



**Crime & Disorder Scrutiny
Committee**

Members of the **Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee** of **Gravesham Borough Council** are summoned to attend a meeting to be held at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1AU on **Thursday, 27 October 2022 at 7.30 pm** when the business specified in the following agenda is proposed to be transacted.

S Walsh
Service Manager (Communities)

Agenda

Part A

Items likely to be considered in Public

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)
3. Declarations of Interest
4. To consider whether any items in Part A of the Agenda should be considered in private or any items in Part B in public
5. Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Topic Review (Pages 9 - 12)
6. Town Centre Topic Review (Pages 13 - 20)
7. Policing Update VERBAL UPDATE
8. Safer Streets Round 4 Project VERBAL UPDATE
9. Minutes of the latest published Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel (Pages 21 - 28)

Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend Kent DA12 1AU

The below link takes you the agenda and minutes for the meeting on Thursday, 16 June 2022:

[Agenda for Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel on Thursday, 16th June, 2022, 10.00 am](#)

10. Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter or urgency.

11. Exclusion

To move, if required, that pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded from any items included in Part B of the agenda because it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted that if members of the public are present during those items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. Part B Items likely to be considered in private.

Part B

Items likely to be considered in private

None.

Members

Cllr Baljit Hayre (Chair)

Cllr Brian Sangha (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Derek Ashenden
 Helen Ashenden
 Ejaz Aslam
 John Caller
 Dakota Dibben
 Aaron Elliott
 Brian Francis
 Jordan Meade
 Lyn Milner
 Leslie Pearton
 Tony Rana
 Frank Wardle

Substitutes: To be notified

Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee**Tuesday, 15 March 2022****7.30 pm****Present:**

Cllr Baljit Hayre (Chair)
Cllr Peter Scollard (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Derek Ashenden
 Helen Ashenden
 Harold Craske
 Dakota Dibben
 Brian Francis
 Gary Harding
 Bob Lane
 Jordan Meade
 Elizabeth Mulheran
 Tony Rana
 Frank Wardle

Simon Hookway
Kath Donald
Sean Steer
Junior Dann
James Beautridge
Julie Francis-Beard

Assistant Director (Communities)
Community Safety, Strategic Manager
Community Safety, Operations Manager
Chief Inspector, Kent Police
Inspector, Kent Police
Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

31. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Ejaz Aslam, Cllr John Caller, Cllr Aaron Elliott and Cllr Leslie Pearton. Cllrs Jordan Meade, Cllr Bob Lane and Cllr Harold Craske substituted.

32. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 20 January 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

33. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

34. Kent Police Update

The Committee received a verbal update from Inspector James Beautridge.

In the Town Centre there are currently 3 PC's and the following figures are from October 2021 – March 2022: -

- There have been 54 arrests, of which 37 of those were charged, 16 released on bail and 1 arrested person was released with no charge.
- 46 stop and searches were conducted with one community prevention order issued and two tickets for breaches of Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO).
- Caught on Camera, which are stills from shops and CCTV have identified 23 suspects.
- There is extensive work being carried out regarding the sale of illegal tobacco in partnership with Gravesham.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner visited and patrolled the town recently and described the Town Team as the epitome of what they want for Kent Police Town Teams and they are now role models. Chief Inspector, Junior Dann of Kent Police is very proud of the team.
- There have been a series of robberies in the Promenade area of the town. The Town Team did extensive work and engaged with the community and has led to 3 suspects being arrested, they have since been released on bail.
- The Town Team have been nominated for a Chief Constable's Award.
- In the town, in partnership with the council, a "Best Bar None Scheme" is being launched. Initially this will be open to all pubs, bars and club premises in the Borough as a whole and to all restaurants in Gravesend town centre that are licensed to sell alcohol. Restaurants will be included as well. There will be six assessors trained and they will go and inspect all the pubs and restaurants that have signed up. A launch event will happen in June. Representatives from the council and Kent Police will be inspectors and there will be an annual award ceremony with awards in safety and CCTV amongst others. This scheme has been trialled successfully over the last year in other parts of the country.
- General Policing – street engagement took place in Wallis Park and Denton. Kent Police advertised this prior to attending and it was well represented by KCC, Environmental Health, Council Officers, Housing, Councillors from the Denton Ward and Kent Police attending, and it was well received. Kent Police were knocking on doors giving out My Community Voice leaflets, dog fouling bags and speaking to people and asking what issues they had.
- Following on from the feedback they received in the Denton area increased foot patrols have been undertaken by PCSO's and the Community Policing Team conducted road checks ensuring residents feel safer. The joint operation has been really well received by the community. This approach will be rolled out to the whole borough in time.
- Night time economy – the Police are continuing to run the "Safer Streets" scheme primarily aimed at alcohol related crime and making the area safer especially for women. Engagement with the Licensing Team and educating door staff for signs to look out for and distributing knife arches / wands and training door staff on how to use them.
- A fall in public order offences could be due to the high visibility of the Police.
- In May, the Police will be running SEPTA – anti knife crime which is a national initiative. Kent Police will jointly be conducting work with the Transport Police, Gangs and County Lines Teams involving high visibility and targeting offenders.
- Drug possession had gone up by 13.4% which showed the stop and searches are working.

The Chair thanked Inspector James Beautridge for the informative update.

35. Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Topic Review

Cllr Rana updated the Committee with the work being done on the Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Topic Review.

There have been two workshops where a number of different parties were invited to. It was well attended and the feedback and questions were very positive. One of the main points that was mentioned was that although a lot of work was being done in the background this was not communicated to residents either via social media or through websites.

What was found was that perception of crime plays a big part in people feeling safe. Reporting needs to be encouraged and the police need to communicate positive actions. PACT meetings are a great way of the police communicating with communities and a good way of putting their worries and issues across and the Police being able to know what areas they should be focusing on.

Attendance is crucial that the police attend any incidents. Early reporting of crimes allows the PCSOs to stop any further crime. At Kings Farm and Whitehill the PCOs, who patrolled the area, are quick to respond to local issues e.g. car crime or unruly behaviour by teenagers and actually stopped further crime happening.

PCOs that are out patrolling in those areas have regular contact with the local councillors, which is good.

Another area that was reviewed was the statistics of crime. The improvement statistics that Kent Police have made on knife crime was hardly known or there was very little information available to the public. People need to know where to go to view these statistics and also be able to report a crime online. Publishing the statistics has shown that Gravesham is one of the quietest towns in Kent regarding knife crime.

The second part of the review was regarding young people. How do the different organisations in Kent engage with them to stop knife crime becoming a real issue. What was found was that there was no central place where activities were being advertised to inform children and young people where to go and participate in the clubs / activities. Not many people knew that Charlton Football Club were hosting a "kick about" at Kings Farm. The Violence Reduction Unit mentioned this event which had a real positive effect as it took a number of children off the streets to play a game of football. This should be advertised as positive news.

What was also found was that the Northfleet Youth Hub, The Grand, and youth clubs were hosting events that were being run successfully but were not being advertised anywhere so parents and guardians were unaware they could take children to these events. Communication has to get better along with engagement with young people to inform them of where to go for events in their local area. Whilst there is an issue, there is a lot of good work happening to reduce knife crime further.

From May 2022, further funding from the Government will be available to run youth programmes in Kent for the next two years. Any youth activity can apply and, if viable, funding will be provided.

The Assistant Director (Communities) explained that additional background papers had been received, including statistics. These will be circulated to the Topic Review Group.

The previous Committee received a summary report and recommendations to date and from that an additional meeting was identified to look at knife crime issues in young people. The Assistant Director (Communities) explained that as the next Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee was not until October a draft report would be completed with the Topic Review Group. This could be reported to the Community Safety Partnership as an interim stage. This would be timely as the CSP also has a new duty in respect of serious violence and a strategic assessment will be reported to the CSP shortly. A final Topic Review report could then be discussed and agreed at the next Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair thanked Cllr Rana and the Assistant Director (Communities) for the information given.

36. Town Centre Topic Review

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director (Communities) regarding the Town Centre Topic Review.

Members of the Topic Review group met last week to look at the scope and next steps for this review. As the Town Centre Crime review is quite broad, Members agreed the first meeting would be to confirm that daytime responses to crime and understand the actions taking place. The review would then move to discuss the night time economy and the crimes association with that. Additional partners would be asked to speak to Members e.g. Kent Police, G-Safe, Street Pastors and representatives from licensed premises to establish the facts around the current position.

A subsequent meeting would be held to discuss how to make the town safer especially for women and girls. Plenty of ideas have been forthcoming and one of those approaches was to look at sending a questionnaire to businesses, residents and visitors to get their ideas around what steps can be taken to help people feel safe.

Those meetings will take place with a report coming back to this Committee in October.

Following questions and comments from Members, the following was discussed:

- The Chair asked if a further night time 'audit' could be arranged during the summer months. The Assistant Director (Communities) explained that in November 2019, Members went out with Council Officers and Kent Police to see how the town performed and changed from early evening to the early hours of the morning. There was always a plan to organise another event during the summer months, but Covid-19 hit. Consideration will be given to undertaking a similar exercise, to which Members would be welcome.
- Cllr Wardle mentioned that another part of the Town Centre Topic Review remit was to understand and investigate large gatherings of youths especially between 5pm - 8pm around McDonalds and what engagement could happen.

37. Minutes of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

The Committee were presented with the minutes of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held on Wednesday, 8 December 2021.

The Committee noted the minutes.

38. Exclusion

Resolved pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded from any items included in Part B of the agenda because it is likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that if members of the public are present during this items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

39. Strategic Assessment 2021 – Summary of Key Findings

The Community Safety, Strategic Manager informed the Committee of the key points raised in the Gravesham Annual Strategic Assessment 2021 – A Summary of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour prepared on behalf of the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The production of the Strategic Assessment is an annual exercise carried out by all CSPs with the primary purpose of reviewing levels of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their area and providing an opportunity to revise existing strategic priorities to reflect changing circumstances.

The report highlighted changes in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and the Borough's position against that of other Kent Districts and Medway. It concluded with recommendations that have been adopted by the CSP and that will form part of its prioritised work programme over the next 12 months.

Following questions and comments from Members, the Community Safety, Strategic Manager explained that:

- Although crime has risen in some areas, overall crime has fallen (some decrease being directly linked to the pandemic). ASB reports have risen but in part this is due to a large proportion of ASB incidents being specifically linked to breaches of Covid-19 social distancing regulations that have been included in ASB data. It could also be due to more people reporting crimes; considerable work has been undertaken locally to encourage reporting and outcomes of investigations have been well-publicised which in turn promotes public confidence that reporting is worthwhile.
- Regarding the Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week which will be between 18 – 24 July, a series of pop-up events in different locations will be programmed. Members will be informed of these activities and relevant dates so they can promote and engage the communities in these multi-discipline activities. Housing Officers, KCC street lighting, Kent Police, voluntary and community sectors will be involved in the relevant events.
- Parking on pavements remains an issue. The Government are bringing in law to stop parking on certain roads. The Assistant Director (Communities) agreed to discuss with the Parking & Environmental Enforcement Services Manager what actions can be taken locally to address this issue.
- E-Scooters are classed as motor vehicles as they require an MOT and insurance. Any E-Scooter being driven on the road is illegal. E-bikes are legal as they are partially pedalled.
- Inspector Beautridge confirmed that there had been few instances of catalytic converters being stolen from hybrid cars locally.
- Crime prevention advice on how to protect hybrid vehicles and catalytic converter theft is largely available on the Internet but can include simple steps such as: parking

close to walls/fences to prevent easy access to under the vehicle; Marking catalytic converters with a serial number; asking a garage to weld the bolts on the converter shut to make it difficult to remove; parking in well-lit areas; attaching a clamp to exhaust pipes, making it very difficult to remove the converter in a hurry.

Resolved that the Committee considered and offered comments upon the content of the report as appropriate.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27 October 2022

Reporting officer: Topic Review Group

Subject: Review of Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence

Purpose and summary of report:

This report provides Members with the final recommendations of the Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Topic Review previously reported to this Committee.

Recommendations:

1. The Committee is asked to:
 - i) Note and comment upon the recommendations of the Topic Review Group and offer any further suggestions that could be submitted to the next Gravesham Community Safety Partnership meeting in January 2023.

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to work with partner agencies to address crime and ASB and Crime (Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Serious Organised Crime Act 2015).
Finance and Value for Money	There are no identified or specific financial implications.
Corporate Plan	Work undertaken by the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (and which is subject to overview by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee makes a direct contribution to People and Place in the Corporate Plan.
Climate Change	None.

1. Background

- 1.1 Terms of Reference for the Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Topic Review were originally agreed in January 2020 and a Multi-Agency Round Table Topic Review meeting was held in March 2020 however, due to Covid-19 the Review was then unavoidably halted. Following the recommencement of the Review process, a verbal report on progress was provided to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee in October 2021 and a further meeting of the Topic Review was held on 6 December 2021.

- 1.2 A full report on and the actions and provisional recommendations resulting from both the Multi-Agency Round Table Topic Review meeting and December meeting was provided to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee in January 2022. A further update was then provided to this Committee by the Topic Review Group's Chair, Councillor Tony Rana, at its last meeting in March 2022.
- 1.3 A final meeting has been held involving Members of the Topic Review Group that was also attended by Kent Police, KCC Youth Services colleagues, the Assistant Director (Communities, GBC) and the Strategic Manager (Community Safety, GBC). This provided an opportunity to consider any more recent information or intelligence regarding the level of knife crime and serious youth violence locally and whether the recommendations identified were felt to still be appropriate for referral to the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Group's discussion confirmed that:
- The level of knife crime in Gravesham is low; proactive policing, joint partnership activity and the presence of the Town Centre Policing Team, are all having a positive impact in reducing knife crime.
 - Most recent information provided to the Council's Community Safety Unit by the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit indicates that no priority repeat locations or hot spots for serious youth violence in Gravesham are currently identified.
 - There is an extensive programme of detached and outreach youth work being delivered across the Borough that is resulting in very positive engagement with young people. Workers from KCC Youth Services and The Gr@nd work collaboratively to ensure that outreach sessions are provided in different areas at a range of different times, diverting young people into constructive activities and simultaneously safeguarding them from being drawn into crime/violence.
 - A survey is in the process of being completed with young people by KCC Youth Services to develop a better understanding of young people's own perceptions and feelings of their personal safety and concerns that they may have in respect of crime.

2. Recommendations of the Topic Review Group

- 2.1 The Topic Review concluded that there were several key tasks that should be taken on board and progressed via Gravesham's CSP namely:
- That partners needed to ensure that knife crime and serious youth violence statistics are not provided/shared in isolation but alongside supporting contextual information to give a more accurate picture of the level and nature of these crimes. This is particularly important when statistics/data are being made available in the public domain.
 - That the CSP review and agree the best means to communicate information on crime issues with local people, to keep them informed of the 'real' level of violent crime in the Borough i.e., that compared to many areas (including some other Kent Districts), crime in Gravesham is not high and the Borough is a safe place in which to live and work. This will help to build confidence, maintain perspective and challenge poor perceptions that may be held.
 - That efforts be made to raise awareness of the wide range of youth activities that are available to young people across the Borough, most of which are

free of charge, and how to access them so that more young people will be encouraged to take part.

- To understand and promote the beneficial role of Neighbourhood Watch in local communities, review the current number of active Schemes, identify areas in which Schemes could be introduced and to explore opportunities to support the expansion of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes more broadly within Gravesham.

Secondary Implications	
Risk Assessment	Failure to work collaboratively with partner agencies in tackling crime and ASB would be a failure to meet our statutory responsibilities and would undermine the confidence of the public in our ability to respond effectively to their community safety concerns.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. No.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. N/A</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. N/A</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. N/A</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Crime and Disorder	As stated above.
Digital and website implications	None at this stage although some of the recommendations of the Topic Review Group, may require the support of the Council's Digital Team to promote and to provide information on the outcomes of certain activities.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	The safeguarding of vulnerable young people and adults is corporately a high priority for the Council and is also a strategic priority for the CSP. Partnership activity that aims to improve safety within Gravesend town centre, which is accessed by children and adults alike, will contribute to safeguarding them from harm.

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27 October 2022

Reporting officer: Topic Review Group

Subject: Review of Town Centre Crime

Purpose and summary of report:

This report provides the Committee with the findings and recommendations of the Town Centre Crime Topic Review.

Recommendations:

1. The Committee is asked to:
 - i) Consider and comment upon the findings of the Topic Review Group and on the recommendations to be submitted to the next Gravesham Community Safety Partnership meeting in January 2023 as detailed in this report.

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to work with partner agencies to address crime and anti-social behaviour and Crime (Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Serious Organised Crime Act 2015).
Finance and Value for Money	There are no identified or specific financial implications.
Corporate Plan	Work undertaken by the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (and which is subject to overview by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee makes a direct contribution to People and Place in the Corporate Plan.
Climate Change	None.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Terms of Reference for the Town Centre Crime Topic Review Group were agreed in October 2021 together with the Group's membership:

Councillor John Caller (Chair)

Councillor Brian Francis

Councillor Ejaz Aslam

Councillor Frank Wardle

1.2 A scoping meeting between the Group Members and Council Officers took place in March 2022 to identify the priorities and objectives of the Review and the process that would be followed. At this meeting, Members agreed:

- that the nature of crime in the town centre, either experienced or perceived, appeared to differ during the daytime and in the evening/night-time economy
- that a multi-agency meeting would be arranged inviting Council Department representatives, partner organisations operating or delivering services within the town centre, business representatives, transport providers and representatives from the voluntary sector in order that they could inform the Review Group of their experience and understanding of crime and any contributory factors
- that participants in the multi-agency meeting would be invited to offer their suggestions on steps that might be taken to help prevent crime and improve perceptions in order that the town centre could be recognised as a safe and welcoming place.

2. Multi-Agency Meeting

2.1 The multi-agency meeting was held in June 2022 and was well-attended by both statutory and non-statutory partners, local businesses and two young people who were at that time completing work experience placements with the Council.

2.2 Town Centre Policing Resources

Kent Police colleagues were invited to begin by explaining policing resources that were allocated to the town centre. Insp. James Beautridge confirmed that Gravesend had a dedicated Town Centre Policing Team comprised of 3 police officers and 2 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The Team was recognised as a benchmark in the county for crime management in town centre areas. This Team operates during day-time hours whilst the Community Policing Team comprised of a Sergeant and 6 officers covers policing in the night-time economy with particular attention being given to Friday and Saturday nights (21:00hrs-03:00hrs).

Proactive work undertaken by the Town Centre Policing Team included their partnership working alongside Council officers, the G-Safe Business Crime Reduction Initiative, local businesses and security staff. A specific and recent example was provided of collaborative efforts that had resulted in 3-month Closure Orders being obtained against 8 shop premises (7 of which were immediately within the town centre) that had been involved in the selling of illegal tobacco and cigarettes. The Town Centre Policing Team responds to a variety of incidents throughout the day from shoplifting and street drinking to more serious criminal activity such as drug dealing and robberies and have a track record of having achieved very positive results.

2.3 The Issues Identified

The Topic Review Chair then invited other representatives at the meeting to give their views/comments on their perceptions of crime in the town centre.

The following is a distillation of the key points that were raised:

- The greatest problem faced by businesses was felt to be anti-social behaviour (ASB) rather than crime during the daytime, often involving young people generally aged between 10-18 years and frequently during the afternoon/early evening after school. Behaviour included causing a disturbance to other clientele and verbal abuse to staff. It was acknowledged that if young people are in school uniform and their school can be identified, the Police Schools Officer would be able to raise the matter with school staff. One fast food outlet described that they had a 'Staff Safe' scheme in place as a result of ongoing problems with of ASB involving young people. They employed a security guard in the evening but did not have security staff during the day, however, as a member of the G-Safe Radionet system, they had found that security staff from other would come to their assistance if necessary.
- G-Safe reported that the Initiative encourages businesses to report all lower-level ASB issues as littering, verbal abuse, graffiti etc. as well as more serious offences as these too, can have a very negative impact on perceptions of the town centre.
- Attendees raised the issue of Police response times/delays in Police attendance when incidents are called in and lack of feedback following the reporting of incidents. The meeting heard that there is a programme of recruitment in place which should mean additional police officers in the Borough that will improve capacity to respond to calls for assistance/attendance in future.
- Councillors and businesses commented that their constituents and clientele respectively, informed them that they feel the town centre is 'unsafe'. The Group agreed that this perception is largely perpetuated by social media commentary and print and online press coverage of more serious/violent offences (which are rare) which are reported in such a way that they serve to create a fear of crime. Some sections of the community and older people, in particular, have a perception of Gravesend being a 'no go' area.
- Both Kent Police and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) colleagues present at the meeting confirmed that crime (in general and specifically in relation to serious youth violence in the VRU's experience) is not high locally compared to many other areas, including other parts of Kent.
- It was suggested that the absence of visible uniformed presence (other than Police) during the daytime to deal with minor ASB issues, interact with and provide reassurance to the public, had a negative impact.
- Recorded crime data for the town centre Wards indicated a reduction in offences over recent years. Whilst some of the reductions seen would clearly have been linked to Covid-19 and a much-reduced footfall due to the closure of many businesses during the pandemic, most recent data suggested that many reductions were being sustained.
- British Transport Police (BTP) data demonstrates that Gravesend experiences lower rates of incidents than many other areas and that it is not identified by BTP as a 'hot spot' town.
- Whilst some ASB occurring in the town centre is linked to young people, it is often the behaviour of adults that contributes to negative impressions e.g.,

rowdy/noisy behaviour, drunkenness (street drinkers), open use of bad language etc. It was felt that there was a lack of respect or consideration both for the environment and other people.

- The presence of rough sleepers can be intimidating for the public and has caused some problems in some parts of the town centre e.g., Gravesend Market, New Road. However, it was noted that the number of people sleeping on the streets has reduced thanks to the interventions of the Council's relatively new Homeless Team.

2.4 Suggestions for addressing the issues identified

2.4.1 Having shared views and their direct experience/knowledge of crime and ASB in the town centre, attendees were invited to offer suggestions that might help address the issues identified. These included the following:

- There was an opportunity for closer working between youth workers from The Gr@nd and McDonalds staff (as the key venue most frequently used by young people and that experienced the majority of youth-related ASB issues). It was agreed that youth workers contact details would be shared so that youth workers could engage with young people and potentially help to moderate behaviour/prevent situations from escalating.
- There should be a concerted effort/campaign to 'sell' the positives of the town centre and to regain pride in the area by encouraging an attitudinal change e.g., promoting the ongoing regeneration of and planned improvements for the town centre. Consideration should be given to developing a positive publicity campaign e.g., #AmazingGravesend, #GoodNewsGravesend, to make both residents and potential visitors of cultural and leisure/socialising opportunities on offer. The creation of advert-length 'mini-films' focusing on the social, leisure and cultural offer was suggested and that these could perhaps be shown prior to cinema showings at The Woodville.
- Using all opportunities, including social media messaging, to communicate that Gravesend town centre is a safe environment e.g., countering negative coverage of incidents that affect public perceptions with information that provides context and demonstrates that Gravesend is not a 'hot spot' compared with other areas.
- Consideration to be given to the viability of having a uniformed non-police presence in the town centre to provide reassurance and assist or deal with minor issues.
- Ensuring that businesses affected by rough sleepers are aware of how to report to the Council's Homeless Team so that they can be appropriately supported.
- Continuing to use enforcement powers when justified e.g., applying the Public Space Protection Order in the town centre as a tool for dealing with issues caused by street drinkers.
- Ensuring that minor criminal damage e.g., such as graffiti is reported in order that information can be properly collated to assist with the potential identification of those responsible.

- Increasing or raising awareness of activities available for young people in the town centre and encouraging them to take part in them and identifying further activities that might be attractive to young people.
- Exploring opportunities to work with young people and for them to act as the 'communicator' with their peers both to ascertain their views on safety in the town centre and to encourage pride in the area e.g., utilising the Gr@nd's Gifted Young Gravesend reporters to cover positive news, raise awareness of what is on offer and of the impact of low level ASB.
- Using approaches that encourage a shared responsibility for respect for the town centre's physical environment, for those working in local businesses and for other people visiting Gravesend e.g., national Shop Kind Campaign.

2.4.2 Whilst not raised at the meeting itself, several other suggestions have subsequently been received which it is felt should be included in this report, namely that:

- Efforts should be made to establish 'Safe Zones' or 'Safe Spaces' within a range of venues across the town centre with participating premises having clear signage. These would allow anyone finding themselves feeling vulnerable or unsafe to go into the premises where staff can take them to the Safe Space and support and advise them.
- Subject to resources, improvements to the environment to improve feelings of safety in the town centre to be considered e.g., enhancing lighting (both public street lighting and lighting within/outside premises) where it is poor and ensuring that CCTV signage is adequate and visible to act both as a deterrence and as a means of providing reassurance.
- Evening and night-time events promoting safety messages should be considered as a means of developing confidence and providing reassurance.

3. Final Recommendations

3.1 Having considered experiences and discussed possible suggestions for addressing the issues identified, the Topic Review Group agreed the following final recommendations:

- i) That there should be a concerted campaign aimed at changing public perceptions of Gravesend through accurate and positive reporting of the 'real' levels of crime so that fear of crime and negative impressions of risks to personal safety can be minimised.
- ii) Working in partnership is essential to continue achieving further reductions in crime (and ASB) - this includes not just statutory services and businesses but local residents too. Underlining the message of the need to report incidents is crucial to ensuring that partnership activity and any additional resources are properly targeted.
- iii) There needs to be more effective communication of 'good news' about what the town centre has to offer, ongoing improvements and planned activities, to encourage a greater footfall both in the daytime and the evenings, so that Gravesend builds a reputation of as a safe socialising environment.
- iv) Greater awareness of the range of existing activities that are available for young people to access needs to be achieved to encourage take-up

together with more consultation with young people about what they feel they would like to see made available to them.

- v) Subject to resources, a series of community events should be held to promote Gravesham as a whole.
 - vi) The displaying of messages about expected standards of behaviour e.g., 'Anti-Social Behaviour will not be tolerated' to be promoted.
 - vii) Consideration should be given to the creation of a separate website dedicated to celebrating good news about the Borough e.g., Amazing Gravesham, to supplement the Council's website which is primarily focused on services and the Discover Gravesham website which concentrates on information for visitors and tourists.
- 3.2 The Topic Review Group agreed that the findings of the review would be reported back to both the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee on 27 October 2022 and to the next Gravesham Community Safety Partnership meeting (January 2023).

Secondary Implications	
Risk Assessment	Failure to work collaboratively with partner agencies in tackling crime and ASB would be a failure to meet our statutory responsibilities and would undermine the confidence of the public in our ability to respond effectively to their community safety concerns.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. No.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. N/A</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. N/A</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. N/A</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Crime and Disorder	As stated above.
Digital and website implications	None at this stage although some of the recommendations of the Topic Review Group, would require the support of the Council's Digital Team.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	The safeguarding of vulnerable young people and adults is corporately a high priority for the Council and is also a strategic priority for the CSP. Partnership activity that aims to improve safety within Gravesend town centre, which is accessed by children and adults alike, will contribute to safeguarding them from harm.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT AND MEDWAY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 16 June 2022.

PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE (Chair), Mr G Sandher (Vice-Chair), Mrs E Bolton, Mr I S Chittenden, Cllr A Clark, Cllr G Hackwell, Cllr Mrs J Hollingsbee, Mr M A J Hood, Cllr S Mochrie-Cox, Cllr R Palmer, Cllr H Tejan and Cllr L Dyball (Substitute for Cllr P Fleming)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Scott (Kent Police and Crime Commissioner), Mr A Harper (PCC's Chief Executive) and Mr R Phillips (PCC's Chief Finance Officer)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**40. Election of Chair**

(Item 2)

1. The Scrutiny Research Officer asked for nominations for Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.
2. Cllr Hollingsbee proposed and Cllr Clark seconded that Mr Hill be elected Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Mr Hill be elected Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

41. Election of Vice-Chair

(Item 3)

1. The Chair proposed and Cllr Palmer seconded that Mr Sandher be elected Vice Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Mr Sandher be elected Vice Chair of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel.

42. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting

(Item 5)

No declarations were made.

43. Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel held on 2 February 2022

(Item 6)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2022 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

44. HMICFRS PEEL Inspection 2021/22

(Item B1)

1. The Commissioner presented a report which outlined the outcome of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) 2021/22 PEEL Inspection of Kent Police. He explained the purpose of PEEL reports, which among other functions gave Commissioners independent assurance on the performance of their force. The new methodology used for Kent Police's inspection, which analysed 9 areas of policing were outlined and included: crime data recording; preventing crime; treatment of the public; developing a positive workplace; use of resources; protecting vulnerable people; investigating crime; responding to the public; and managing offenders. A breakdown of the force's performance against each of the areas was given, with 6 of the 9 areas rated outstanding, good or adequate. He shared his dissatisfaction that investigating crime, responding to the public and managing offenders were judged as requiring improvement. In response to the Inspection's findings, he outlined his governance and improvement plan, tasked at holding the Chief Constable to account on performance, this included the foundation of a PEEL Oversight Board and an extraordinary meeting of his Performance and Delivery Board, which would be held on 3 November, to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Chief Constable's Improvement Plan. He shared his initial assessment of the issues which had contributed towards the Inspection's conclusions, which were the impact high crime data reporting standards had on capacity and the capability to respond to crime, as well as the impact of experienced officer shortages, particularly apparent with a shortage of experienced detectives. Whilst recognising that the Investigate First scheme would provide a long-term solution to the second issue, he noted that it would take time to see measurable results. He affirmed that some of the issues raised by the Inspection would be factored into the retendering of his victims support contract. Concluding his report, the Commissioner asserted his belief that the areas requiring improvement would be judged adequate when reassessed by HMICFRS later in the year, based on the initial measures put in place and commitment from the Chief Constable.
2. The Chair expressed his disappointment at the Inspection's findings. He recognised that Kent Police had received commendable inspections in previous years and asked for an indication of Kent's performance against other forces. He reminded the Commissioner of the Panel's support for his council tax precept increases, which had been predicated on the expectation that the quality of policing in Kent would improve. He asked for an explanation of the key problems which had contributed to the poor performance outlined in the report. The Commissioner confirmed that he had reviewed all other HMICFRS inspection reports published since November 2021 and noted that the difficulty of balancing crime response and data integrity were national challenges, with most forces struggling to perform highly in both areas. He reaffirmed that this was attributed to resourcing constraints. He shared

examples of individual forces which had performed better in one area over another, linking this trend to the findings of the Kent inspection. It was explained that the response to VAWG, Rural Crime Team, as well as the Chief Constable's crime squad, had been strengthened as a response to the concerns raised in relation to the protection of vulnerable people, crime investigation and response to the public.

3. In response to a question from a Member, the Commissioner confirmed that police staff vacancy rates stood at 6%, down from a high of 9%. He agreed to share further information on this matter with Members following the meeting.
4. The Commissioner was asked what had been done to ensure that Kent Police were proactive rather than reactive when dealing with cases. He explained that of 396 cases identified during the inspection, upon review by Kent Police it was concluded only 1 actually required further attention. He confirmed that concerns with the methodology in this area had been shared with the Inspectorate.
5. A Member asked that the Commissioner pressure the Chief Constable to improve communication with victims of hate crime, to include explaining how and why crimes were dealt with in a particular way.
6. The Commissioner explained, following a question from a Member, that victims had rights under the Victims' Code, which included the right of review. He asked that cases be referred to Professional Standards should Members have concerns over the handling of individual cases.
7. A Member asked why Kent Police's inspection could not reasonably be compared to those of other forces. The Commissioner explained that Kent's inspection used a new methodology which made it difficult to compare it with previous inspections. He noted that Sussex Police were to be inspected under the same methodology and that it would provide a good comparison. Beyond direct inspection comparisons, the Commissioner recognised the importance of comparing Kent to forces of a similar size, such as Staffordshire or Essex, and stressed the need to understand what had been done well by exemplary forces such as Leicestershire.
8. The Vice Chair shared his concerns that the three key areas highlighted for improvement were core policing functions and vital for ensuring community safety. He asked what had been done to reassure communities. The Commissioner agreed that the areas for improvement were central to Kent Police's overall impact. He confirmed that the public could be reassured that there had been an 18% increase in rape prosecutions and that Domestic Abuse Hubs had been set up to protect victims, though he acknowledged that communication of these developments could be improved.
9. A Member asked whether there had been a wider impact on Kent Police's operating capacity as a result of the measures put in place to resolve the issues highlighted by the PEEL report. The Commissioner reassured Members

that combating serious crime remained the priority and that key operations had not been negatively impacted. He added that officers were redeployed across the force on an ad hoc basis to improve resilience.

10. Following a request from the Chair, the Commissioner agreed to provide an interim verbal update at the Panel's next meeting in September.

RESOLVED to note the report and agree to a further written update at the Panel's December 2022 meeting.

45. Draft PCC Succession Plan

(Item B2)

1. The Commissioner explained the requirement to agree a formal succession plan following a Home Office directive. He outlined his proposal for the OPCC Chief Executive to be appointed as acting commissioner, if required. He confirmed that he did not intend to appoint a deputy or delegate any responsibilities whilst in office.
2. Mr Harper gave reassurance that he would, as the statutory Chief Executive, be willing to take on the role of acting commissioner in the event of a Commissioner vacancy or incapacitation, with the express direction and guidance of the Panel until an election.

RESOLVED to agree the draft Succession Plan.

46. Update on Fraud

(Item B3)

1. The Commissioner presented his written update on fraud. He explained the responsibilities of Action Fraud and Kent Police in relation to fraud reporting. He confirmed that Kent had witnessed a 22% increase in fraud reports over the past year. He shared his concerns at the overall impact of Action Fraud, though noted that a significant amount of fraud and cyber crime originated outside of the UK. He explained that fraud reports were not held to same crime reporting standards as other crimes. Kent Police's measures to tackle economic, cyber and fraud crimes in partnership with Essex Police, as a result of Panel support for precept increases, were summarised and included a 22 officer unit which worked alongside the organised crime, cyber crime, financial intelligence and proceeds of crime teams.
2. Concerning accountability, he noted that Commissioners had worked together nationally to identify opportunities to combat fraud and provide victims a better response, with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners having a national fraud lead. He stated that the current system required reform and explained the possible advantages of a national coordinator and further powers for local forces.
3. Members shared their concerns at the fraud trends on a national and local level as well as the inability to combat and effectively coordinate a response to the issue.

4. A Member asked that the Commissioner press the Chief Constable to improve the police response to fraud carried out by organised crime groups as well as doorstep fraud in progress. Regarding fraud in progress, the Commissioner encouraged members of the public to dial 999. He confirmed that the Community Safety Units (CSUs) monitored local intelligence and trading standards reports to identify and combat organised fraud.
5. The Commissioner agreed, following a question from a Member, that there was scope to include fraud alerts on My Community Voice.

RESOLVED to note the report and request a further update at the appropriate time.

47. Violence Against Women and Girls Inquiry - update
(Item B4)

1. The Commissioner gave an update on the progress of his Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Inquiry. He confirmed that the Inquiry's final report would be published in the coming weeks and that he would use it to hold the wider criminal justice system to account on the issue. In relation to activities over the previous year, he explained that the police response to VAWG had developed in real time, including the implementation of an officer identity verification process, which had been used by members of the public more than 70 times. He thanked victims for sharing their stories at victim focus groups and noted the profound impact their experiences had on the Inquiry. He assured Members that he had urged the force to remind victims of their rights under the Victims' Code. He explained that he supported education schemes with schools, with the aim of addressing perpetrator behaviour. Regarding initial areas for improvement, he noted that preliminary findings had made it clear that more should be done to provide victims with quality updates.
2. Following a question from the Chair, the Commissioner explained that the VAWG Coordinator would be a new role, which was required to join up efforts and prevent duplication across the system. He reassured the Panel that there would be no real term increase in the OPCC budget as a result of the new role.
3. A Member stressed the importance of building public confidence through communicating the outcomes of the justice system and raised concerns that lengthy 101 response times reduced confidence. The Commissioner confirmed that he had urged the Chief Constable to redouble efforts to share outcomes, including the larger picture and overall impact on tackling perpetrators. He agreed that it was important to improve 101 response times as instances of VAWG were often reported this way, including 27% of rape reports. He reassured the Panel that cases were treated equally regardless of how they were first reported.
4. A Member asked for an indication of how diverse the survey respondents were, including a breakdown across different communities and ethnic groups.

The Commissioner agreed to share the requested information with the Panel following the meeting.

5. The Commissioner was asked how victims who had difficulties lodging appeals were supported. He confirmed that victim support arrangements were in place and agreed to share further information on provision with Members.
6. The Vice Chair asked whether future updates would address a victim's journey and service consistency across ethnicities. The Commissioner reassured the Panel that he intended on improving victim satisfaction mapping, in order that different crime types and their impact on victims with protected characteristics could be understood.

RESOLVED to note the report and agree to a further update at the Panel's December 2022 meeting.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Violence Against Women and Girls Inquiry report was published on 26 July 2022 and can be viewed on the Commissioner's website (www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/vawg/final-vawg-inquiry-report---kent-pcc-summer-2022.pdf).

48. Decision OPCC.D.029.22 - Legally Qualified Chairs and other members of Police Misconduct Panels

(Item C1)

RESOLVED to endorse the decision to provide indemnity to Legally Qualified Chairs and other members of Police Misconduct Panels until such time as the Home Office finds a national solution.

49. Questions to the Commissioner

(Item D1)

Question 1

Can the PCC explain how he will hold the Chief Constable to account for the appalling response times to answering 999 calls and that the fixation with police numbers is not resulting to service cuts elsewhere within Kent Police?

(Cllr Richard Palmer, Swale Borough Council)

1. The Commissioner responded to the question by confirming that the Home Office had set up a 999 response time league table, which indicated that Kent Police had median and mean response times of 5 and 16 seconds respectively, which were in line with national averages. He reassured the Panel that he had held the Chief Constable to account at the Performance and Delivery Board, with the Chief Constable acknowledging that response times required improvement. He committed to monitor the issue closely. Regarding the Police Officer Uplift Programme, he reaffirmed his support for the Programme and underscored the benefits of increased officer numbers. He stated that he would welcome further funding for staff, in order to reduce the financial burden on Kent Police, whilst recognising that there was more to be done to reduce non-staffing costs.

Question 2

In his role in holding the Chief Constable to account, can the PCC explain, in light of the estimated £34m budget cuts over the life cycle of the latest Police and Crime Plan, how the Neighbourhood Policing review will ensure that communities will have enhanced policing and PCSO patrols and the ability to prevent, investigate and take speedy action against ASB, crimes and suspected crimes and linked to this how the 101 and 999 call rates can be improved as ASB, crime or suspected crime has become too difficult to report recently and residents have the right to a speedy response and full investigation and feedback with actions of said reports?
(Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox, Gravesham Borough Council)

2. The Commissioner responded by confirming that he had received assurances from the Chief Constable that the Neighbourhood Policing Review would increase resilience and improve the quality of community policing. He stressed that he considered the maintenance of PCSOs as a fundamental requirement. Concerning efforts to reduce waiting times, he recognised that the force had previously been successful, as a result of him holding the Chief Constable to account, and committed to ensure a similar outcome on this occasion.

50. Future work programme

(Item E1)

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

51. Minutes of the Commissioner's Performance and Delivery Board meeting held on 16 March 2022

(Item F1)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance and Delivery Board held on 16 March 2022 be noted.

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