

Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 20 March 2018

7:30pm

Present:

Cllr Sara Langdale (Chair)
Cllr Conrad Broadley (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs: Gurdip Bungar
Brian Francis
Rob Halpin
Gary Harding
Karen Hurdle
David Hurley
Lyn Milner
Shane Mochrie-Cox

Simon Hookway	Service Manager (Economic Development)
Kath Donald	Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit)
Sean Steer	Operational Manager (CSU)
David Venus-Coppard	Detective Inspector, Kent Police
Patrick Holmes	Inspector, Kent Police
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

35. Apologies

An apology of absence was received from Lucy Connor, Victim Services Delivery Manager, Victim Support and Chief Inspector Andy Gadd.

36. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2017 were signed by the Chair.

A point was raised by a Member regarding the previous minutes that the Police & Crime Commissioner was supposed to be invited to the present meeting.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) explained that the last date offered had not been convenient but a further invitation would be extended.

37. Declarations of Interest

The Chair stated that her daughter is a Police Officer based at North West Kent Police Station.

38. 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 appendix to item 8 will be taken in Part B.

39. Special Thanks

The Committee wanted their thanks recorded for the hard work and response time carried out by emergency services on Saturday night when the violent incident occurred at Blake's nightclub.

40. Victim Support Services

The Committee was advised that due to ill health the Victim Services Delivery Manager, Victim Support had to give her apologies for the meeting but she advised that she would be happy to bring the presentation to a future meeting.

The Chair raised the possibility of creating a special meeting before the next date of October for the Victims Services Delivery Manager to give her presentation to Members. The Committee approved the notion and asked whether it would be possible to have the Police & Crime Commissioner attend the same meeting.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) advised that she would look into possible dates for another meeting; with regard to the PCC, part of his agenda is working with victims of domestic abuse so he may very well be interested in attending. Once the dates have been checked with both parties, a new date will be proposed to the Chair of the Committee.

41. Vulnerability Investigation Team (VIT)

The Committee received a presentation from the two inspectors from Kent Police giving Members clarity and understanding of the work and roles of officers within the recently formed VIT (dedicated team to increase early identification of vulnerable children and adults/vulnerable victims of ASB/crime and provide them with tailored interventions). (Please see supplementary for PowerPoint presentation).

Following Members questions and comments, the Detective Inspector and Inspector, Kent Police explained that:

- Crimes are dealt with in their specialist teams for each area, so a case involving domestic abuse would be handled by a domestic team with officers who are trained to deal with the victims and investigate the crime. An officer might also work with an officer in a different area if the original crime has links to something else
- On the matter of underage children sharing explicit images with each other, it has to be recorded an offence under Police guidelines but it is down to the officer dealing with it whether or not there is a case for prosecution. The Police do not want to criminalise all children and have it impact them in later life, ways will be looked at as to the most appropriate action to take; , ultimately it is a judgment call to the officer if it is a case of exploitation or experimentation etc
- The VIT team was formed in September; prior to September the majority of crimes were dealt with by a common officer but now there are specialist officers that are trained to the requisite level to deal with specific types of crimes, the load is shared out much better with officers training tailored to the crimes
- There is always a specialist response and often intermediaries are used for the cases where there is sensitivity, language barriers and disabilities as the intermediary helps to build trust between the Police and the victim. The team will help the victims in any

way that they can using various different techniques but no matter the disability or nature of the victim there will always be help suitable for them made available

- Once a crime has been reported, that suspect's name will be listed and it will only be removed once there has been evidence to disapprove the crime
- If a member of the public calls 101 and their report is suspected to be malicious,, there will absolutely be a response from one of the Police Teams whose job it is to investigate the claims and seek out evidence of any possible crime

The officers advised that if Members wanted to help and support the issue of children not being criminalised for the explicit images sharing then they should pen a letter to the Home Office who have control and are able to change current legislation. Members asked that also included in the letter is the request that anonymity for the suspects in sexual abuse cases be the same for victims in that no names are released until proven guilty as people's lives have been destroyed following false sexual abuse allegation.

The Service Manager (Economic Development) advised that a letter about the aforementioned issues can be drafted and sent to the Home Office. It will need to be sent in the name of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Safety. A letter can be reported back to Committee Members.

The Committee thanked the officers for an informative presentation.

42. Altogether Safer - Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls in North Kent

The Strategic Manager, (Community Safety Unit) presented Members with the Altogether Safer Annual Report 2017-18.

In December 2016, the Home Office announced that it had created a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Transformation Fund and was inviting bids from Local Authorities and Health Authorities to support projects to address this issue. Gravesham's Community Safety Unit (CSU) saw this as an opportunity to work with some of GBC's partner agencies to put together a programme of work to help reduce VAWG and submitted a bid in late February 2017.

The announcement on the outcome of applications was delayed due to the General Election but in July 2017 the CSU received notification that the bid was one of 61 projects nationwide that had been successful. Funding was agreed in full for the project (Altogether Safer – Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls in North Kent) and GBC have been awarded a total grant of £229,000 over three financial years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (c. £76,300 p.a.).

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) outlined the three approaches listed in the project which the bid money was spent on over the course of the year:

The Weekend/Out of Hours Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service (Police Station-Based)

A Police Station-based Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service at weekend nights/Out of Hours provides readily accessible, expert advice for victims and front-line officers – crucial engagement at the right time. Victims do not have to wait until the following week for this support which can otherwise be too little, too late and result in a

disproportionately high ratio of victims declining to support a prosecution in Dartford and Gravesham.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) explained that they work closely with Inspector Holmes and directly alongside the VIT team; the Choices charity has been very long established with its advisors highly trained to deal with victim support. The IDVAs have been Police vetted and cleared all the necessary security checks, they also have the ability to access Police systems which is invaluable in responding to victims as early as possible..

Due to the unavoidable delay in the project being able to commence, the IDVA service began operating in the autumn 2017. Although the service was initially intended to provide cover 12 hours during weekend nights, the pool of IDVAs trained meant that the project had the capacity to provide additional hours during week nights (Thursday and Fridays) as well as further hours at the weekends. This was seen as a good solution to recoup the hours lost earlier in the year whilst also having the additional benefit of allowing the project to 'test' demand for the service during other times of the week.

Choose Respect Programme

Choose Respect is a targeted programme for boys and young men aged 11-18 years displaying challenging, aggressive, controlling or anxious behaviours. The programme addresses factors influencing their behaviour through small group work and 1:1 sessions proven to reduce and prevent violent and aggressive behaviour. The use of social media as a tool for abuse and exploitation is also addressed through the programme delivered in conjunction with schools and a wide range of services coming into contact with young people.

The target for year one was 60 boys and the target for year two doubles to 120; again due to the late announcement instead of the programme starting in April as planned it began in September 2017. Usually the programme is delivered purely in conjunction with schools but this has been extended to allow Choose Respect to receive referrals of boys and young men from KCC Early Help and Preventative Services and Troubled Families Teams, Youth Services, Kent Police and The Grand. Boys and young men can also self-refer. As at end of February 55 boys have been dealt with and there is a waiting list which means that the original target of 60 will be hit by the end of March 2018.

Improving access to services – reducing violence within BME communities and working with hard to reach groups

Collaborative work between North Kent Equality Cohesion Council (KECC) and Rethink Sahayak is focusing on encouraging engagement with services by victims across BME communities (currently unrepresented). Awareness-raising, service promotion, peer-led support and initiatives to remove the stigma associated with seeking help within certain cultures, will continue to break down existing barriers. Activities (including some for women and girl-only audiences) are used to generate confidence and provide environments in which victims can be empowered to discuss their experiences and get the help they need. The aim was to reach the groups of people in society who were at the most risk and make it less of a taboo for them to come forward as many people especially women in certain cultures feel pressured to stay silent on abuse issues.

There were a number of successful events held throughout the year which are listed on page 31 of the report but one very important initiative that was delivered by KECC and Rethink

(which is also going to be delivered in Years 2 and 3 of the project) was the organising and holding of a Women and Girls only conference and social event. The Sadi Awaaz Suno (Listen to our Voices) event took place on Friday 24 November 2017 – specifically leading up to the International Day for the Elimination of VAWG on 25 November.

The event was very successful and approximately 300 local women and girls attended (exceeding our original target of 150-200 attendees). They ranged from grandmothers and mothers for whom English is their second language to young professionals and newly arrived brides from the Indian Sub-Continent. The event provided an open space for women and girls to gain a better understanding of issues affecting their communities and to be encouraged to voice their opinions. The conference was addressed by the various different speakers including doctors, Police Officers, key speakers regarding forced marriages and exploitation. Immediately following the conference was a social event with food and drink in which the guests could talk to the speakers privately if they chose too.

As part of our work to reach as wide an audience as possible with our local BME communities, KECC has led on the production of a short film, *Ladies Sangeet*, that examines a domestic abuse victim's silence. The entire cast was made up of local women and girls who volunteered their time and the script and the film was screened for the first time at the conference proving very impactful. It will shortly be made available on YouTube and will hopefully also be used in a variety of venues e.g. Civic Centre television screens in waiting areas, at events and in working with smaller community and peer support groups. The intention is for further films to be produced each year of the project to raise awareness of different types of VAWG and services that are available. At the end of Year 3, they will become part of the project end 'toolkit' of materials and resources that will be made freely available to other areas wanting to address those issues.

The final report was submitted to the Home Office and an email was received last Thursday giving thanks for the hard work carried out and the claim for the full amount of the bid had been signed off. The Home Office was so pleased with GBC's work that they sought GBC's approval for the project to be featured in a newsletter that the Department's Safeguarding Team produce and issue to a number of stakeholders ranging from police, local authorities, social, health care, academia and charity sectors. The next edition is due to be issued in the Spring and this will help to raise the profile of the work that is being carried out locally.

Following Members questions and comments, the Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) advised that:

- With regard to IDVA, Thursdays and Fridays were not as busy as the weekends but still proved to be a valuable service and the aim is to keep it going for year 2. The CSU is applying to the PCC to use part of its Community Safety Grant allocated for 2018-19 to provide the funding to continue with those two extra days. Around £10K would be needed to carry the service on into 2018/19 and possibly two different weeknights would be trialled to gain a better understanding of when are high times of abuse
- With regard to the Choose Respect Programme, all the young boys and men completing the programme said they felt that they could identify ways of managing their feelings better especially anger and 100% of them felt that their aggression had been lowered as well as an increased sense of empathy
- Years 1 and 2 are about ensuring that the targets are met and during year 3 more routes of funding can be explored to carry on the project after its initial three years

- It is unsure why there are double the amount of issues listed on page 17 in Gravesham compared to Dartford but it is something that will be looked into in April; the annual report was completed 2 weeks ago and there was a very tight deadline so the figures haven't been able to be questioned yet but the issues will be addressed
- In terms of tutoring young people, girls are also taught what is to acceptable behaviour from someone else. Other CSU activity in 2018-19 will focus on girls as well as boys who are linked to gang activity and who may be being exploited or who are vulnerable.
- The Choose Respect workers now have hot desks at The Gr@nd and the benefit of that is that when the boys finish their 12 week programme they are able to choose from activities run by The Gr@nd work that they can move on to and that may be beneficial to them. It also works vice-versa with The Gr@nd coming across boys and girls who are experiencing problems and having the opportunity to refer them to the Choose Respect Programme.
- An annual report will be coming to the Committee on the work carried out in the project every year
- All of the young boys and men that are referred to the Choose Respect programme are not just average boys having a hard time, going through changes; their behaviour is identified as being particularly concerning e.g. displaying aggression and abuse in relationships. Individual assessments are carried out on every referral received the individual is accepted onto the Programme.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) stated she was interested in the abuse figures for disabled women who may not be accessing services (raised by Cllr Harding) and advised she would look into and raise it at the next Delivery Group meeting in April 2018. There was potential for the Project to consider specific work focussing on encouraging reporting from victims with disabilities and improving the accessibility of services to them.

The Chair and Committee thanked the Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) for all of her dedication and hard work pushing for the bid and the distribution of resources so effectively.

Members agreed to note the contents of the Altogether Safer Annual Report 2017-18.

43. Community Safety Strategic Priorities 2018-19 and Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2017

Members were presented with the Part B Strategic Assessment 2017 for the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership.

The Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) presented to the Committee, listed at appendix 1, the annual Community Safety Strategic Assessment completed on behalf of the joint Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership and in accordance with our legal obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This year, the Assessment has been completed by Dartford Community Safety Unit (CSU). It is provided to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee in order that Members have an opportunity to note levels in recorded crime and anti-social behaviour and to be apprised of any findings that may have an impact on local community safety priorities.

Following an introduction regarding the confidential information in the report, the Strategic Manager (Community Safety Unit) answered Members questions:

- Anti-social behaviour (incorporating criminal damage) had been removed off the priority list of crimes but it is felt that it should remain as a priority action to be dealt with by the Police; the matter will be raised at the next CSP meeting on Thursday as proportionately it is still a large component of total crime
- The matter of FGM can be looked into further to see if it warrants being moved onto the strategy

It was agreed by Members that:

- The content of the Strategic Assessment 2017 (Appendix 1) taking into account the limitations of the document this year as detailed below in this cover report be noted
- A recommendation be made by the Committee to the next CSP meeting that criminal damage be retained as a priority in the Community Safety Strategy

44. Kent & Medway Police and Crime Panel Minutes (15 Nov 2017)

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel meeting dated Wednesday, 15 November 2018.

The Chair advised that the Councils interest were effectively represented by Cllr John Knight and Cllr John Burden at the meeting.

Members noted the contents of the minutes.

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

There were no urgent items.

46. Exclusion

Resolved that the public be excluded from the meeting because it is likely that in view of the nature of business to be transacted there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

47. PART B Appendix - Community Safety Strategic Priorities 2018-19 and Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2017

The appendix was presented and noted by the Committee.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9:44pm.