

## Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 3 April 2024

7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr Baljit Hayre (Chair)  
Cllr Lyn Milner (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:       Derek Ashenden  
                          Helen Ashenden  
                          David Beattie  
                          Deborah Croxton  
                          Aaron Elliott  
                          Gary Harding  
                          Jo Hart  
                          Karina O'Malley  
                          Leslie Pearton  
                          Tony Rana  
                          Christina Rolles  
                          Ektaveen Thandi  
                          Frank Wardle

Mark Lees	Head of Community Protection
Kath Donald	Strategic Manager
Will Lay	Chief Inspector (Kent Police)
Kirsty Dunne	Acting Inspector (Kent Police)
Stuart Wickens	Kent Fire and Rescue Service
Emily Say	Kent Fire and Rescue Service
Chloe Taylor	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

### 10. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Ejaz Aslam. Cllr David Beattie attended as his substitute.

### 11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 26 October 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

### 12. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Pearton declared an interest as his daughter worked for the prison service.

### 13. Proposed Topic Review and Process

The Strategic Manager presented members of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee with a report detailing the proposed topic review following recommendations made by

members at the last meeting of this Committee. The committee were asked to consider the proposed topic review and subject to Members' approval, agree that the appropriate members and officers commence the review process. The Strategic Manager highlighted the following key points:

- At the previous Crime and Disorder Scrutiny meeting, members put forward ideas for a topic review and agreed for the Chair, Vice-Chair and Strategic Manager to meet and discuss the suggested topics and report back with the proposal.
- Subject to the members approval, it was suggested that the topic review focused on 'anti-social behaviour (ASB) involving school-age young people and occurring after school finishing time in the afternoon and early evening, particularly in Gravesend town centre'.
- ASB is an issue that affects the borough, including residents and local businesses.
- Some residents and others wishing to visit the town centre reported consequently avoiding the area at those times.
- The Strategic Assessment 2023 established that Police-recorded ASB in Gravesham had increased by 11.4% in the year ending 30 September 2023 compared to a Kent average increase of 2.0%.
- Tackling ASB can be resource-intensive, and placed demands on all CSP partner agencies.
- It was felt that ASB was a suitable topic for review as it was highlighted as a priority amongst residents and that all CSP partner agencies could be involved.
- Members were advised that the next stage would involve appointing four members of the committee as part of the topic review group and elect one as Chair. Members were reminded that the group must be politically balanced.
- The Strategic Manager then outlined to members the process of the topic review detailed within the report.

The Chairman advised the Conservative Members of the committee to decide the members who they would like to put forward for the topic review group and for the membership to be agreed outside of the meeting.

The committee agreed for the topic review process to commence.

#### **14. Kent Police and Fire Service Update**

As Kent Fire and Rescue were in attendance, the Chair agreed for their verbal update to be taken as one item alongside Kent Police.

##### **Kent Police Update**

Kent Police, Chief Inspector Will Lay and Acting Inspector Kirsty Dunne, presented members with a verbal update on recent work being undertaken by Kent Police. The following key points were highlighted:

- Funding in previous years from the Home Office had covered patrolling for serious violence offences. However, this year, Kent Police had (in addition) been given funding dedicated to targeting hot spots for anti-social behaviour.
- The Chief Inspector advised he would update the committee on any identified hotspots.
- Members were advised that it was the responsibility of Kent Police to resource against

those hotspots.

- As a result of the Angiolini Inquiry Part One, Members were advised that there had been 16 recommendations, which Kent Police would adhere to. Work had already started and would continue.
- Members were updated on the last PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) assessment, which highlighted improvements made in certain areas, such as responding to the public like 101 calls and how quickly they were answered. There had been significant improvements and calls were getting answered quickly.
- The Acting Inspector updated members on nuisance bikes, advising there was an operation launching in April 2024.
- The ASB team had been working in the town centre and in Denton, working with schools and with staff to deliver education around ASB.
- Kent Police were looking to work with the Cyclo-Park as youth groups had been taken away and it was important to give school age/young adults something to do in the evenings/weekends.
- Burger King in the town centre had reported incidents of ASB – these individuals had been successfully dealt with.

Following questions and comments from members, the Chief Inspector and Acting Inspector explained the following:

- Kent Police had done a lot of work around the rules and regulations of e-scooters. They're able to enforce confiscation and advised members that where they had concerns regarding dangerous areas, this would get fed back to the team so they could proactively target those areas.
- The Chief Inspector advised that the danger around children on e-scooters was a valid concern. The Child Centred Policing team had undertaken prevention work around this.
- Kent Police were aware of the risks surrounding the storming of shopping centres. Where possible, they received early warnings and put measures in place where they were advised gatherings/planning were expected. They had successfully prevented such events from occurring, including warning phones shops and electronic goods stores.
- Kent Police were keen to work with educational establishments and were happy to look into opportunities where they can identify programmes as a deterrent. They had a good working relationship with social services and were able to report any children they felt were at risk.
- They had dedicated ward officers, but often found that they were not seen, and advised they needed to find a better way to capture that, such as using social media to promote where they have been and where they were going to be.
- There were 6 PCSO's in total, but ward areas now had a dedicated Beat police officer with more enforcement powers.
- They had started to use new methods, such as drones. This was particularly useful where incidences of ASB involving motorbikes had taken place. They could follow the vehicle without causing risks, like a high-speed chase, and when the vehicle slowed down, they were able to locate and seize it.
- Kent Police understood the concerns regarding cars driving without lights and advised they would feed this back to the Road Safety team.

### **Kent Fire and Rescue Service**

Stuart Wickens presented the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee with a verbal update on the recent work undertaken by the Kent Fire and Rescue Service, and highlighted the following:

- Statistics between 2022-23 and 2023-24 showed a rise in deliberate fires.
- There had been concerns with deliberate waste fires at sites in Denton, where attacks had been aimed towards the fire crews. Fire engine windows had been smashed and a firefighter had been hit. Kent Fire and Rescue had been very well supported by Kent Police, who were doing everything they could to increase the safety of the fire crew.
- They were working closely with Kent Police to protect the crew. In high-risk areas, unless there was a threat to life, they would await police presence before attending.
- They had achieved their house visitation target of 1,400 – raising safeguarding concerns and speaking to residents about the importance/maintenance of fire alarms, making homes that much safer.
- They were hopeful they would see a drop in dwelling fires within the next statistics.
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service also gave out information around e-scooters and safety advice around charging and high risks associated with the batteries. Members of the public have been advised to avoid charging them in communal areas and at home – or to do so in an area with a closable door.
- They had also been speaking with local businesses, looking at their current processes and offering advice, especially regarding warehouses. It provided additional safety for the crew if a fire occurred out of hours. The fire service would then have more information about what's inside the warehouse.
- Kent Fire and Rescue had been working alongside Gravesham Borough Council where waste fires have been set in relation to fly-tipping.
- The Kent Fire and Rescue Service had a team that went out to schools and promoted the safe use of e-scooters.
- The Kent Fire and Rescue Service were looking into body cams to increase the safety of the crew, but their appliances did currently have CCTV, which captured images used for prosecution.

The committee commended the Kent Fire and Rescue Service for all their hard work.

The committee noted the update.

## **15. Minutes of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel October 2023**

The Chairman advised that this report was for information only, and advised members that if they had any questions about the minutes, to direct them to Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox, the council representative.

The committee noted the report.

## **16. Exclusion**

**Resolved** that pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public be excluded during the following item of business because it was likely in view of the nature of business to be transacted that, if members of the public were present during the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**17. Strategic Assessment 2023 (Summary of Key Findings) and Priorities for the new Community Safety Strategy 2024-28**

The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee considered and discussed in detail the Part B information pertaining to the Strategic Assessment 2023 (Summary of Key Findings) and the priorities for the new Community Safety Strategy 2024-28.

The Strategic Manager provided the committee with further information which needed to remain confidential at this stage.

The committee noted the report.

**Close of meeting**

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm