



**SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**Draft Annual Report 2018-19**

### Introduction and Background

The Council appointed the Scrutiny Committee in response to the Local Government Act 2000 in order to introduce more democracy into the decision making process, and to ensure that those who made decisions were held accountable.

The Committee performs the scrutiny function on behalf of the Council in accordance with the guidelines contained in its Protocol and Terms of Reference (ToRs) documents confirmed at Annual Council in May each year.

The Committee's remit is to contribute to improving Council services by holding decision makers to account to the ultimate benefit of the residents of the Borough. To achieve this aim the Committee may:

- Review and question Cabinet Members and Officers about decisions and performance;
- Scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy, objectives, performance targets and /or particular service areas;
- Make recommendations to the Cabinet and the General Assembly of the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.

Work carried out by the Scrutiny Committee complements the work undertaken by the Crime and Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee and the Policy Overview Committee, whose remits are set out in their respective Protocols. In compiling its work programme for the ensuing municipal year, the Scrutiny Committee aims to avoid duplicating any work being undertaken by those sister Committees.

The Committee's Protocol requires it to report to the Council annually on the work it has undertaken in the preceding municipal year. This Annual Report provides a summary of the Committee's work undertaken during the **2018-19** municipal cycle. The comprehensive record of the Committee's work in the period under review is contained in the Minutes of its meetings, as published in full on the Council's website.

<h3>WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW 2018-19</h3>
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The Committee is responsible for compiling its own Work Programme for the ensuing municipal year, and agreeing an initial Work Plan with proposed timings for each topic, to be reviewed/confirmed at each subsequent meeting in the ensuing municipal cycle.

On **10 July 2018** at the initial meeting of the Committee in the new **2018-19** municipal year, agreed an initial rolling Work Plan. The Plan was reviewed and updated by Members at its subsequent meetings in the 2018-19 cycle in September and November 2018. The meeting scheduled for February 2019

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was cancelled. In addition to agreed Work Plan items, Members also considered topics on an *ad-hoc* basis through-out the year, drawn-down under the terms of the Committee's Protocol, with the approval of the Managing Director, as Responsible Council Officer.

The Committee also considered as a stock item at each meeting, the current Regulation 9 Notice (formerly the Forward Plan), which set out the key decisions to be considered by Cabinet in the forthcoming 4 month period; with a view to drawing-down topics for future consideration by the Committee.

Details of the programme of work undertaken by the Committee during the **2018-19** municipal cycle are summarised below. Comprehensive details of Member's discussions are contained in the Committee's Minutes, published on the Council's public website.

### WORK PLAN Items completed in the 2018-19 MUNICIPAL YEAR

#### **10 July 2018**

##### ***Item 1: Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017-18***

Members approved the Committee's Annual Report for 2017-18 for presentation to the General Assembly of the Council and thanked the Committee Co-ordinator for his advice and support of Members in the period under review.

##### ***Item 2: Committee's Work Programme for 2018-19***

Members approved an initial Work Plan for the ensuing 2018-19 municipal year to be reviewed at subsequent meetings of the Committee in the cycle.

#### **18 September 2018**

No Work Plan items had been scheduled for consideration by Members at this meeting [see draw-down items below].

#### **20 November 2018**

##### ***Item 1: The Orchard Theatre Annual Report & Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2018***

Members considered a report from the Council's Leisure & Communities Officer which attached as Appendices A, B and C respectively:

- (i) The Council's Monitoring Schedule for the provision of Services by HQ Theatre & Hospitality (HQT&H) for The Orchard Theatre Dartford Ltd (Appendix A to the report);

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- (ii) The Orchard Theatre Director's Annual Report for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 (Appendix B to the report);
- (iii) Orchard Theatre Dartford Ltd Profit Share Statement at 31 March 2018 (Appendix C to the report).

Members expressed their appreciation of the efforts of the Orchard Theatre Director and his team in the period under review, and resolved to note the contents of the 2017/18 Annual Report for the Orchard Theatre Dartford as set out in Appendix B to the covering report, and the Profit Share Statement for the Theatre at 31 March 2018, as set out in Appendix C to the report.

### ***Item 2: Dartford Cricket Club in Hesketh Park – Update***

Members considered a report from the Council's Leisure & Communities Officer which enclosed a Community Use Information (CUI) sheet from Dartford Cricket Club dated October 2018. The CUI sheet updated the Committee on the activities being undertaken by the Club in Hesketh Park and in support of the wider Dartford community, which Members resolved to note.

### **19 February 2019**

This scheduled meeting was subsequently cancelled, due to a lack of substantive business.

## ITEMS DRAWN-DOWN

### **10 July 2018**

#### **FUNDING of DARTFORD CHURCHES WINTER SHELTER**

The topic had been drawn-down by the Vice-Chairman on behalf of the Conservative Group represented on the Committee, who assumed the Chairmanship of the meeting for consideration of the item.

Members had been provided with copies of a tabled document entitled '*Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Project – 2018*' prior to being addressed by David Mitchell, Project Administrator for the Shelter, and John Atkins Chair of the Shelter's Steering Group. The Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Council's Housing Solutions & Private Sector Manager, were also in attendance to respond to Members' questions.

Members were advised by the Acting Chairman that the purpose of the draw-down was to establish clarity over the Council's decision to fund the Winter Shelter Project, not to scrutinise the Shelter's operation by Dartford Churches.

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Michael Smith and John Atkins from the Winter Shelter highlighted the following principal points for Members, drawing on the contents of the tabled document:

- The Winter Shelter Project was in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of its operation and ran during the peak cold Winter months from 1 January to 31 March;
- The Project offered over-night accommodation Sunday to Saturday between the hours of 7 pm to 8 am and provided a hot evening meal and a cooked breakfast the following morning. A maximum of 12 homeless people were accommodated each night at a different church venue;
- All churches in Dartford supported the Winter Project, which had grown year on year, with 180 regular volunteers currently operating at 6 separate church venues in Dartford;
- The Project had been wholly reliant on donations from churches and individuals in its first 4 years of operation, prior to the Council's funding donation in November 2017;
- The Council's grant of £10k had enabled the Winter Project to make a significant step-change in its operation in 2018 from a bed & breakfast service, to one which helped homeless people to '*move on*' to a better life off the streets;
- The Council's donation had been used to fund the general running costs of the Project in 2018 [excluding salaries] which had enabled the Shelter's Steering Group to use its existing £2k bank balance (plus continuing private donations), to fund the salaries of 2 Project Workers during the Shelter's peak operating months from January to March, and a part-time Project Worker throughout the year, to help clients build on their initial Winter Shelter experience, and '*move-on*' during the Spring and Summer months;
- The Winter Project had been able to accommodate all its clients during January to March 2018 with only 1 or 2 exceptions.

The Leader of the Council clarified for Members the rationale behind the Council's decision to make a funding donation to the Winter Shelter and how that donation had helped to meet the Council's Corporate Objectives. In particular, the Council's general responsibility for the well-being of Dartford residents and more specifically, on compassionate grounds, for the homeless sleeping rough on the streets in the Borough in the most extreme winter weather.

He advised Members that the 'risk' for the Council in making such a grant funding to the Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Project had been that it became the helper of 1<sup>st</sup> resort in the future: this could conflict with the Council's statutory responsibilities under the new Homelessness Reduction Act [to provide accommodation for those that qualified]. Part of the rationale in granting funding to the Winter Shelter Project was that it provided accommodation in Dartford, whereas under the Act, the Council was not always able to accommodate the homeless within the Borough, only nearby in Kent.

The Leader had received an application for a grant-in-aid on 25 August 2017 which had been considered in consultation with the Managing Director, as the

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Responsible Council Officer, and a grant of £10k from the Identified Initiatives Reserve (2017-18) had been subsequently been made in November 2017, on the sole condition that the monies were not used for salary purposes [in line with the Council's grants-in-aid policy].

Council Officers ensured that the Winter Shelter's services dove-tailed with those commissioned by the Council from Porchlight, and the umbrella of services provided by the Council and its partner agencies in the new Housing Services Hub; to meet the Council's statutory obligations for the homeless under the provisions of the new Homelessness Reduction Act.

Members were advised by the Housing Solutions & Private Sector Housing Manager that:

- Shelter clients were people whom the Council could not help directly under any of the '5 tests' for homelessness under the provisions of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 [prior to April 2018] and subsequently under the new Homelessness Prevention Act, which defined the Council's statutory responsibilities with regard to homeless persons and families;
- The Council's Severe Weather Protocol formed part of the support element of the Act, and was applied to homeless persons sleeping on the streets when temperatures dropped below zero for three consecutive nights;
- The Council provided a Single Person Homeless Service to those that qualified;
- Hostels were an alternative for some Shelter clients but could be problematical in terms of a client's previous history and behaviour in a hostel;
- Shelter clients may have been to the Council prior to the Shelter, but either failed to qualify for the Council's help under the Act, or had previously lost accommodation provided by the Council or its partner Agencies, due to dependency issues;
- The Council always examined all options available when considering applications from potentially homeless applicants under the provisions of the Act;
- The issue of East European workers sleeping rough in the Borough was being addressed by the Vulnerability Forum run by the Council's Community Safety Unit (CSU) and the Safety Forum;
- Significant and increasingly successful work had been undertaken on a multi-agency basis to address drug and alcohol dependency and mental health issues amongst the homeless (via the Council's new Housing Services Hub) to meet the Council's statutory obligations under the Homelessness Prevention Act where appropriate.

The Leader advised Members, in terms of lessons learnt and the shape and adequacy of the Council's provision for the Homeless and Rough Sleepers in the Borough; that Porchlight's Single Homeless Service (commissioned by the Council) had corresponded with the Shelter's own survey in terms of numbers, demographics and profile, and whether those individuals did or did not have recourse to help from the Council under the statutory provisions of

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the Act. He judged that both the Porchlight Survey and the Council's donation to the Winter Shelter as money well spent.

The Chairman held a different view. He suggested that the most important lessons to be learnt from the Porchlight and Shelter surveys was that most rough sleepers in the Borough were young, had drug or alcohol dependencies, and often suffered from mental health issues. He suggested that these were more important lessons to be learned by the Council and its Service partners.

The Housing Solutions & Private Sector Housing Manager assured the Chairman that the Council were aware of issues and demographics, and the contribution of the Winter Shelter in helping such clients whom the Council could not, under the provisions of the Act.

She advised that parental eviction and mental health issues were the primary causes of homelessness amongst the young. The Council's multi-agency operation in the new Housing Services Hub sought to address these and other issues affecting the Homeless in a wrap-around service provision, to meet the statutory requirements of the Act. She represented the Council in the continuing national discussion of these issues, and at the local authority level with KCC, over the commissioning of further resources in Dartford.

The Acting Chairman thanked his guests from the Shelter together with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Portfolio Holder and the Council's HS&PS Manager for attending the Committee's proceedings, and their comprehensive response to Members questions concerning the Council's decision to make a funding donation to the Dartford Churches Winter Shelter Project operation in 2018.

### **18 September 2018**

#### **COUNCIL LITTER ENFORCEMENT SCHEME**

The topic had been drawn-down by the Chairman who had expressed his concern regarding the effectiveness of the existing Scheme, how it fitted into the Council's wider strategy to tackle litter in the Borough, and how it met relevant Corporate Objective(s).

The Leader of the Council responded on behalf of Cabinet. He advised Members that the current Litter Enforcement Scheme formed part of the Council's wider remit; considered by Cabinet some years previously; but initially deferred in the hope that the Dartford public could be educated to improve its litter habits and sense of public responsibility over the issue.

By 2013 it had become increasingly apparent that trying to better educate the public over its litter responsibilities was not working. Littering in the Borough, in particular around the town centre and the railway station had increased, and Cabinet took the decision to impose a litter scheme. After taking time to learn from other authorities operating litter enforcement schemes, Kingdom Security had been chosen to operate the Scheme from the small pool of contractors operating in the sector. The Council had ensured that a

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prescriptive contract was drawn-up with Kingdom [given the BBC programme on Kingdom's litter enforcement schemes elsewhere in the UK] and the Leader expressed his satisfaction that the Council's overall aims and policy objectives had been met under the contract arrangements secured. Cigarette butt littering, particularly in the Town Centre and around Dartford railway station, continued to be the primary offence. But all aspects of littering were tackled by the Council, under its wider remit to reduce offending in the Borough.

The Chairman noted that over the 2 year period 2016-18 under the Scheme, 94% of all Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued by Kingdom's Litter Enforcement Officers (LEOs) had been for cigarette butt littering. He accepted that cigarette butt littering was the number 1 issue, but suggested that Dartford had several other litter issues which also needed to be addressed. He questioned whether the profile of FPNs issued in 2016-18 matched Dartford's littering profile on a category basis in that 2 year period.

The Leader agreed that the FPN profile clearly did not, and conceded that dog fouling was a greater problem than indicated by the 0.3% of total FPNs issued. That said; Kingdom's LEOs could only issue FPNs for littering offences they observed, and dog fouling was rarely observed at the time of offence. Cigarette butt littering in the Town Centre and Dartford railway station had been, and continued to be, the primary offence and consequently attracted the vast majority of FPNs issued. It was hoped that once the Dartford public had been sufficiently educated (through FPN fines), Kingdom would be able to expand its current Dartford operation beyond the Town Centre and Dartford railway station to concentrate on other areas of the Town. Until that time, LEOs would continue to issue FPNs where offences were seen to be committed.

Members were informed by the Kingdom Manager that the company's LEOs worked in daylight hours up to 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday, in partnership with the Council's enforcement officers and Kent police. He confirmed the Leader's advice that offenders had to be clearly seen to be committing an offence before an FPN could be issued. This made the issue of FPNs for dog fouling particularly difficult. It was hoped to extend the daylight hours that LEOs patrolled next summer to address the specific issue of dog fouling, allied to increased co-ordination with Kent Police via the Council's CSU operation.

He advised that his LEO teams were deployed on specific routes on a weekly basis, in response to Intel reports received from a variety of sources (residents, street cleaners, Kent police and Council enforcement officers); to help target litter 'hotspots' for enforcement measures by LEOs and the Council's EOs. Dartford train station and the Town Centre were regularly identified as litter 'hotspots' and feedback from the LEO teams indicated that interaction with the public was good, and that the message *not* to drop cigarette butts was being received. He added that under the national '*Keep Britain Tidy*' campaign, cigarette butt littering was a major target used to better educate the public.

The Chairman suggested that despite an apparently low recidivism rate amongst fined offenders, the fact that incidences of cigarette butt littering were still high, indicated that the message was *not* getting through to the



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wider public and that by extension, the current Scheme was *not* effective in changing public behaviour.

In response to the Chairman's expression of concern, the Leader advised Members that Kingdom's data for the Scheme for 2016/17 and 2017/18 clearly showed that the recidivism rate amongst smokers dropping cigarette butts was low when fined. Educating the public took time and the Scheme clearly needed more time to change public behaviour regarding this specific littering offence. The Council would continue to fine offenders in the belief that the message would eventually get through to the public at large. The Scheme required zero financing, and actually provided a small revenue stream for the authority which had been used by the Council to supplement resources including; the provision of additional bins, tackling fly-tipping issues and the purchase of new CCTV cameras.

Members expressed further concern over LEO patrol patterns, food packaging and drinks can littering at the week-end around West Hill by patrons of Dartford's night-time economy. Early morning dog walkers who allowed their pets to foul this area were also a source of particular concern.

The Strategic Director (ES), the Council's Waste & Parks Manager, and the Kingdom Manger confirmed the following points for Members in response to their concerns:

- Wards were patrolled on the basis of Intel received and not set in stone;
- If residents raised concerns over specific littering behaviour the Council's EOs and Kingdom's LEOs would respond appropriately;
- LEOs undertook dog-fouling patrols between 5 to 8 a.m. in the summer months when such offences could be observed;
- Kingdom participated in Police led multi-agency operations on a monthly basis to tackle littering issues arising out of Dartford's night-time economy;
- Kingdom held weekly team meetings with Dartford partners; under the over-all direction of the Council's Enforcement Manager; to assess the Intel received from a wide variety of sources including residents and shopkeepers, to set future patrol patterns to target litter 'hotspots'.

Members were advised that all age groups were represented in the FPN demographic for Dartford and the Council had a 75% payment rate for FPNs issued across that demographic spectrum, with the level of complaints against FPN issue low. This compared favourably with other Boroughs. It was confirmed that a 60% FPN payment rate was required to self-finance the Scheme.

The Chairman returned to his theme of the effectiveness/success of the existing Scheme and how it was being measured. He remained unconvinced that a low level of complaints against FPN issue and a low level of recidivism by smokers [who had dropped cigarette butts and been fined] were in fact indicators that the Scheme was neither effective nor successful. He noted that no FPNs had been issued for dog-fouling in the period to September 2018,

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and concluded that that offence was clearly not being effectively addressed by the current Scheme. Some other Members echoed the Chairman's concerns.

The Leader maintained his view that a 0% rate of recidivism amongst cigarette butt offenders (over 6,900 people had *not* committed a second offence after receiving an FPN), allied to the low level of complaints against FPNs issued; were real indicators of the current Scheme's success and justified the decision by Cabinet to institute a litter scheme.

The Chairman concluded discussion by suggesting that it would be easier to demonstrate that the current Scheme was effective, if there was measurable evidence of an actual decline in littering. He had no confidence that this was in fact the case.

At the suggestion of the Strategic Director (External Services), the Council's Waste & Parks Manager advised Members of the background to littering in the Borough, the aims of the current Scheme, and the context of success in the long-term.

- The Council's street cleaning operation cleared 125 tonnes of waste per month;
- Litter only accounted for 5 tonnes of that monthly total;
- There was no accurate breakdown for that litter component;
- It was therefore impossible to profile litter or those that littered ;
- DBC's waste and litter clearing operation was comparable with other Boroughs in the area;
- Actual litter complaints were mainly about cans, bottles and cigarette packets;
- Complaints were down to about 30 per month for litter and 20 per month for dog fouling;
- Council street cleaning teams believed the Town Centre was cleaner - but this was difficult to quantify;
- The current Scheme was a long-term project whose success needed to be measured in years (if not decades) in terms of educating the public and altering their behaviour and littering profile.

The Committee thanked Cabinet Members and Officers for attending, and responding to the issues and concerns raised in the debate.

### **20 November 2018**

#### **1: UTILISATION and RENEWAL of PUBLIC LITTER BINS**

The Chairman advised Members that he had drawn-down the topic on behalf of his Group, in response to the weight of correspondence he continued to receive from residents in his Ward regarding the existing provision of litter and dog waste bins by the Council. His aim was to examine and discuss the Council's existing litter bin regime, and how the current arrangements might move forward and be improved for the future.

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The Waste & Parks Manager highlighted the following principal points for Members from his report before the Committee:

- There were currently some 700 litter bins distributed across the Borough used for both litter and dog waste [previously separate bins];
- The Borough Council provided the majority of the bins, supplemented by Parish/Town Councils locally, plus from private enterprise;
- The current distribution of litter bins had evolved over time in response to varied Member and resident concern and expressions of perceived need;
- The Council received on average between 3 to 5 requests per month for increased litter-bin provision with the majority of residents requesting dual litter and dog-waste bins, but generally not situated too close to their homes;
- Litter bins were emptied by the Council's contractors on a daily, multiple day, or weekly basis as appropriate, depending on the volume of litter and dog waste deposited;
- Amey LG Ltd emptied the majority of the 700 litter bins in the urban environment, Continental Landscapes emptied the litter bins in Central and Hesketh Parks, and CPM Ltd were contracted to empty the litter bins in Dartford's 27 school playgrounds;
- All street litter - plastic, paper and bottles went into the same litter bins together with dog waste. Consequently, there was no statistical breakdown for the component elements of street litter.

In response to subsequent specific questions from Members the Waste & Parks Manager confirmed the following additional points:

- The location of litter bins in the Borough was unmapped;
- All non-recyclable waste (including dog waste) from litter bins was bulked up at Pepperhill Household Waste & Recycling Centre and transferred to Maidstone for incineration;
- The frequency for emptying litter bins was decided by the Waste & Parks Manager, based on feedback from contractors.

The Chairman expressed his concern that no formal policy or procedure was set out in the report for the provision of new litter and dog bins. He asked whether the replacement of litter bins was a reactive or proactive (intelligence led) process, and what factors were used to determine the siting of new dual use litter/dog waste bins.

The Waste & Parks Manager advised Members that the replacement of dual litter/dog waste bins and the provision of new or additional bins, was a reactive process based on a number of factors and considerations including:

- Whether there was already a bin at a location;
- How many shops/schools were located nearby;
- Was the location of the existing/proposed bin on a route used by school/college pupils;
- If so, were there shops nearby that those pupils used, particularly fast food outlets and/or convenience stores;

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- Complaints of [repeated] dog littering from residents in a specific location.

Increased bin provision was also considered by Officers during the planning application process for new fast food outlets, which tended to generate increased levels of littering. Littering in private areas or where a road had yet to be 'adopted', were not the responsibility of the Council.

Members' sought evidence of pro-active Council policy going forward. The Waste & Parks Manager gave the following advice in response:

- Litter bin cost varied from £25 up to £5,000 for a 'Big-Belly' solar-powered bin with a crushing/compacting capacity;
- Dartford purchased towards the low-cost end of the litter bin market;
- Re-cycling efforts were being pushed across the Borough, but research showed that multi-compartment bins did not work well with residents, were labour intensive for contractors to empty, and consequently costly for the Council to install and run;
- The Council's existing policy and going forward, was to purchase good quality standard litter and re-cycling bins that were economically priced;
- The Council's litter bin policy had been evolved by Officers over time based on their experience of what worked, which was 'simple was best'. Both for the Council and for residents;
- The more complex a litter collection process became, the greater opportunity for error, leading to resident dissatisfaction and complaints.

The Chairman next addressed the topic of the Council's review of its current litter operation as notified by Cabinet, but as yet, not subject to report.

The Waste & Parks Manager advised Members that the Council's Review of Litter for Dartford as a whole remained ongoing. A mini review of the Town Centre had been completed, and a joint review with Wilmington Parish Council was progressing, with similar joint reviews with all Parishes proposed in the future. He confirmed the following points in response to subsequent specific questions from the Chairman and some Members:

- The purpose of the Review was to determine the present location of all bins [some pre-dated the 1980s];
- The number of proposed new litter bins was not yet known;
- There was scope for bin replacement in the current budget, with recourse to greater funding on a needs basis as required;
- Priorities remained replacing small lidless bins attached to lamp posts and bus stops, then the replacement of larger lidless bins on a like for like basis, with good quality robust bins from the economical end of the market;
- Not all litter bins would be replaced - many were in a good condition;
- The Town Centre, Longfield and Swanscombe retail areas benefited from metal bins on a perceived needs basis.

Members thanked the Waste & Parks manager for his report and for his open and frank responses to Members' questions, and resolved that the Minutes of the meeting be referred to Cabinet for response in due course.

### 2: COUNCIL'S MODERN ANTI-SLAVERY and HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT

The Chairman advised Members that he had drawn-down the Council's Statement on '*Modern Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking*' on behalf of his Group in recognition of UK Anti-Slavery Day [18 October].

He proposed that the Committee examine whether the Council's performance in these policy areas fulfilled the terms of its Statement; including the Council's interactions with suppliers and partners; and whether there was any scope for more to be done in that respect.

The Chairman opened the debate by stating that it was hugely positive that the Council had published their own Statement regarding '*Modern Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking*' measures, procedures and practices. He noted that many Councils had *not* done so and invited the Cabinet Member present and the Strategic Director (External Services) to brief Members on the objectives of the Council's policy, as enshrined in its Statement.

The Strategic Director (External Services) advised the Committee that she was not an expert on the subject, but gave the following background to the Council's decision to publish a Statement, and outlined how her responsibilities as SD (ES) had led to her involvement with and oversight of, the Council's Statement at a personal working level.

As Chair of the Council's corporate Safeguarding Steering Group the SD(ES) was heavily involved on behalf of the Council with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) on the issues. A principal part of the CSP's work was to agree and publish an Annual Strategic Assessment (SA) document. The SA addressed *inter-alia* Safeguarding, Modern Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking issues in the Borough, how to identify them, and the measures and resources required to address the issues, together with CSP partners such as Kent Police and KCC.

At the time of publication of the parent legislation [Modern Slavery Act 2015] it had not been clear what demands the Act imposed on local authorities. The Council had decided to adopt the strictures set out in the Act as 'good working practice', and to demonstrate its willingness to address the issues the Act covered. Since publication of its first Statement in 2017, the Council's policy had been one of promoting awareness and greater understanding of the subjects to its Officers. In particular, those serving in the Community Safety Unit (CSU), Housing and Environmental Health services; given their work in the wider community on a daily basis; had been equipped with the skills to recognise and appropriately report concerns of potential modern day slavery and human trafficking.

In addition, the Council had engaged outside experts in the field and liaised closely with colleagues from partner agencies to build up a greater awareness of the issues, and how to respond to them. Examples of that further work included:

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- The Council Briefing Note to Members on the issues, including who to contact when encountering them in their Wards and elsewhere;
- Interactive training of licensed cab drivers in the Borough by Council Licencing Officers, in conjunction with colleagues from Kent Fire & Rescue and Kent Police: Licensed cab drivers had a key role to play in observing and reporting a wide range of possible offences that could give rise to concern across the range of safeguarding subjects;
- Council procurement procedures required existing contractors and suppliers to adhere to the Council's Statement and ensure that their activities met the Council's thresholds in terms of preventing modern day slavery and human trafficking.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Director (ES)) for her detailed and comprehensive briefing of the Committee and proposed that Members next examined what specific measures the Council was taking to combat modern day slavery and human trafficking.

Members were advised that the Council's three performance indicators (PIs) used to measure how effective the Council had been in ensuring slavery and human trafficking were not taking place in any part of its business or supply chains [Statement para 10.1.1-3] were based upon what could be measured, and on what other organisations were doing. The Council had not received any reports of slavery or human trafficking in the Borough in the period under review to date, in relation to its own activities.

The Council was under a legal obligation to work with partners to meet its safeguarding obligations in all its work areas and to report any/all instances of abuse it encountered. Safeguarding measures were now implanted into all of the Council's daily processes and procedures, and specific training given to Council Officers who worked externally in the community. Relevant Council Officers engaged with business managers in the Borough over specific issues, and a broader inter-action with business as a whole, was conducted through the Council's public website.

In addition, the Community Safety Manager as the Council's Safeguarding Champion, was the operational lead in terms of safeguarding children, modern day slavery and human trafficking, and the Head of Housing Services was the operational lead for adult safeguarding.

The Chairman saw an inherent risk [for the Council] in measuring the scale of modern day slavery and human trafficking in the Borough by the fact that no reports of such activity had been recorded in the previous 12 month period. He asked when the fact of '*no reports*' became a concern for the Council, rather than an assurance.

The Strategic Director (External Services) reminded Members that the current Statement enshrined the Council's procedures and practices to combat modern day slavery and human trafficking in the conduct of its own business, its suppliers and partners. The Council Statement did *not* seek to govern the wider Dartford community nor could it.

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In response to a suggestion from the Chairman that the freedom to join a trade union be enshrined in the Council's next Statement; the Strategic Director (External Services) advised that the Council could *not* interfere in the internal running of other organisation, bodies or companies, in terms of trade union membership for its employees.

However, the Council *did* ask its own suppliers and partners to sign-up to its safe-guarding ethos and thresholds, and she undertook to consider the suggestion of trade union representation, for inclusion in the next annual review of the Council's current Statement on Modern Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking measures, due to be undertaken in September 2019.

Members resolved to note the contents of the Council's current proactive Statement on Modern Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking measures, and the proposal that Officers consider Members' views expressed that evening, when the Council's current Statement was reviewed in September 2019.