

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 13 February 2019.

**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 M J Davis (Substitute)

**ABSENT:** Councillor S R Jarnell  
Councillor D J Mote

**Dartford Borough Council Officers:-**

Sheri Green	– Strategic Director (External Services)
Mark Salisbury	– EARS & CSU Manager
Tony Henley	– Community Safety Manager, CSU
Jade Ransley	– Community Safety Officer, CSU

**CABINET MEMBERS:** Councillor Ann Allen MBE, Portfolio Holder for Community Development [by standing invitation]

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

Chief Inspector Neil Louden	– Dartford & Gravesham District Commander, Kent Police
Inspector Gavin Wade	– Dartford CSU Inspector, Kent Police
PCSO Julia Linden-Taylor	– Dartford Youth Engagement Officer, Kent Police
Oliver Jewell	– Principal Trading Standards Officer, Kent County Council Trading Standards

**16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D J Mote due to a prior Mayoral duty (Substitute Cllr. M. Davis) and one for lateness from the Vice-Chairman Cllr. Sandhu.

The Chairman extended a particular welcome to Chief Inspector Neil Louden, Kent Police, who was attending his first meeting of the Committee as the new District Commander for Dartford and Gravesham. He also welcomed

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Inspector Gavin Wade, Dartford CSU Inspector and PCSO Julia Linden-Taylor, Dartford Youth Engagement Officer and noted welcomed the presence of the Strategic Director (External Services), the EARS & CSU Manager, the Community Safety Manager and the Community Safety Officer.

Councillor Ann Allen MBE, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development, was in attendance by standing invitation.

## **17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members, or from Cllr. Sandhu when he subsequently joined the proceedings.

## **18. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2018**

RESOLVED:

1. That the Minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 25 July 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record of those proceedings.

## **19. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman confirmed that there were no urgent items for Members to consider.

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

There were no references from other Committees.

## **21. REGULATION 9 NOTICE**

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Regulation 9 Notice for the period 15 January 2019 to 31 May 2019 be noted.

## **22. KENT POLICE AND CRIME PANEL (PCP) UPDATE**

Members were asked to note the published Minutes of the PCP meetings held on 19 July, 27 September and 14 November 2018 [agenda pages 19-42 refer].

The Chairman advised Members that he had attended the most recent meeting of the Panel on 6 February 2019 and gave the following summary of the principal matters discussed, pending publication of the Minutes by KCC.

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- **Police Precept:** The proposal by the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) Mr Scott, to raise the Police precept in the Council Tax had been approved by the Panel. The increase would equate to a £24 annual increase in Council Tax [for each Band D property] and help fund an increase in overall Kent Police numbers of 180 new Officers. The new recruits when trained would be split on a 50:50 basis between local policing and investigations, subject to the overall operation control of the Chief Constable. Despite the proposed increase, the Police precept for Kent would remain within the 10 lowest in England. Since Mr Scott had taken office as PCC, overall Police numbers in Kent had risen by 450 Officers during his tenure to date;
- **Crime Recording:** The Panel had been advised that, following the latest inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in 2018 Kent Police had regained its 'Outstanding' status for the recording of crime;
- **Brexit:** In his role as PCC for Kent, Mr Scott sat on the Home Secretary's [centrally funded] cross-party Working Group considering appropriate civil contingency measures post Brexit, including a 'no-deal' scenario. Initial funding of £150K had been allocated to Kent to date, to implement any appropriate measures after 29 March 2019.

The Lead Member for Enforcement & Community Safety [in attendance as a Committee Member] reminded Members that the PCC had previously given an undertaking to review the existing 101 and 999 response services, following concerted expressions of concern from the public and Members over current service levels. The Chairman undertook to confirm what progress had been made in the interim and update Members in due course.

The Ward Member for Joyce Green and Chairman of Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley Parish Council, advised the Committee that the PCC had visited his Parish the previous week, and informed Parish Members that the public continued to use the 101 response service as a 'stepping-stone' to the 999 service. The PCC had formulated a plan to review both services, but pay scales and consequent staff retention, remained crucial issues still to be resolved, in his efforts to improve both services for the public.

### RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the published Minutes of the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel (PCP) meetings held on 19 July, 27 September and 14 November 2018 as reproduced in the Agenda pages 19-42 inc.;
2. That Members note the verbal summary provided by the Chairman of the PCP meeting held on 6 February 2019.

## 23. PRESENTATION BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL TRADING STANDARDS

Members received a PowerPoint presentation from Oliver Jewell, Principal Trading Standards Officer, Trading Standards, Kent County Council. He

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advised that Kent's Trading Standards operation had been rationalised and was now situated entirely in Ashford, and comprised of four re-structured teams:

- Complex Investigations Team - dealing with rogue traders on an in-depth basis;
- Food Chain Team;
- Business Advice Services Team – Brexit had increased the Team's work-load considerably;
- Consumer and Public Safety Team – this comprised 8 officers under Oliver Jewell as Principal Trading Standards Officer

His presentation covered the following principal areas and work priorities of the Trading Standards operation in Kent, with particular reference to his own Consumer & Public Safety Team:

### **Brexit**

For Trading Standards Brexit remained a major unknown in terms of the impact that the final deal approved by Parliament would have on trading and business in the UK, or in the event of a 'no-deal' scenario, what degree of contingency and even emergency planning would be required. It was estimated that either final scenario would entail:

- An increase in work at all the Channel ports and dock operations;
- An increase in Trading Standards' support to businesses;
- The potential for criminals to exploit continuing uncertainty over the final outcome and subsequently, particularly in the event of a 'no-deal' scenario;
- Significant contingency planning to prevent fuel shortages post Brexit and gridlock on the motorway and road system, in particular access to and egress from the Channel ports.

### **Consumer and Public Safety Team: Work Areas**

- Product Safety work concentrated on preventing faulty goods reaching the marketplace, initially as an Intel led operation at the docks and other points of UK entry and subsequently by inspecting retail premises that became subject to Intel reports or public concern. All products from cosmetics to construction materials and electrical machinery were subject to safety inspection by Trading Standards. CE and UK/CE safety labelling on products was subject to regular inspection, and were companies assisted in the event of products having to be re-called from the market;
- Combating underage sales of alcohol and tobacco through an holistic and intelligence led approach between the Police, the public and young people to form effective partnership working in the community to identify and prosecute offending retailers;

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- Preventing the sale of illegal alcohol and tobacco [not overly prevalent in Kent to date] and supporting vaping sales (legitimate since 2016) as a healthier alternative to smoking pending, further definitive medical evidence of the 'benefits' of vaping over smoking;
- Combating knife crime through an Intel led approach against suspected retailers and the enforcement of the over 25 policy;
- Supervision of petrol storage, including design and construction of petrol stations, testing for leakages, and post Brexit measures to combat petrol hoarding;
- Explosives monitoring, particularly fireworks and the possibility of bomb-making from such commonly sold products.

### **Illegal Tobacco**

- Illegal tobacco could most easily be recognised by its labelling - often in a Cyrillic [rather than English] script and without the usual health warnings. These products contained more impurities than legal brands and continued to burn when discarded by tired/inebriated smokers, leading to increased fire risks. The main targeted source of supply by Trading Standards were 'Mock Convenience Stores' predominantly run by foreign nationals who sold a basic selection of consumer products e.g. tea, coffee, sugar, toilet rolls in an effort to hide their core business of illegal tobacco sales. Genuine retail stores were also 'guilty' of selling illegal tobacco attracted by both the profit mark-up and as a means of attracting increased customer footfall for sales of its legal consumer products. The advent of online and Facebooks traders dealing expressly in illegal tobacco products was a growing trend;
- Trading Standards targeted illegal tobacco sales because of the increased health risks from such products particularly for minors, and the threat it posed to overall Government health policy, by making smoking more affordable. Cheaper illegal products also undermined local economies by removing revenue from genuine businesses and passing it to organised criminal operations, which in turn threatened the budgets/ funding of enforcement authorities and other Government bodies through the loss of tax revenue to the Exchequer. Employees (including children) of such 'Mock Convenience Stores' were also under threat to continue to work for their criminal taskmasters, who used untaxed and unlicensed vehicles to store and transport their stock, often using unlicensed drivers;
- The results of a 2018 survey of smokers in SE England revealed that 70% bought illegal tobacco from shops, with 75% either knowing they were buying counterfeit products, or simply didn't know or care. Some 83% of smokers had a single supplier (so changing their behaviour would be effective) with 87% agreeing that all smokers bought illegal product at some time, and that cheaper illegal tobacco made it harder to quit smoking. If caught and prosecuted for buying illegal product 70% of smokers surveyed would be put off, 78% would stop purchasing illegal product if they thought it was linked to criminal

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gangs, and 85% would stop buying if they knew the shop involved supplied to children;

- Kent Profile: approximately 20 shops of a criminal nature had been identified in Kent but the traditional investigation/prosecution route wasn't always the answer to effectively combating such operations, which often operated on a 'handshake' basis, with no paper trail to underpin prosecutions in the Courts. Utility bills continued to be met at such premises which were often eligible for business rates discounts/exemptions, making true ownership hard to establish, and successful prosecutions even harder to achieve. Magistrates could impose significant fines against those convicted, but such sums were insignificant, compared to the overall profit made from such illegal operations which could pay fines from 1 day's trading alone;
- Investigation Options: exploring alternative strategies with local authorities and Kent Police were essential e.g. Illegal Tobacco Unit Roadshow funded by Kent Public Health [in Dartford in 2017]; School theatre productions at Primary and Secondary level warning against the dangers of smoking – particularly illegal products; Kent Police Open Day and spray-painting 'Smoke-Free Zone' signs in public places e.g. Young Mum's Centre in the Isle of Sheppey. The use of 'joined-up' reporting across Agencies was also important and helped demonstrate the 'nuisance' caused by such 'Mock Convenience Stores' across the board e.g. the link that illegal tobacco sales [and alcohol sales] had to increased levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB). A multi-agency sustainable approach was required to both disrupt supply networks *and* deter users. All Intel (including from the public) was valued and passed to Trading Standards Intel Unit for analysis ([intelunit@kent.gov.uk](mailto:intelunit@kent.gov.uk) or tel. 03000 412020).

In response to subsequent questions from Members, the Principal Trading Standards Officer gave the following advice:

- Magistrates could impose significant fines on retailers of illegal tobacco, and cases passed up to the Crown Court could result in prison terms of up to 10 years. However, Magistrates tended towards non-custodial community service orders and fines. This was the outcome in the recent case of a repeat offender successfully prosecuted and convicted in Dartford. The Magistrate had imposed a fine plus 240 hours of community service, in recognition of the fact that the offender was also an employer. A custodial sentence would impact adversely on the staff, possibly even closing the business in the owner's absence in prison.
- Trading Standards could be called to appear before Council Sub-Committees to give evidence in licence review cases to help combat illegal alcohol and tobacco sales;
- Rogue traders who targeted an area and a particular customer profile e.g. the elderly, could be subjected to an asset revue by Trading Standards and made to justify their revenue holdings for the previous 6 year period. Where evidence of irregularities were found cases were

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referred to the Police for prosecution. Any Intel received from elected Members and the public on rogue traders was always welcome and assessed appropriately;

- Bogus callers seeking unpaid tax on behalf of HMRC from local businesses were usually based abroad, and used 'closed' telephone lines that were difficult to check or trace. Members and residents should pass any/all details of such approaches to Trading Standards Intel Unit who would alert HMRC as appropriate. The Customer Information Team based within Trading Standards Business Advice Services, used their Twitter account to alert the public to such bogus callers when they came to their attention. Community Wardens and Kent's Vulnerable Victim's Officer were also informed as and when rogue traders and bogus callers were active in targeted areas.

Members had an important role to play, both in alerting their constituents and also helping to collate the facts and any evidence, for passing to Trading Standards to take appropriate action.

The Chairman and Members thanked Mr. Jewell for a very comprehensive presentation and for his detailed answers to their questions and concerns, and extended a further invitation to him to update the Committee in the future.

### **24. REVIEW OF DARTFORD'S 'SAFER STREETS' POLICY**

The Chairman advised Members that prior to receiving an update from Kent Police guests on Dartford's current Safer Streets policy; he had agreed that the Committee should be addressed by a representative from the Nepalese community resident in Dartford regarding their perceived concerns that organised criminal gangs committing burglary in the Borough were targeting Indian and Nepalese homes.

The Nepalese community representative informed Members that burglary offences in Dartford had risen consistently over the previous 6 year period, with the 100 plus families of Indian and Nepalese descent resident in Dartford appearing to suffer from this particular crime on a disproportionate basis.

He asked that increased Police resources be deployed in the town centre to combat this continued rise in burglary offences, including more resources for the Neighbourhood Watch scheme, and asked how his resident Association could help the Police to positively address the issue.

The District Commander advised that Kent Police were aware of the consistent rise in burglary offences and had a Kent Control Strategy in place to combat this particularly pernicious crime which had a major impact on victims in terms of loss, stress and personal invasion. A concerted 3-4 week operation was presently being undertaken by Kent Police in Dartford, resulting in arrests of key known criminals using Intel and CCTV footage. Dartford's CSU Inspector would continue to work with the local community and all

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residents and community groups and would attend any proposed meetings, to help educate residents over measures they could adopt to help the Police further combat burglary in their areas.

The Chairman thanked Kent Police for their response and update on the measures currently being undertaken to address burglary offences in Dartford and across Kent as a whole. He undertook to facilitate a meeting between Kent Police and representatives of the Nepalese community in Dartford, outside the Committee proceedings, to help address their concerns.

The Vice-Chairman added his own thanks to the District Commander for his comments, and advised that he would be attending the next meeting of the Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAC) at Bluewater on 27 February and would raise the topic in that forum also.

Members agreed; in response to a proposal from the Borough Commander; that the Committee would consider Kent Police's further refinements to their 'Safer Streets' policy for Dartford later in the proceedings, within the overall context of 'Offences of Violence' - as set out in the 2018 Strategic Assessment [Item 12 and EXEMP Item A refers].

### **25. KENT & MEDWAY GANGS STRATEGY AND COUNTY LINES**

Members received a joint Kent Police /Dartford Council presentation from the Community Safety Manager (CSM) entitled - Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy and County Lines. The PowerPoint material covered the following principal areas:

- National Picture
- Gangs
- Signs, Risks and Vulnerabilities
- Kent and Medway Strategy
- How Dartford is Responding

#### **Spread of City Gangs and County Lines**

Members were given details of how so called 'county lines' operations had spread out North, South, East and West from the Metropolis into the Home Counties. The overall number of London Gangs was believed to have reduced from 230 down to 180 with an overall gang membership of some 3,000 individuals. 'County lines' activity appeared to operate across most of Kent. Dartford was *not* a 'hotspot' but had its issues.

#### **Definition of a Gang**

Members were advised that the Home Office (HO) defined a group of people involved in violence as a gang if they consisted of 3 or more people **and** had

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one or more characteristics that enabled its members to be identified by others.

Kent Police refined the HO gang definition further, by recognising a distinction between:

- Organised criminal gangs associated with level 2 criminality [Kent, Surrey and Sussex];
- Gangs maintaining 'drug lines' across the county of Kent;
- Those who have a more nebulous link to gangs and a 'youth culture' based on a 'tag line' or postcode affiliation.

The activities of the second and third categories listed above, in particular, exhibited a potent form of Child Criminal Exploitation.

### **Gang Structure**

Gangs could be broken down into the following tiered structure:

- **Highest Tier** – the 'Elder' or 'Boss' who often owned their own business for laundering drugs and money with average daily turnover of £3K upwards;
- **Middle Tier** – 'Shotters' or 'Generals' who were the main enforcers in a gang, researched new areas for drug demand, organised recruitment, supervised the lower tier and crossed 'county lines' during their activities;
- **Lower Tier**- 'Wrappers' were back room staff who prepared Class A drugs for sale. 'Youngers' (including kids) carried knives and committed street robberies. The most vulnerable 'Youngers' usually looked after the younger children on a 'gang family' basis. New recruits entered the gang family at this level.

### **Safeguarding – National Issue**

- The age of children now dealing on behalf of gangs was getting progressively younger;
- As a consequence education around gangs was being targeted at a younger audience and age-group;
- The backgrounds of those being recruited to gangs showed that youths, early school-age teenagers and even younger children were all easy targets. Children from single parent families or with a parent who was a drug user were also particularly susceptible to recruitment, and attracted by the gang as a role model;
- Younger children [pre-Secondary school age] were being increasingly recruited by gangs because they were harder for the authorities to identify and re-educate.

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Members were shown two short hard-hitting video excerpts, featuring real gang members being interviewed [with their features hidden] talking about the reality of their existence as gang members. The difficulties [in terms of detection] that the recruitment of increasingly younger gang members posed for the local and national authorities was highlighted by one interviewee.

### **Cuckooing**

County Line drug dealing is the practice of metropolitan crime gangs supplying drugs outside London to dealers in the Home Counties. **Cuckooing** is the practice whereby dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing. Such cuckooed addresses represent a significant risk to the individuals being cuckooed and the wider community. Signs of this practice include:

- Individuals taking over a vulnerable person's address;
- Vulnerable people being threatened or coerced into co-operating;
- Frequent high numbers of visitors to the address;
- Signs of drug misuse at the address including deal bags and weighing scales;
- Individuals displaying large amounts of cash and having multiple mobile phones.

People in the social housing market were the most vulnerable to this gang activity and the Council's Housing Department liaised closely with the Community Safety Unit and Kent Police to prevent such Cuckooing operations in the Borough.

### **Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy 2018-2021 - Approach to Ending the Criminal Exploitation of Vulnerable Children and Adults by Gangs**

#### **The Vision**

- To protect and prevent young people from becoming involved with gangs, to tackle gang-related harm and youth violence, to pursue effective enforcement action to deal with those embroiled in gang activities;
- Approached by working together collaboratively across Kent & Medway local agency partnerships, to achieve the key objectives that have been identified as central to driving this vision.

#### **Action Plan – District Involvement**

- To undertake multi-agency 'problem profiling' of gangs and gang nominal and associates operating in Kent & Medway;
- To drawing on the learning experiences of the Margate Taskforce geo-mapping and peer group analysis approach to obtain a more comprehensive and sophisticated understanding of where and how gangs operated in the County in order to better target resources and

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channel collective energies to tackle this issue for both vulnerable children and adults;

- To provide individuals at risk of gang involvement and their families with focussed support and wrap-around services to dissuade them from entering into gangs and criminal groups;
- To Work across the tiers of local government to use all available powers to create and manage public spaces and discourage gang congregation.

Members were advised that Dartford was *not* a ‘trail-blazer’ in terms of County Line activity in Kent. Thanet had been the first major location for such activity in the county with lessons to be learnt from that local authority’s experience, and how it had addressed the issue with early help from, and liaison with, London Boroughs and the Kent and Metropolitan Police Forces.

In addition to drawing on KCC’s Safeguarding policy, Dartford worked closely with Kent Police and held a seat on KCC’s Serious Youth Crime Reduction Group, through Councillor Ann Allen as a Kent Member and Dartford Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development.

### **Dartford contribution to Objectives of Kent & Medway Plan**

#### **Prepare**

- To create and manage public spaces to discourage gang congregation and associated anti-social behaviour (ASB) through: Dartford’s CCTV operation; DTAC (Dartford Town Against Crime) network managed through the CSU to provide local retailers and traders with Intel and support; Town Centre Design by the Council benefited from key Intel input from the CSU;
- To create a shared understanding of gangs across the local Partnership (D&G CSP) and develop a common language and approach to that work through: expert CCTV operator training funded by the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC); developing the Dartford Serious Youth Violence Group; continued staff training in the field.

#### **Pursue**

- Drive towards effective enforcement and offender management to deal with individuals involved in gangs who refuse to reform including: enforcement of the Night-Time economy, use of the Housing Act, Community Protection procedures; and Policing Operations and Initiatives.

#### **Prevent**

- Strengthen early intervention and prevention work to stop young people becoming involved with gangs early on, and dissuade those on the cusp of becoming drawn into gang activity – primarily through

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improvements in the sharing of information including: Police input into schools, working with the St. Giles Trust and NatWest as a 'community banker', Head Teacher education, Youth Hubs, Kent Serious Youth Violence Crime scheme and Kent Police Dartford Youth Engagement Officer.

### **Protect**

- Develop support pathways to help young people out of gangs and violent behaviour including: the Challenge scheme – intensive and costly but the CSO was producing good early results; attendance at Adolescent Risk Management Panel (ARM) meetings and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) meetings; through the Vulnerability Forum, a multi-agency operation co-ordinated via the Kent Police CSU Inspector, with the CSO attending London Borough meetings; Cross-Border Liaison.

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

- The Vulnerability Forum had no matrix of activity in Dartford, or profile of gang members. However, work was being undertaken by reformed gang members to provide current offenders with positive male role models;
- Cuckooing was *not* prevalent in Dartford;
- The CSO was liaising with London authorities over their gang profiles and the nature of their County Line operations including any implications for Dartford.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development advised Members that the Local Children's Partnership Board was undertaking excellent work in Dartford. Dartford's Youth Council was also undertaking a vital and effective role in getting young people to talk to each other and she paid particular praise to the work being undertaken by the CSU and Kent Police to educate young people to the dangers of gang activity and involvement.

The Chairman and Members thanked the CSM for an excellent presentation and his positive responses to their questions, and noted the excellent work being undertaken by the CSO.

## **26. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2019-20 AND BEYOND**

RESOLVED:

1. That Members approve the contents for the Committee's rolling Work Programme for the 2019-20 municipal year and beyond, as set out in Appendix A to the report [agenda pages 47-48 refer].

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**27. NEXT MEETING**

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee in the forthcoming 2019-20 municipal year would take place on **Wednesday 24 July 2019** - subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting on 22 May.

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

The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended); he was required to ask that any member(s) of the press and public present vacate the Council Chamber prior to consideration of the next item - Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Strategic Assessment 2018 [Item A in the EXEMPT agenda papers].

Following the departure of a representative of the Press, the Committee continued their discussions in closed session.

**29. DARTFORD AND GRAVESHAM DRAFT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CSP) STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT 2018**

The Community Safety Manager (CSM) advised Members that despite the annual Strategic Assessment 2018 being marked as a *draft* document [Item A in the EXEMPT agenda papers refers]; it had been agreed by the CSP at their meeting on 17 January 2019 (subject to minor amendments) and that no further changes to the document before them were possible.

He reminded that the Strategic Assessment (SA) exercise was conducted annually, but that the 2018 SA was particularly significant, as it formed the first stage of the decision making process to formulate the new three-year Community Safety Strategy to guide the Partnership's work between April 2019 and March 2022.

The views and perceptions of local people were recognised as being important to achieving long-term change, and priorities emerging from the 2018 SA would be subject to public consultation prior to them forming the base building-block for the Community Safety Strategy (2019-2022).

The 2018 SA was also significant in that the data it contained was deemed to be consistent with the current Home Office crime categories, and the statistics compiled by Kent Police conformed to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) standards and, as a consequence, the SA 2018 figures would be used by the CSP for comparative analysis purposes, year-on-year, going forward.

The CSM raised the following detailed points with Members in relation to the 2018 SA:

**Total Crime 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018**

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- **Total Crime** in Dartford for the period under review [agenda p.56] was 13,310 offences amounting to 123.4 offences per 1,000 of the population, slightly higher than the Kent-wide average of 107.7 offences;
- **Violent Crime** in Dartford had also increased, and was above the Kent average due in part to the impact of changes to national crime recording practices, but was nevertheless a concern for the CSP. Members were reassured that 50% of crimes categorised as violent did not result in actual injury to a person. The CSM outlined for Members the principal hotspots for such crime in the Borough;
- **Domestic Abuse (DA)** cases had risen sharply in the year under review, again due in part to changes in recording practices, whereby each historic offense disclosed involving the same victim and perpetrator, was now recorded as a separate crime. Funding from the Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Transformation Fund, to deliver the '*Altogether Safer Project*' across the Dartford and Gravesham CSP in the current 3 year cycle, had been increased by £19K in 2018 to extend the '*Out of Hours*' Service and strengthen '*Choose Respect*' work;
- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** had seen a significant reduction. In Dartford incidents of ASB recorded by Kent Police had decreased by 26.7% with the work of the Community Wardens and the CSO making a real impact both in the Town Centre and the Parishes. This trend was reflected across Kent, although the decrease in Dartford was greater than that seen elsewhere in Kent. A drop in the number of repeat offenders was seen as particularly positive. There had also been a significant drop in deliberate fires (arson) in Dartford;
- **Fly-tipping** Dartford Council reported all incidences of fly-tipping and would continue to do so as a priority;
- **Reducing Offending and Reoffending** [agenda p.52]: the focus within this priority would be the disruption of serious and organised crime and preventing and reducing Youth reoffending (with an emphasis on gang-related activity). The CSP would draw-up a 3 year plan to address the issue, but funding would be key to its success.
- **Serious Organised Crime – Youth reoffending** [agenda p.69]: deterring young people from becoming involved in crime and preventing Youth reoffending was key to reducing crime in the long-term, with the CSO playing the lead role within Dartford CSU. The work relied upon intelligence from various sources and the partnership working between the Council, Kent Police, the County Council and other local authorities was explained to Members, as were the constraints of resource and funding. Kent Police's Youth Engagement Officer for Dartford played a key role inter-acting with local young people via relevant groups and by visiting both primary and secondary schools, liaising with Head teachers to offer advice and guidance using the '*Stay Safe*' programme at school, both in the community and on-line. The Youth Engagement Officer liaised closely with the CSO in Dartford CSU and Councillor Ann Allen, in her role as Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development. Strong ties had

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also been developed with the Police Cadets and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Cross-border cooperation with the Metropolitan Police was well developed, especially useful over pupils from London attending Dartford schools. Links had also been established with other Youth Engagement Officers across Kent.

The District Commander then addressed Members. He advised that the recent spike in burglaries in Dartford was currently subject to increased operational activity by Kent Police [Min. No. 24 refers], and that his review of Dartford's Safer Streets policy had been re-invigorated since his last update to the Committee in July 2018.

The CSU Inspector outlined for Members the operational impact of 'Safer Streets', provided details of current activity, and confirmed that Kent Police had good intelligence and a strategy in place to react to any future spikes of anti-social behaviour in the Night-Time economy.

The District Commander advised that the recruitment of new Police constables was underway and numbers would increase on the ground in Dartford following training. He also praised the key nature of the combined Police and Council operation in Dartford CSU, which he believed was unique across Kent and the bench-mark for other authorities to reach. Inter-face with Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham Councils were effective, and best practice was shared with Gravesham CSU and other partners within the CSP.

The CSM concluded the presentation by referring Members to page 38 of the 2018 SA [agenda p.86] which addressed the CSP priority of 'Protecting Vulnerable People and Strengthening Communities'. Mental health issues, homelessness and vulnerable adults were key issues which demanded effective co-operation and co-ordination across all agencies in the Partnership both to help the individuals concerned – the CSU mantra of 'individuals make a difference' and strengthened the Dartford and Gravesham communities as a consequence.

He confirmed that the next step was for the priorities from the 2018 SA to be subject to a public survey, prior to their incorporation into the Partnership's 2019-2022 Community Safety Strategy, and 2019 Action Plan.

Members commended the 2018 Strategic Assessment (SA) document, the Council's efforts to address fly tipping in particular, and Kent Police's targeted operation to address the 'spike' in burglary in the Borough, and suggested that such 'good news' stories needed to receive greater publicity, to help inform and re-assure the public. Concern was however expressed over the perceived targeting of Asian families by burglars.

The District Commander advised Members that the current pro-active Police operation contained an element to address this. In response to a request from the Vice-Chairman, the District Commander undertook to strengthen contact with the Sikh Temple and community in Dartford.

## CRIME AND DISORDER (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2019

In response to Member concern regarding road safety, particularly around Dartford's schools, the EARS & CSU Manager advised the Committee that the Leader's cross-party Working Group on Road Safety had targeted improved road safety around schools as a particular priority, including dialogue with the schools and local residents. The Council's School Safety Van had issued 126 penalty charge notices in the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018 for motorists [primarily parents] parking on zig-zag lines outside schools. TTROs (Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders) were used to address vehicles parked on footpaths around schools, penalising parking on yellow lines was more difficult to enforce effectively. Overall, the Council ran an effective enforcement operation to educate motorists, with particular success in the last 2 years following a re-structure of the Service, against a backdrop of increases in population, car use and pupil intake at Dartford schools.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development advised Members that the Leader's Working Group was running a pilot scheme at 7 schools in Dartford to address road safety concerns. Poor parking by a minority of parents was a major factor for enforcement officers and changing the mind-set of parents in this respect was a key target. Measures being adopted were parental agreements between parents and schools, and the naming and shaming of offenders. However, children of offending parents could not be prevented from attending a school.

Head teachers had a key role to play in addressing road safety issues around their schools. Recruiting the support of local businesses (especially fast-food retailers) was another key element, encouraging more walking to school, and using different entrances to schools to help prevent traffic congestion and parking were other measures being encouraged. However, poor parental attitude remained the major obstacle to improved road safety around schools in Dartford. It was proposed that the Minutes of the Leader's Working Group be passed to the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) for consideration in future.

A Member asked what impact Dartford's connection to the greater South-East rail network (via Dartford and Ebbsfleet International stations) had on levels of crime in the Borough, and whether the British Transport Police (BTP) contributed to the crime statistics compiled annually by the CSP, and if not should such input be sought.

The CSM advised that the CSP's crime statistics were compiled solely by Kent Police. He further advised that the BTP were not a statutory partner in the CSP but had been invited to attend CSU and CSP meetings in the past; to address the acknowledged problem of apprehending Metropolitan and other criminal's resident elsewhere in Kent; who committed offences in Dartford and used the rail network to escape apprehension. BTP attendance at those meetings had been intermittent, but CCTV coverage at both stations was good and an effective aid to bringing successful prosecutions.

CRIME AND DISORDER (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2019

The Chairman and Members thanked the CSM for presenting the CSP's 2018 Strategic Assessment, and all attending Officers and Kent Police guests for responding positively to Members' concerns.

RESOLVED:

1. That Members note the contents of the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Draft Strategic Assessment 2018 document [Item A in the EXEMPT agenda papers];
2. That Members note the priorities identified in the Draft Strategic Assessment 2018, subject to the amendments proposed by the CSP at their meeting on 17 January 2019;
3. That Members note the CSP's intention to submit a new Community Safety Strategy (2019-2022) document to address the priorities identified in the Draft Strategic Assessment 2018;
4. That the Community Safety Strategy (2019-2022) be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 24 July 2019.

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The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

Councillor R J Wells  
CHAIRMAN