KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - Sessions House on Wednesday, 3 April 2019.

PRESENT: Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr A M Ridgers (Vice-Chairman), Mr M A C Balfour, Mr P V Barrington-King, Mrs P M Beresford, Mrs R Binks, Mr R H Bird, Mr I S Chittenden (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE), Mr G Cooke, Mr D Farrell, Mr R C Love, OBE, Dr L Sullivan and Mr J Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

50. Substitutes
(Item A2)

1. Apologies had been received from Mrs Dean (Mr Chittenden was substituting), the two Parent Governors Mr Garsed and Mr Roy and the Church Representative Mr Brunning.

51. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting
(Item A3)

1. Dr Sullivan declared an interest as her husband was employed as an Early Help Worker for Kent County Council.

52. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019
(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

53. Select Committee Update - verbal briefing
(Item A5)

Mr Watts (General Counsel) was in attendance for this item.

1. Ben Watts, General Counsel gave Members a briefing on how the proposed urgent Select Committee on Knife Crime could be progressed. Currently the Select Committee on Affordable Housing was due to commence next but a review of Knife Crime could be prioritised if this was agreed by the Scrutiny Committee.

2. It was understood that Members wished this Select Committee to proceed at pace and to form recommendations as quickly as possible. There was a variety of activity already underway and it was considered that it would be helpful for a first stage activity to review the work already ongoing both by KCC and with partners.

3. The Chairman commented that this topic was of huge national importance and it was considered that KCC needed to exhibit a strong position.

4. The Chairman recommended, seconded by Mr Ridgers, that Mr Barrington-King be Chairman designate of the Knife Crime Select Committee.

5. Mr Bird proposed Mr Farrell as the Chairman designate of the Knife Crime Select Committee.

6. Members were asked to vote upon the first proposal, and this was won by majority. Following this Mr Bird withdrew his proposal.

7. Members commented that there was a large measure of agreement on the proposed way forward of this Select Committee.

8. One Member commented that the Select Committee should move at a slightly faster pace than suggested.

9. Members recognised the urgency of the review and commented upon the role of schools. There were concerns that the speed of the review may limit the depth of understanding that the subject warranted.

10. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Mr Wright, that the Select Committee on Knife Crime be the next to be established, being prioritised over Affordable Housing. This was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED that:

- the Scrutiny Committee agree that a Knife Crime Select Committee should be prioritised over the Affordable Housing Select Committee;
- the Scrutiny Committee recommends that Mr Barrington-King be Chairman Designate.

54. Kent Community Safety Agreement
(Item B1)

Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, Shafick Peerbux, Head of Community Safety, KCC, T/Chief Supt Andy Pritchard, Kent Police, Chief Insp Guy Thompson, Kent Police, Tim Read, Chair of Safer Roads for Kent Board, KCC, Jon Quinn, Assistant Director, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, Nick Wilkinson, Prevent and Channel Strategic Manager, KCC and Jess Mookherjee, Consultant in Public Health, Kent Public Health were in attendance for this item.

1. The Chairman asked Mike Hill, Cabinet Member, to introduce this item and he set out the important work of the Community Safety Team and its partners, their role in Domestic Homicide Review work and the role of the Kent Community Safety Partnership which was hosted by KCC.

2. T/Chief Supt Andy Pritchard suggested that intervention, education, diversion and prevention were vital.

3. Shafick Peerbux, Head of Community Safety delivered a presentation setting out the role of the Kent Community Safety Partnership and the Community Safety Agreement. The presentation is available online here or via this link:

4. Members thanked Mr Peerbux for his presentation which was comprehensive, informative and chilling. Members considered that the increase in gang culture arose from young people having a lack of somewhere to be, not having a good male role model, and individuals looking for belonging.

5. Referring to a comment made by the partners that the Police were not the best agency to go into schools and colleges to educate Members asked who would be better? Chief Insp Guy Thompson explained that PSHE documentation set out how education should be taken into schools and this was led by the PSHE teacher and supported by the schools.

6. Nick Wilkinson agreed that many of the young people drawn into gangs were vulnerable, were looking for a sense of belonging, had low self esteem and low achievement levels.

7. A Member referred to prevention, how could partners be sure that they were aware of vulnerable people, what was the cost of missing vulnerable young people? She also asked whether any requests had been received from KCC about knife arches, and what advice would be given to KCC about these?

8. Mr Thompson said that knife arches had been used at youth centres, but he urged caution over their use and their careful management. Commenting on missing vulnerable people he explained that these young people were at risk of becoming involved in gangs. Partners discussed the benefits of money spent on early intervention.

9. It was clear that adverse childhood experiences affected a child's wellbeing as they got older. Partners also commented that Domestic Abuse was not an isolated issue it had links with; poverty, deprivation, gangs, smoking and therefore a child's wellbeing and emotional development was also affected.

10. Jess Mookherjee spoke to Members about trauma informed care, which involved open-mindedness and compassion. All services dealing with young people should ask why the child is there rather than what the child has done. There had been a huge amount of training to ensure that the focus was on trauma informed care, it was hoped that this would have a significant impact in the future.

11. Members were aware that there was no easy solution to these issues, vigilance in communities was imperative and it was essential that individuals knew where to report any concerns.

12. In response to a Member's question about the involvement of British Transport Police (BTP) Mr Pritchard explained that like all forces BTP had 'stepped up' in relation to the challenge around knife crime and it being a national policing priority.

13. A Member referred to new parents, their support and environment and considered that the Select Committee should not exclude this area as well as early childhood, nurseries, social workers.

14. Members discussed road safety and considered that anti-social behaviour on roads was less recognised and not dealt with.

15. Tim Read, Chair of Safer Roads for Kent Board explained that the idea of criminalising a large number of people for traffic offences was difficult. The Government would have to pass legislation that would require all of us to have black boxes in cars and this then raised other issues around surveillance and anonymity. It was necessary to get to a point where people wanted to behave in a responsible way.

16. Mr Pritchard explained that insurance companies were offering discounts to young people if they had a black box fitted into their vehicle. It was better to be proactive and there were less criminalising methods to look at.

17. A Member asked about scammers and cybercrime and how effective the partnership was at preventing crimes. Mr Peerbux explained that this was a large problem, and authorities were only aware of a small proportion. It was incumbent on communities to know where to and how to report incidents, and to support victims.

18. The Chairman asked how increasing the number of ANPR cameras could contribute to reducing crime. Mr Pritchard considered that more facilities would increase opportunities for detection, they were valuable in detecting and reducing crime. Their limits included infringements of privacy.

19. In response to a question Mr Read explained that he was not aware of any work done on the impact of road safety with the presence of dash cams, it was considered that this would be a positive impact, but it was difficult to measure.

20. Members briefly discussed the pressure on the county and districts of the increasing numbers of housing developments and the loss of power for highways authorities to turn down planning permissions. It was considered that the impacts of air pollution would become more prominent in the future.

21. Mr Hill thanked Members for their interest and their questions which had been useful and productive, he thanked the Scrutiny Committee on behalf of his team and partners.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee thank the Community Safety partners for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering Members' questions. This would be brought back to the Committee annually as required.

55. Application of KCC's social value principles to KCC's Commissioning and Contract Management
(Item C1)

Miss Rankin, Cabinet Member for Strategic Commissioning and Vincent Godfrey, Strategic Commissioner were in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Rankin explained that this was an iterative process, the Government was due to make changes around how authorities dealt with social value. KCC's

procurement and commissioning templates set out where social value was added. The Commissioning Team tried to ensure that this was always considered.

2. Vincent Godfrey explained that this was a positive piece of legislation and the Commissioning team were raising awareness of social value and aimed to ensure consistency of application with the following initiatives:

   a. Over a dozen senior commissioners had gone through the commissioning academy
   b. Understanding how social value was measured
   c. Redoing an ethical procurement test every two years.
   d. Lord Young's report – what was legally permissible, there was mandatory training for all officers. Regulations were amended in 2015 which encouraged consideration of social value.

3. The Commissioning team was committed to getting a Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) certification of the whole authority.

4. The weakest area was considered to be the measurement and realisation of social value and it was necessary to get better at measuring outcomes of added social value.

5. Members discussed how it was possible to get those KCC contracted with to add benefit. There were questions over whether the statistics produced showed the real benefits.

6. In response to a question Miss Rankin explained that it was required in contracts that organisations complied with the law, the main contractor was always responsible for the sub-contractor. Referring to sub-contractors providing social value organisations were content to find a way of fulfilling their own social responsibility policy.

7. In response to a comment about academies it was considered to be disappointing if an academy did not have a corporate social responsibility policy. For example for employees who might wish to undertake duties as a councillor or for volunteering. Organisations should be aware that they would be more likely to win contracts on the basis that the organisation was forward thinking, socially aware and responsible.

8. A Member asked how robust were the KPIs? Mr Godfrey explained that the robustness of KPIs had got better over time, this had happened in the evolution of outsourcing and procuring contracts generally.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee note the update on progress provided in the report.