

## Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 10 October 2019

7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr Steve Thompson (Chair)  
Cllr Baljit Hayre (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Ejaz Aslam  
John Caller  
Aaron Elliott  
Brian Francis  
Gary Harding  
Nirmal Khabra  
Emma Morley  
Leslie Pearton  
Lauren Sullivan  
Frank Wardle

**Note:** Councillor: Shane Mochrie-Cox (Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure was also in attendance

Chief Inspector Neil Loudon Kent Police  
Inspector Craig West Kent Police

Simon Hookway Assistant Director (Communities)  
Kath Donald Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit)  
Sean Steer Community Safety Operations Manager  
Chris Wakeford Committee Services Officer (minutes)

### 64. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Gurjit Kaur Bains.

### 65. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2019 were signed by the Chair.

### 66. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Leslie Pearton declared an "Other Interest" in Item 6, Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategy 2019-22 as his daughter was a Prison Officer based at Cookham Wood.

## **67. Terms of Reference - Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee**

The Assistant Director (Communities) presented the Committee with the Terms of reference for the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair explained that the minutes of the Committee were reported to Full Council and could be reserved for discussion.

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference.

## **68. Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategy 2019-22**

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) provided Members with details of key work that had been undertaken during the period April-September 2019 or that was planned for delivery this year in addressing the strategic priorities identified in the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategy 2019-22.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) fielded questions from the Committee and highlighted the following:

- To support the work of the Community Safety Partnership the internal community safety budget of £15,000 is utilised. There is also the Police and Crime Commissioner Community Safety Fund of c.£34,000 which the partnership bids for each year, however; the areas the money is spent on has to meet criteria of the PCC i.e. contribute towards the priorities in the Policing and Crime Plan and not overlap/duplicate work already funded by the PCC. The Community Safety Unit (CSU) also bids for external funding e.g. from the Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.
- The Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategy 2019-22 is meant to be a broader document rather than an action plan. Further detail on what actions have taken place will be reported to the relevant Cabinet Committee.
- The Community Safety Unit are working closely with KCC and the Waste Management Team at GBC to tackle fly-tipping and other environmental crimes.
- There have been a couple of 'Cuckooing' cases in the Borough. A multi-agency approach has proved very successful and the victims have been well supported.
- Priority 2 has a focus on continuing to reduce ASB incidents by taking a holistic approach in each case looking at any underlining issues which need to be addressed. This involves looking at the causes of ASB and what drives that behaviour.
- The Community Safety Priorities - Public Opinion Survey was widely promoted and community groups were targeted. However, the response from ethnic minorities was quite low and the method of community engagement will be reviewed for the next consultation.

The Committee noted the report and thanked the Community Safety Unit and Community Safety Partnership for a really good strategy.

## **69. Mid-Year Position 2019-20 - Progress and Performance Report**

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) provided Members with details of key work that has been undertaken during the period April-September 2019 or that is planned for

delivery this year in addressing the strategic priorities identified in the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategy 2019-22.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) highlighted the following:

- In Gravesham, a total of 5,370 offences were recorded between April-August 2019 compared to 5,915 offences in the previous year – a drop of 9.2% (545 fewer crimes). This compares to an average decrease across Kent and Medway of 8.8%.
- In the time periods considered, violent crime (comprised of violence against the person, sexual and robbery offences) has reduced by 7.3% or 190 fewer crimes from 2,610 to 2,420 offences.
- Overall the Total Crime by Offence Category table on page 41 shows decreases against most of the offence categories apart from vehicle crime and ASB which have seen a slight increase.
- The Altogether Safer – Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Project has been funded by the Home Office, having been awarded c.£248,000 over three years (including additional funding awarded in 2018-19) from the VAWG Transformation Fund. Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) have been introduced at North Kent Police Station since late 2017 for 12 hours per week. The intention is to provide victims with expert support and advice at the right time, reducing the risk of repeat victimisation and prosecution withdrawals. The OOHs IDVAs have supported 232 adult victims during that time who between them had 306 children who would have potentially witnessed or experienced some of the consequences of domestic abuse in the home.
- Choose Respect Programme: A target of 70% was set against each of the following measures – end assessments demonstrating these were exceeded for each indicator with the following results:
  - 100% were able to identify respect, honesty and empathy as helpful for effective communication;
  - 100% now had the ability to be assertive (i.e. not to bow to peer pressure to behave in a particular way);
  - 100% agreed their aggression had decreased;
  - 100% were able to identify 3/+ healthy behaviours;
  - 100% felt their understanding of feelings had increased;
  - 100% felt able to identify strategies for managing feelings as a result of Choose Respect;
  - 98% were able to identify relationship skills/factors including self-esteem, assertiveness and healthy boundaries;
  - 92% felt their ability to cope with stressful situations had increased;
  - 87% were able to identify that abuse occurs in relationships because of power and control;
  - 78% felt feelings of anxiety and worry had decreased.
- KECC and Rethink have organised and delivered a range of community engagement events, used as opportunities to open discussions about VAWG issues and increase awareness of services. A major initiative has been the delivery of an annual women and girls only conference and social event – the latest having just taken place in September 2019. The Sadi Awaz Suno (Listen to our Voices) event has been incredibly successful: the original target of 150-200 attendees has been totally exceeded with approximately 300 local women and girls in attendance each time, ranging from grandmothers for whom English is their second language to young professionals and newly-arrived brides from the Indian sub-continent.

The first conference concentrated on the issues of: honour-based crime and on-line grooming; DA and the use of social media; mental health and well-being; dealing with child disability; positive female role models; and the promotion of services.

The 2018 conference focused on the taboo issue of alcohol misuse /dependency, its impact on relationships and harm caused by the cultural practice of staying silent.

This year's conference considered modern slavery and trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), alcohol misuse and mental health. Interpreters and translators were present throughout to encourage audience participation in discussion. The conferences have received considerable publicity locally, generating debate about these issues.

This limb of the Project has also seen the creation of several short film clips (the final one will be created before the end of March 2020) used to raise awareness of services. The first was written, filmed and edited by KEEC colleagues but importantly, all of its cast are local women and girls who volunteered their time. This has been shown at various community events and is available as a tool to initiate group discussion. The second talks about the extent of domestic abuse and particularly how it affects BAME communities and provides details of support services. Members can view the film clips by following the links in the report.

- A successful bid prepared by Gravesham CSU and submitted to the MHCLG's Domestic Abuse Services Fund was awarded £137,880 to deliver the Step Change Project. This new initiative, being delivered by Choices Domestic Abuse Services provides specialist DA workers to give intensive, 'wrap-around-the family' support to victims with complex needs and victims from hard to reach groups across Dartford and Gravesham. The target is 40 and 41 people have been supported already.

The Community Safety Operations Manager highlighted the following:

- Safer Place Officers: currently in the process of recruiting 2 new officers, this will bring the Team to a total of 5 officers that will enable them to cover wider areas in the Borough.
- Fixed Penalty Notices are being issued for littering; 5 cases were in court this week (one was withdrawn as the payment was made, 3 were fined £200 and 1 pleaded guilty and was fined £147).
- The team are working with Porchlight to support homeless people.
- 15 damaged or inoperative telephone boxes have been reported to BT.
- The team check trade waste agreements and street peddler licences.
- Cyclists are being asked to dismount and walk in New Road.
- Rough Sleeper Initiative: working with GBC's housing team, Kent Police, Porchlight, Probation, Look Ahead Housing & Care and other housing providers in order to find support and accommodation for rough sleepers.
- Tackling Seasonal ASB: there will be a Community Safety pop-up shop in December in the town centre looking at fire safety, purse dipping prevention advice etc.

Chief Inspector Neil Loudon and Inspector Craig West highlighted the following:

- Joint working between all the members of Gravesham's Organised Crime Group (OCG) has continued to be very effective. The Group meets on a monthly basis and there have been some positive outcomes:
  - Principal member of one of our first OCGs is now serving a lengthy prison sentence (smuggling of people and importing/trading in high-end vehicles);
  - Considerable disruption caused to a further OCG and linked multi-agency activity has led to considerable work involving Licensing, HMRC, Police and Trading Standards

resulting in the seizing of significant quantities of illegal tobacco. Information-sharing took place over a number of months that made a positive contribution to coordinated activity that took place targeting particular locations and premises in Gravesend and Northfleet in May this year. Approximately 60,000 illegal cigarettes were seized worth an estimated £22,500 in duty and VAT evaded. Further activity in July this year resulted in 6 arrests being made, 3 individuals involved in supplying/selling illegal cigarettes being from Gravesend and receiving custodial sentences.

- Investigations into one suspected OCG did find a number of people believed to be being used for labour exploitation. Although adults in the group did not want action to be taken, a 16-year-old Bulgarian male was taken to a safe house.
- Gravesham Vulnerability Panel – this is the key multi-agency vehicle (Kent Police-led) that works to safeguard identified vulnerable adults (excluding homeless individuals who are supported through the Rough Sleeper Initiative Group mentioned above). The Panel has an extensive membership from a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies and is attended by representatives across Council Departments. Referrals of adults with a variety of complex needs who are not engaging effectively with service providers are made to the Panel who will then consider appropriate support and interventions for them. The Panel meets on a monthly basis and has successfully dealt with a number of cases (6 cases were able to be closed at the last meeting in September), 2 new referrals has been received and 1 case continues to be monitored.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit), The Community Safety Operations Manager, Chief Inspector Neil Loudon and Inspector Craig West fielded questions from the Committee and highlighted the following:

- Part of the Altogether Stronger Project includes further developing promotional/marketing materials to be used in engagement events well as through other community-based activity to address hate crime. We will also be arranging training sessions for key staff (and Members) on recognising extremism/extremist behaviour which presents itself as hate crime and how to signpost and better support victims that may report to the Council. Kent Police are running various events to promote National Hate Crime Awareness Week (12 to 19 October 2019).
- Safer Place Officers do not pursue or harass people who litter; their role involves talking to people and educating them but they will issue fines where deemed appropriate.
- Kent Police have seen an increase in people reporting crime. Kent Police cannot capture crime reporting from social media sites but there is a live chat service available as well as the 101 service and Crime Stoppers.
- Kent Police are currently engaged in a large recruitment drive with 942 new officers in North Kent but around 250 officers are lost every couple of months due to retirement etc. and officers joining the Metropolitan Police Service.
- GBC do work with KCC in tackling domestic abuse (KCC has lead responsibility for the commissioned domestic abuse services in our area). The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) agreed to provide Members of the Committee with the latest figures relating to those using/benefiting from the commissioned services for this matter.(subject to the approval of KCC who own the data).
- The Council work with Porchlight and Look Ahead Housing & Care to support rough sleepers but there are not enough places for those with complex needs that require long term support.
- The Vulnerability Panel has mechanisms in place that mean a case won't be closed until all agencies are satisfied and the case can be re-opened if necessary.

- Chief Inspector Neil Loudon agreed to arrange a Kent Police briefing event for all Members in the Council Chamber.
- Chief Inspector Neil Loudon agreed to provide Members with an update on how data was recorded.

The Committee noted the Future Mid-Year Position 2019-20 – Progress and Performance Report.

## **70. Future Topics for Review**

The Assistant Director (Communities) presented the Committee with the Councillor proposed options for review at future meetings of the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee:

1. Town Centre Crime
2. Illegal handling and use of drugs/alcohol in public places
3. Knife and violent youth crime
4. Rural and semi-rural areas
5. Drug-related issues

The Committee discussed each topic in turn and Members highlighted their preference.

The Committee felt that two reviews should be selected now and the remaining topics could be considered at a later date along with any new topics Members may wish to consider.

**Resolved** that:

- The Committee conduct a review of Town Centre Crime, chaired by Cllr Baljit Hayre
- The Committee conduct a review of knife and violent youth crime, chaired by Cllr Lauren Sullivan
- The Chair of the Committee (Cllr Steve Thompson) will liaise with the Chief Executive to clarify the political balance for each sub-group. Once clarified the membership of each sub-group will be decided.
- Both reviews to run concurrently and be completed by March 2020.

## **71. Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel Minutes - June 2019**

The Committee considered the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2018

The Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure explained that the Police and Crime Commissioner will be coming to the Civic Centre on 12 November 2019, 2pm – 4pm.

The Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure stated that he is happy to raise any items Members may have at the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

The Chair advised that for future meetings it would be good to have the agenda pack for the Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel as well as the minutes.

Members noted the content of the minutes

The Chair explained that if Members of the Committee had any items they would like the Committee to consider then they should contact the Chair or Assistant Director (Communities) or the Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit).

**Note:** Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox (Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure) spoke with the leave of the Chair on this item.

### **Close of meeting**

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified