

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 4 February 2015.

PRESENT: Mr R J Parry (Chairman), Mr J E Scholes (Vice-Chairman), Mr H Birkby, Mr G Cowan, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr E E C Hotson, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr R A Latchford, OBE, Mr R A Marsh and Mr R Truelove

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE, Supt L Russell and Mr S Bone-Knell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Beaumont (Head of Community Safety and Emergency Planning), Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)) and Mr J Cook (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

74. Community Safety Agreement 2014 - 17 *(Item A4)*

1. The Chairman welcomed Members of the Committee and the guests to this meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee.
2. Mr Hill introduced the Community Safety Agreement, giving a brief overview of the history of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP). He explained that the Safe and Stronger Communities programme run in Kent, had been set up by the then Chief Constable of Kent Police David Phillips and KCC Chief Executive Mike Pitt. This was used as a model nationally to shape the development of top tier Community Safety Partnerships, which meant that Kent was in an excellent position when they were formally introduced in 2006.
3. Mr Hill explained that the KCSP was made up of the six responsible authorities who also provided the principle funding for community safety activity in Kent. Kent Police, District & Borough Councils, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Kent Fire & Rescue Service and Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company now all had a statutory responsibility to co-operate and develop joint plans to tackle shared priorities.
4. Mr Beaumont, Head of Community Safety and Emergency Planning, delivered a detailed presentation on the Community Safety Agreement.
5. Key points made by Mr Beaumont included;
 - The main achievements of 2014 had been the development of an anti-social behaviour (ASB) strategy linked with THEMIS, an ASB case management system. The latter assisting in sharing case information with other authorities and agencies to improve joint working as well as charting issues relating to repeat victims such as vulnerabilities that impact on their risk assessment.

- The implementation of the Community Trigger process which required the relevant agencies in the CSP to respond when three complaints were received from a victim of ASB.
- Progress on the Domestic Abuse priority such as the development of the Kent Domestic Abuse website which signposted professionals and victims to appropriate services.
- Funding for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors had been continued through a specific funding stream through the CSP using a Charity Cartel. This had allowed continued use of this excellent resource.
- Since 2013, there had been 13 Domestic Homicide Reviews in Kent. The learning outcomes from these had continued to contribute toward developing better systems to preventing domestic homicides.

6. Supt. Russell, Head of Partnerships and Communities for Kent Police, commented on the Community Safety Agreement Action Plan in that so far the Community Trigger had only been activated twice in Kent. This evidenced that there was already a good system in place for responding to ASB complaints.

7. Supt. Russell commented that as 20% of callers to the police were responsible for 50% of the total call volume, it was important to focus resources on the root causes of the ASB and implement preventative measures that would provide long term resolution to the repeat victims.

8. Mr Bone-Knell, Operations Director of Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), provided some background on the work of the Kent Joint Community Safety Team. He gave updates on various areas of Community Safety work such as;

- The excellent partnership work undertaken by the Kent Resilience Team which drew together emergency planning activity from all the key partners.
- The unfortunate increase in incidents of people being killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Kent's roads – up from 601 to 619 equating to 3% increase since 2013. This issue had been recognised and work was in progress to address the matter.
- The continued positive response to the License to Kill educational tool.

9. Mr Hill drew attention to the improvements in how the partner agencies responded to domestic abuse were very positive and that the increase in reporting was a positive development as it showed there was growing confidence in the system. Additionally, he drew attention to the improvements made to early identification and management of mental health issues were expected to reduce the risk of domestic abuse and violent crime in the long term.

10. Supt. Russell explained that E-safety was being addressed through a programme of workshops being rolled out across the county at both primary and secondary school level.

11. Supt Russell also noted that the Mental Health Concordat marked further joint work being undertaken to ensure people with mental health issues were managed properly, reducing pressure of Police resources.

12. Members asked several questions, Mr Beaumont, Mr Hill, Supt Russell and Mr Bone-Knell responded as follows;

- Clarifying how Legal Highs were being addressed, Supt Russell explained that the term was being challenged as the term “legal”, combined with the accessibility of the substances created a false sense of acceptability and safety. This was concerning as Kent had the highest concentration of sellers outside London. Work was ongoing with Kent Trading Standards but it remained challenging as product sellers and manufacturers could manoeuvre around bans or sanctions. Kent Police was lobbying for national guidance to improve their capacity to respond to the issue.
- In terms of continued financial challenge on resources, all guests agreed that the pressures were intense but that joint working and collaboration were proving to be the best methods of continuing to provide a good service. The focus on maintaining frontline services across Kent has been continued across all the agencies.
- Mr Beaumont clarified that the Community Safety Agreement was a forward looking document. It focused on the plans for the future and what strategic action would be taken rather than a review of past performance of the KCSP. The annual strategic assessments that contributed to the document did consider the progress made previously on the key priorities.
- To allow for better scrutiny of performance in future, representatives of the KCSP agreed to provide the relevant performance data to the Committee and to include it in future Crime and Disorder Papers.
- All partners indicated their support for the plan to roll out defibrillators as widely as possible. Examples of increased availability included equipping all KFRS and Police Response vehicles to support medical emergency situations. Additionally, the KCSP supported bids for other agencies and authorities to purchase defibrillators. Agreement was given by the partners to liaise with the Kent Association of Local Councils to progress this further.
- Supt. Russell clarified the use of Community Justice in that Restorative Practice was commonly used when dealing with young offenders, in the interest of limiting the criminalisation of young people. Additionally, the local panels such as the Thanet Neighbourhood Response Panel, discussed local action and sought to publicise the success as the view the justice needed to be seen to be effective was appreciated by the partners.
- Supt. Russell explained that human trafficking was being addressed as a priority by the Serious Crime Directorate and that while operational security prevented detailed discussion, further information could be provided to the Committee.
- Members were advised that the local CSPs (Community Safety Partnerships) were scrutinised at District level by the District / Borough Council Scrutiny Committees. All the CSPs worked slightly differently as they had varied demographics and circumstances. The Kent CSP provided the strategic overview and direction and was able to direct additional resources to areas of increased need.

A Member commented that Mr Beaumont was retiring from KCC. The Committee referred to his his excellent service, recorded their thanks to him and wished him well on his retirement.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Community Safety Agreement; that the Community Safety Team and partner agencies give consideration to the comments made by the Committee and that they provide performance data relevant to the delivery of the CSA priorities as part of the next annual report to the Committee.