

By: Gaetano Romagnuolo, Research Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)

To: Knife Crime Select Committee – 9 May 2019

Subject: Knife Crime Select Committee Topic Review

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: To discuss and agree proposed Terms of Reference, timetable, potential witnesses and general approach for the Review

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## **1 Introduction**

At its meeting on 3 April the Scrutiny Committee agreed that a Select Committee would be established to carry out a focused review of Knife Crime in Kent which would submit its final report to County Council on 17 October 2019.

In accordance with the process set out in the Constitution, the Chairman designate, Mr Barrington-King, and Mr Chittenden and Mr Farrell met informally to develop the draft Terms of Reference, including the general nature of the expected outcomes for consideration by this Committee.

## **2 Draft Terms of Reference**

The Committee is invited to consider and approve the following draft Terms of Reference for the review. To assist Members a background briefing paper is attached as an Appendix to this report.

1. To examine the reasons behind the recent increases in knife crime offences in the county.
2. To consider current initiatives in Kent focused on addressing knife crime in the county.
3. To identify opportunities for KCC to help reduce the incidence and impact of knife crime in Kent.

### 3 Proposed Timetable (summary)

<b>17 April 2019</b>	Informal cross-party meeting for the Select Committee to discuss the Terms of Reference of the review
<b>8 May 2019</b>	Update to Scrutiny Committee
<b>9 May 2019</b>	First meeting of the Select Committee, to appoint the Chair and to discuss and agree the Terms of Reference of the review
<b>Early May to late May 2019</b>	Research and arrangements for hearing sessions and written evidence
<b>Mid June 2019</b>	Hearings, and the Committee meets to identify key issues and to make recommendations (dates have been circulated to Members of the Committee and are available on the website)
<b>July 2019</b>	Report writing, production of first draft
<b>Late July 2019</b>	Informal meeting of the Committee to discuss the first draft of the report and suggest amendments
<b>Late July/early Aug*</b>	Draft report amended and agreed with the Chairman/Committee by email
<b>27 Aug 2019*</b>	Committee shares the draft report with Cabinet Member(s) and Corporate Director(s) – invite comments by email
<b>w/c 2 Sept</b>	Informal meeting of the Committee to consider comments and finalise report for publication
<b>w/c 9 Sept</b>	Select Committee's formal meeting to agree the final report
<b>18 September</b>	Despatch for Cabinet
<b>28 September</b>	<b>Report presented to Cabinet for comments</b>
<b>9 October</b>	Despatch for County Council
<b>17 October</b>	<b>Report presented to County Council for endorsement</b>

\*NB – Normally there would be an informal meeting of the Select Committee to agree the draft report to be shared with the Cabinet Member(s) and Director(s), and an informal meeting between the Committee and Cabinet Member(s) and Director(s) to hear their comments and decide whether to make any amendments to the report in light of these comments. In order to speed up the process these may need to be undertaken virtually (via email).

### 4 General Approach

The review is proposed to include a short period of desk-based research. Oral and written evidence from identified witnesses/organisations will be obtained during the course of the review. Once the Terms of Reference have been agreed there will be a press release issued by the Chairman of the Committee which will include a general request for written evidence.

## **5 Evidence Gathering – Hearings and written evidence**

To enable a brief, focused review, it is proposed that the Select Committee gathers oral evidence through about twelve hearing sessions of 45 minutes each over four half days. Hearings will normally be open to the public unless there is a specific requirement to hold a closed session due to the likely disclosure of exempt information.

It is proposed that Members of the Committee remain for about 20 minutes after each set of hearing sessions to ensure that all views, key points and emerging recommendations are captured.

This process will be followed by a session where the Committee will make its recommendations, and by the subsequent production of a short draft report for the Committee's consideration.

Details of suggested witnesses/organisations to invite to provide oral or written evidence are outlined below.

- KCC services that could provide relevant evidence and information in relation to knife crime include the following:
  - **Community Safety Team**, Kent County Council
  - **Troubled Families Programme**, Kent County Council
  - **0-25 Service**, Children, Kent County Council (in relation to elements of the Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy 2018-2021)
  - **Early Help and Preventative Services, Kent County Council** (in relation to 'contextual safeguarding')
  - **Trading Standards** service, Kent County Council
  - **Education Safeguarding Team**, Kent County Council
  - **Public Health**, Kent County Council
  
- **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Kent Police force area**
  
- **Kent Police** (in relation to gangs-related crime. Also, Kent Police has launched a dedicated Kent campaign 'Don't let a knife take life' to tackle knife crime and highlight the risks of carrying a knife. The focus of the campaign is prevention, delivered through an education and support initiative, which has been designed to assist schools and youth groups to independently talk to students about knife crime)

- **Representatives of Kent schools/Kent Association of Headteachers**
- **Excelsior Safeguarding**, (in particular their work with primary schools. Excelsior Safeguarding is a 'not for profit' organisation established to provide effective help and support to vulnerable young people and adults affected by group violence, drugs and forms of exploitation such as human trafficking and extremism)
- **Uprising Youth** (Uprising Youth and Community is a charity based in Ashford, Kent, that aims to support young people, families, and communities facing significant challenges to achieve improvements in life, resulting in positive personal and community transformation)
- **Kent Youth County Council**
- **Refocus** (Refocus is a specialist crime prevention and early intervention charity now based in Dartford. The service has helped over 12,000 young people in 13 years, aged between 8 – 21 years old. Its mission is to “refocus “young people who are in danger of, or have already taken, a wrong turn in their lives, helping them to tackle the root causes of their behaviour)
- **KnifeCrimes.Org** (is a registered charity providing information and support to families and friends affected by serious violent crime, or bereaved, as a result of knife, gun and gang-related crime
- **No Knives, Better Lives**, (based in Scotland. Their projects include: online practitioner training packages, peer education training, educational toolkits for schools and youth work settings and a range of supporting resources from high-quality videos and animations to posters, leaflets, reports and evaluations – see <https://noknivesbetterlives.com/>)
- **Academics**, professionals, advisers and other witnesses who can make relevant contributions.
- **YMCA**
- Representatives of **Central Government** who can offer a national level perspective on knife crime
- **National Probation Service**
- Representatives of **other local authorities** that can provide examples of best practice
- **Scotland Violence Reduction Unit** (has a good track record of combating knife crime)
- Representatives of other **local organisations** working to deal with knife crime

## 6 Project Risks

The tight timescale necessitates a focused and rigorous approach to the review with an emphasis on identifying ways in which KCC can assist partner organisations to achieve positive outcomes and avoid duplication.

### 7 Recommendations:

1. To agree the Terms of Reference for the review and general approach, including the timetable as set out in paragraph 3, and sources of evidence - both written and oral - as set out in paragraph 5, with any additions agreed by the Committee.
2. The Committee acknowledges the good work already being undertaken by partner organisations to tackle knife crime, and the review will consider ways in which KCC can contribute to achieving positive outcomes.

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