

Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 12 October 2017

7:30pm

Present:

Cllr John Knight (Chair)
Cllr Sara Langdale (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs: Brian Francis
Rob Halpin
Karen Hurdle
David Hurley
Lyn Milner
Shane Mochrie-Cox
Peter Scollard

Simon Hookway	Service Manager (Economic Development)
Sean Steer	Operational Manager (CSU)
Kath Donald	Strategic Manager (Community Safety)
Inspector Patrick Holmes	CSU Inspector, Kent Police
PC James Hensman	Public Protection and Partnerships Command, Kent Police
PSE Will Liley	Force Control Room, Kent Police
PSE Luke Bradley	Force Control Room, Kent Police
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

27. Apologies

Apologies of absence were received from Cllr Samir Jassal and Cllr Gurdip Bungar (Cllr Peter Scollard subbing).

28. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2016 were signed by the Chair.

29. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

30. To consider whether any items in Part A of the Agenda should be considered in private or any items in Part B in public

The Chair stated that item 8 – Knife Crime – Level of Knife Crime locally and action being taken to help Prevent Knife Crime would be taken in private.

31. Risk, Threat and Harm Approach – how incidents/reports to Police are assessed and the appropriate response identified

The Committee received a presentation from the two Force Control Room (Kent Police) staff members on how Incidents/Reports to Police are assessed and the appropriate response identified (please see supplementary).

After the presentation the two Force Control Room, Kent Police Officers took Members questions explaining that:

- The Force Control Room receiving all the incident calls both from 999 and 101 is based at Maidstone and response time is based on how far away the problem is and what officers are near as a different district of officers may need to be contacted if the caller is far away from the immediate area
- An impact assessment is carried out and every caller is prioritised using the THRIVE system mentioned in the presentation, officers are directed to where they will be most effective and do the most good. If there are situations that need to be attended but officers are not available or stretched too thinly then the force control room supervisors who oversee districts will try to reach out and contact other district officers to source a solution
- Budgets are being continually cut and officers cannot go to every incident call so it cannot be helped that some of the public's perception is that there is a lack of follow up but in all instances a crime report will be logged and investigated to a reasonable extent
- As the internet is being utilised more around 6000-9000 emails are received through the online reporting system a month which are all individually read, risk assessed and prioritised by officers on the day it is received
- There is no email address for the public to use, it all goes through the reporting system so that it is risk assessed otherwise an important email could be missed and lives endangered etc. It could be taken back to the supervisors though about a possible automated response being sent out immediately to reassure the public that their email has been received
- Some Police forces in the country have opened up web chats and social media solutions to further communication with the public
- In response to a scrutiny question, it was advised that any decisions made by the officers can be escalated to the Supervisors who can overturn a decision if they feel they are not justified and team leaders continually review staff performance

Following some of the Members voicing concerns and stories over lack of Police follow through the Service Manager (Economic Development) explained an incident of a family member's bike being stolen and the detailed response it received from the Police including texts about victim support and a visit from a PCSO.

With regard to public perception of the Police, Inspector Patrick Holmes advised that he had attended a public meeting in Gravesend in which the residents complained of drug dealing in the area and the call records showed that no one had even contacted the Police about potential drug dealing; he encouraged Members to tell people to call the Police so that issues can be tracked as every crime reported is logged down no matter how little information there is.

The Chair thanked the officers for an information presentation.

32. Kent and Medway Police Crime Panel Update

The Committee was presented with the minutes of the Kent and Medway Police Crime Panel from Thursday, 20 July 2017.

After a brief exchange Committee Members were all in agreement that the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner should be invited to attend the next Committee meeting as it would be a useful insight.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety) advised she would try to get him booked to come to the next meeting on Tuesday, 20 March 2018.

33. 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 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.

34. Knife crime – level of knife crime locally and action being taken to help prevent knife crime

The Committee received a restricted presentation from PC James Hensman regarding the level of crime locally and the action that is being undertaken to prevent it.

After PC James Hensman gave his detailed presentation, Members asked him and Inspector Patrick Holmes a series of questions relevant to the subject matter.

The Strategic Manager Community Safety said that as a part of preventative work, there are areas that target youth, advising she has ring-fenced £3000 which will be exclusively used for youth engagement when a project is found that will be beneficial. There was a meeting of the Youth Advisory Group held recently which decided that they are going to be working with young people and producing information that will be useful to their age bracket tackling hate crime and it's quite possible that there may be scope to run a similar initiative with young people but with the focus on gang culture to discourage and prevent them from becoming involved.

A few Members argued that there should be more stringent licensing control and requirements from the Council on giving out licenses to off licenses and clubs to include things like mandatory search etc.

A suggestion was put forward by a Member that work was needed to be carried out on the analysis of why young people are carrying and using weapons; he drew upon his youth worker experience stating that many youths these days are not part of the gang culture immediately and carry the weapons for protection rather than status.

With regard to increasing statistics crime within Gravesham the Strategic Manager Community Safety pointed that it is wise to remember that Gravesham is very near to London and has easy access via the train line and roads which makes it an accessible area for the London population overspill and crime. The Strategic Manager Community Safety added that it is very difficult to stop people coming to Gravened with knives bought elsewhere but GBC know their town centre and businesses well and most of them use the G

SAFE; it's a great opportunity to use G SAFE more and offer training to the staff of businesses on selling knives.

PC James Hensman informed the Strategic Manager Community Safety that he would send her over an information education pack that she could provide to the G-Safe Board.

The Chair thanked PC James Hensman for his detailed presentation.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9:35pm.