q&A session with Members, Kent Police representatives confirmed the following points:

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- No parameters had been set for the optimum number of NW Schemes for North Kent, demand was public led and much depended on the successful recruitment of Volunteers to effectively manage individual Schemes. There was currently a vacancy for Chairman of North Kent Neighbourhood Watch. A re-assessment of overall provision was likely when a new appointment had been made;
- The danger of 'information overload' for Kent Police (KP) from the 6,000 NW Schemes operating in Kent was addressed through a '*sift and review*' process. If info received from Schemes was not relevant / had been over-taken Co-ordinators were given feed-back by KP. Calls from the 101 Service were subjected to a similar sift, review and feedback operation, in an effort to distil and retain only info that was important and relevant;
- KP and NW representatives had recently met with Residents' Groups in Greenhithe to address continuing problems of Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) in the Castle Hill area, with new build developments identified as being in particular need of NW Schemes;
- There was no mapping document available to show the NW Schemes currently operating in North Kent. Councillors/residents/organisations were advised to contact Kent Police direct for NW information in their area. The Apps. used by '*Rural Farm Watch*' and '*Country Eye*' were being studied by KP with a view to re-branding NW and making the Scheme more relevant to new younger members, in the faster moving age of social-media;
- The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) had allocated start-up funding for the re-branding of the NW Scheme (including a new social-media App. for NW) under a new 3 person team. Given the traditions of the Scheme and the majority of its members, progress was slower than hoped for, but being made.

The Chairman and Members thanked Kent Police representatives for an excellent presentation and accepted an invitation from Erin Scott to contact her with any individual concerns they or their residents might wish to follow-up on.

**23. BLUEWATER SAFETY SHOP / COMMUNITY SAFETY AT HOME FACILITY  
- PRESENTATION BY KENT POLICE**

The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation from the CSU Inspector and the Safer Home Manager on the operation of Kent Police's Safety Store situated in the Bluewater Shopping complex.

Members were advised that the present Safety Store had been expanded from it's original 'Charity Shop' image in 2014 operating as a '1 Stop Shop' for Kent Police, the RSPCA, Kent Fire & Rescue and the North West Kent Crime Prevention Panel. In 2014 a variety of gimmicks such as raffle prizes and demonstrating high speed intercept cars had been used to attract the public's

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interest. From those early days the facility had been re-branded with a definitive image and expanded into the current Safety Store, with financial help from Bluewater Management, including rent-free tenure.

The expanded Safety Store facility now functioned as a 'mock house' to demonstrate 'best practice' procedures to the public in the home environment for; better health & safety, to combat theft, protect valuables, prevent cyber-crime and alert parents and children to the dangers of on-line grooming. The expanded Safety Store also included a new Police Back Office facility, which gave Officers a crucial working environment within the Bluewater complex to complete paperwork and conduct interviews.

The Safer Home Objectives were identified as:

- To showcase Kent Police to a wider public;
- To raise awareness of policing priorities and mobilise community involvement;
- To provide and demonstrate professional crime prevention products and information;
- To improve the efficiency of the Policing Team;
- To compliment the Bluewater Community Engagement Strategy;
- To provide a platform/opportunity for relevant Community Stakeholders/Partners to compliment the Safer Home objectives.

The Safer Home Brief was to:

- Professionalise the branding – move away from the 'charity shop' image;
- Create a more interactive environment with both the older and younger demographic - e.g. using local football teams to attract fans to the Safer Home facility;
- Be scalable and transferable – the Safer Home facility underwent a 3 month re-fresh moving within Bluewater to empty units on a rent-free basis;
- Provide operational functionality – supporting Bluewater Police team with a Back-Room function;
- Facilitate Office Space;
- Market 'The Home' both internally and externally to maximise benefits for the wider Kent Police Force and its partner Agencies e.g. KF&RS etc.;
- The Vision of the 'The Safer Home' facility was to educate the public in terms of safety within the home environment with an added crime prevention dimension.

Specific elements of the 'Safer Home' facility included:

- **Public Entrance** – the store front reflected a brick-build house with Bluewater and Kent Police logo branding, following customer feedback;

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- **Kitchen** – to demonstrate to the public good safety measures and tips in a ‘real’ environment e.g. plugs and sockets etc.;
- **Lounge** – fully furnished to reflect a home with safety and security videos e.g. ‘Stay Safe’ running on a loop on the ‘family’ TV;
- **Study** –also furnished as in a home to help demonstrate crime prevention measures and hosting demographic group’s e.g. Workshop to educate elderly residents on current ‘scams’ being perpetrated in the area;
- **Technology** – raising parental awareness of how common technology e.g. Play Stations, X-Boxes, laptops and tablets (all of which had internet access) could be used to groom children on-line;
- **Work Stream Ideas** – Young adults were able to test their knowledge of Child Safe-Guarding measures by taking the CEOP’s ‘Thinkuknow’ module test on a dedicated computer terminal; examples of scam emails and letters were available for public view and education; literature on Domestic Violence awareness and tell-tale signs of abuse in the home environment;
- **Police Back Office** – a crucial professional work environment facility enabling Police Officers to conduct interviews and take statements from victims and witnesses, saving police time and increasing police presence on high visibility patrol around the Bluewater complex;
- **Future Steps in 2017** - Every month the Home Store distributed a new *crime prevention giveaway* item e.g. sheaths for contactless cards; on 31 March the Home Store was due to move to a new unit within Bluewater and undergo a ‘refresh’; in August it was hoped to hold a charity rowing event against the famous *Macey’s* Department Store in New York with the proceeds going to local charities in the Dartford area; in October /November a Chief Officer event was proposed hosted by The Chief Constable or the Police & Crime Commissioner.

In subsequent discussion with Members, the following suggestions were made for increased use of the Home Store facility at Bluewater:

- Increased co-ordination between the Bluewater and Dartford Town Centre Shop Safe Scheme teams;
- Instituting measures at Bluewater to help ‘Adults with Learning Difficulties’ similar to The Orchard Centre scheme in Dartford;
- Use of the Safer Homes Store to conduct routine health checks on the elderly;
- Hosting a meeting of the Dartford Elders Forum in the Home Safe Store;
- Taking forward existing contacts and co-operation with Darent Valley Hospital over measures to combat Domestic Violence (DV) and educate the public on measures to identify DV;
- Hold a maternity event at the Store for expectant and new mothers e.g. social awareness over ‘breast-feeding’;

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- Continue the tradition with the new Dartford Mayor [May 2017] of sponsoring charities and events within Bluewater and the Home Store facility.

The Chairman and Members thanked Kent Police representatives for a second excellent presentation and accepted the invitation from the Safer Homes Manager to contact him with their concerns and ideas for future co-operation with the Safer Homes Store at Bluewater.

**24. UPDATE ON NEW ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) POWERS - ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME & POLICING ACT 2014**

The Community Safety Officer summarised his report for the Committee as submitted in the Agenda papers [p. 37-43] and invited questions.

The Strategic Director (External Services), CSU Officers and the Kent Police Inspector confirmed the following points in response to specific questions and expressions of concern from Members:

***Community Trigger (CT):***

- The *Community Trigger (CT)* process gave victims of anti-social behaviour (ASB) the ability to demand a review of their cases, where the locally defined threshold for ASB had been met and effectively represented a 'complaints process' for the handling of individual ASB cases [but did not replace the formal complaints process for individual organisations within the CSP];
- No *CTs* had been activated in Dartford to date (February 2017) but the co-location of the local policing team within the Council's Community Safety Unit, together with the Council's Housing Services team also located within the Civic Centre building, enabled those three principal bodies to undertake reviews of ongoing ASB cases and exchange information and effectively undertake the *CT* process in a less formal manner;
- Members' request, that the *CT* process be more widely advertised to residents, would be considered;
- The concerns of the Greenhithe Ward Member in relation to ongoing ASB issues in Castle Hill were noted and would be responded to;
- Expressions of concern from other Members in relation to acts of ASB and/or Criminal Damage in their Wards could be investigated by the CSU Team, if Members could provide specific details and a resident to contact.

***Civil Injunctions (CIs) and Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs):***

- *Civil Injunctions (CIs)* were used primarily against anti-social individuals;

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- *PSPOs* were designed to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in a designated area;
- The Council considered use of both *CIs* and *PSPOs* as they deemed appropriate;
- A *PSPO* was proposed to combat ongoing ASB issues at Crossways Industrial Estate in the Greenhithe Ward, once the exact criteria to be applied had been finalised, to meet the local circumstances and improve residents wellbeing;
- Both measures [*CIs* and *PSPOs*] could be used in tandem or consecutively e.g. a *PSPO* could be imposed to provide an underpinning solution to an area based problem, then as required, follow-up action taken with *CIs* applied against persistent ASB offenders within the area of the *PSPO* ;
- The definition of a *Community Trigger* given in para 3.4.1. of the report [agenda pages 37/38] had been personalised and differed to the criteria for activating the *CTI* process on the Council website.

### ***Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs):***

- Existing DPPOs were due to be replaced by PSPOs in October 2017 some 3 years after the 2015 Act came into effect;
- The existing DPPO for the Town Centre during the hours of the 'Nighttime Economy' would be replaced by a revised PSPO with similar conditions;
- All existing DPPOs would be reviewed and relevant conditions transferred to the new PSPOs as relevant and new conditions added if appropriate.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the contents of the report.

### **25. DARTFORD AND GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT 2016**

The report asked the Committee to consider the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSPs) annual Strategic Assessment 2016 document, as presented to the CSP on 26 January 2017 (Appendix A to the report – marked as Item A in the EXEMPT agenda papers).

The report advised Members that the Council was under an obligation of confidence in relation to the Strategic Assessment 2016 document, in that, the data it contained had been provided to the Council on an *In-Confidence* basis and should as a consequence, be considered by the Committee in the EXEMPT part of the Agenda proceedings.



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### RESOLVED:

1. That Appendix A to the report be considered as Item A in the EXEMPT part of the Agenda.

### **26. WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17: UPDATE**

The report asked Members to agree the contents of a revised Work Programme for the remainder of the 2016-17 Municipal Year and the summer and winter meetings of the forthcoming 2017-18 Municipal cycle [Appendix A to the report].

The Committee Co-ordinator confirmed that the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) had declined the Committee's invitation to address Members on 26 July 2017 [report para 3.4 refers] and that a further invitation had been sent to his office proposing **14 February 2018** as an alternative. He reminded Members that the PCC had recently addressed the Council's Borough and Parish Forum [5 July 2016] and that as a consequence, securing a second visit by the PCC to address Dartford Members was proving more difficult.

In subsequent Member discussion, the Lead Member for Enforcement & Community Safety proposed that the Committee receive a presentation from Kent County Council Trading Standards on current 'scam' operations being perpetrated in the Dartford area, in particular those criminal activities that targeted the elderly.

### RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed rolling Work Programme for the Committee (attached as Appendix A to the report) be noted;
2. That the proposed addition from the Lead Member for Enforcement & Community Safety as detailed above, be pursued by CSU Officers.

### **27. NEXT MEETING**

Members were advised that, subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting in May, the next meeting of the Committee would be **Wednesday 26 July 2017**.

### **28. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman advised that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) he was required to ask that all members of the press and public present vacate the Chamber prior to discussion of the CSP Strategic Assessment 2016 document.

No members of the press or public were present.

**29. CSP STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT 2016**

The Committee considered, in closed session, as recommended in the covering report [Agenda Item 13 and Min. No. 25 refers]; the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP's) Strategic Assessment 2016 document (agenda Item A in the EXEMPT papers).

The SA 2016 document advised that the Partnership was required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce an SA on an annual basis. The SA was based on research, evidence and intelligence gathered from both Kent-wide and local sources and wherever possible, that information was analysed at a Dartford and Gravesham level.

SA 2016 detailed recorded crime and disorder offences for the period 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2016 for both Boroughs (separately) and fed into the Partnership's three-year Community Safety Strategy for the period 2016-19. The main aim of the annual SA was to identify any changes in circumstance that might necessitate amendments being made to the existing Strategy and to ensure that new or emerging local priorities were addressed. For the first time since changes to several definitions of crime types and the application of new Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime in 2014, year-on-year comparisons with information contained in the Partnership's SA 2015 document were possible.

In addition to year-on-year performance comparison for the Partnership, SA 2016 also drew comparisons between the Partnership and other CSPs in Kent Districts and Medway and compared the performance and position of the Partnership within its Most Similar Group (MSG) of CSPs.

In this latter respect; SA 2016 noted that other Police Forces represented within its MSG of CSPs had significantly lower levels of accuracy for recorded crime [as assessed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)]. Kent Police continued to lead the field with 96% accuracy for the recording of all reported crime [as assessed by HMIC in 2014]. By comparison, within the Partnership's MSG, Greater Manchester Police had been assessed by HMIC as having only an 85% accuracy level for recording reported crime, with the Staffordshire and Sussex Forces [in the MSG] at 91% and 94% respectively. These differing levels of accuracy within the MSG for recording reported crime made the objective assessment of the Partnership's performance on a comparative basis, difficult. Dartford remained 13<sup>th</sup> out of 14 areas assessed within its MSG for the level of crime recorded locally per 1,000 of the population and was above the average experienced by other areas with similar demographics. Dartford's position within the MSG remained unchanged from the previous 2015 Assessment.

The Community Safety Officer (CSO) advised Members that total recorded crime in Dartford for the period 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2016 had risen by 12.8% which mirrored an increase in every Kent and Medway District [average 12%]. Within the total crime recorded figure; Dartford had experienced rises in most crime categories in the period under review; with a

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significant rise in the volume of violent crime, particularly in offences of violence against the person [29% slightly above the Kent average of 28%]. The significant increase was attributed, in the main, to the increased number of cases of domestic abuse [DA] and the accuracy now used in reporting such cases. The volume increase in this offence made it the single category placing the greatest demand on CSP resources. Offences of ASB had increased by 12.8% in the period under review and the related offence of Criminal Damage had been identified as a new priority for the CSP to address in Dartford.

In response to specific questions and expressions of concern from Members the Strategic Director (External Services), CSU Officers and the CSU Kent Police Inspector confirmed the following points for the Committee:

- The increase in Dartford's recorded crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) recorded in SA 2016 was *not* seen as being directly related to the increase in the Borough's population, more a reflection of an increased crime rate across the County and changes to the recording of historic crime, particularly Domestic Abuse (see below);
- Increased reporting and recording of Domestic Abuse (DA) offences, with every historic incident against a victim requiring a separate report, had significantly driven up statistics for Dartford. Increased recording of cyber-crime and fraud in the Borough had also pushed up statistics; reflecting the national trend in these crimes which had seen a new national centre to combat fraud and cyber-crime opened recently;
- The performance of Dartford [and Gravesham] within its Most Similar Group (MSG) of CSPs continued to suffer in comparative terms with some Forces recording fully 11% less crime than Kent Police i.e. 'apples were still *not* being compared to apples' with-in the MSG, to the Partnership's detriment;
- The 50% recorded increase in the number of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system was a cause of concern for Dartford CSU Officers and the local police team. The profile of offences recorded in SA 2016 remained much the same as for 2015 with offences committed at Bluewater continuing to be a major contributor to Dartford's statistics and Members were advised as to key trends and offender profiles;
- The Strategic Director (External Services) advised that the large number of young people that had been recorded as first-time offenders, had also been noted by the Dartford Children and Young People's Board as being the opposite of the trend encountered in previous years in Dartford and further work would be necessary to identify possible causes;
- Increased gang related crime, including by gangs displaced from adjoining Boroughs and the Metropolis, was being tackled by Kent

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Police under a variety of Protocols, including measures to tackle child sexual exploitation and modern-day slavery: the aim was to make Dartford a difficult place for gangs to operate and public feed-back and information had an important role to play in achieving this goal;

- The Committee was advised of potential difficulties created by the placement of both offenders and vulnerable persons in Dartford by London Boroughs and other agencies: the Council had no powers to prevent such transfers but addressed any issues that arose with CSP partners following arrival. The KCC Community Warden Scheme had played an increasingly useful role in the period under review and KCC Wardens attended daily CSU briefings;
- CSU Officers had undertaken anti-social behaviour (ASB) training delivered by a barrister specialising in use of the new powers in December 2016. This had increased awareness of the options for using the new powers;
- Kent Police had carried out a joint initiative with the Metropolitan Police aimed at dismantling criminal businesses operating in the Borough and neighbouring Bexley, however the work was proving to be challenging;
- CSU Officers and the local Kent Police team had not detected any increase or pattern in hate crime *post* the Brexit Referendum vote. But hate crime continued to be monitored on a daily basis and all victims supported, with several prosecutions in the legal pipe-line pending resolution;
- The Council was pressing KCC to introduce a new template for the Strategic Assessment (SA) to cater for the reality of differing reporting methods and methodologies across Kent CSP's and introduce greater reality to comparative performance against statistics. Dartford was prepared to pilot a new risk assessment based model for a future SA document, reflecting the MORILE [Management of Risks in Law Enforcement] methodology.

### RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee note the contents of the Strategic Assessment 2016 document (EXEMPT Item A);
2. That the Committee note the priorities identified in the SA 2016;
3. That the Committee note the intention of the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to refresh the Community Safety Plan to address the priorities in the SA 2016 and that the Plan be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in July 2017.

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The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Councillor R J Wells  
CHAIRMAN