

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2012**

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Brindle,
Mrs Joy, D Mortimer, McLoughlin, Munford, Mrs Parvin
and Vizzard

32. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.

It was resolved that all items be webcast.

33. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillor de Wiggondene.

34. Notification of Substitute Members.

There were no Substitute Members.

35. Notification of Visiting Members.

There were no Visiting Members.

36. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

There were no disclosures.

37. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.

It was agreed that all items be taken on public as proposed.

38. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2012

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2012 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.

39. Update from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership bodies on the Implementation of the CCTV Monitoring Service at the Medway Control Centre.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting, Chief Inspector Jon Bumpus, District Commander for Maidstone, Vikram Sahdev, Head of Business Development, Medway Council, Lynne Goodwin, Operations Manager, Medway Council and John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services.

Mr Sahdev provided an overview of the implementation of the CCTV monitoring service at the Medway Control Centre and the Partnership between Maidstone, Swale and Gravesham Councils.

Mr Sahdev addressed the Committee's concerns informing them that:

- The project had been delivered on time and within budget;
- The six operators from Maidstone had been retained as had the local knowledge that they brought to the team via cross training; and
- Maidstone staffs now had increased pay, were working reduced hours and had suffered no loss of income.

Mr Littlemore informed the Committee that there had been no down time as a result of the move, which had been a concern for Maidstone Borough Council.

Chief Inspector Bumpus responded to Members questions on the impact of the move on the police. He had no issues to raise but told the Committee that he would like the Police be able to download CCTV images remotely. It was explained that this was not part of the current contract with Medway but a solution to this was being developed. Members were informed that the technology existed for this but protocols needed to be in place. The images were owned by Maidstone Borough Council but in order for evidence to be used effectively in court for prosecution strict protocols needed to be established. It was explained that the lead officer working on this was employed by Kent Police and had recently retired. Once the post had been filled this project would resume. The Committee were keen that this should happen as soon as possible and were supportive of the growth and development of the monitoring service.

Mr Littlemore informed the Committee that stakeholder meetings had taken place on a monthly basis and had now been reduced to bi-annual meetings owing to the success of the move. A meeting had taken place the previous evening and stakeholders had been presented with positive monthly statistics provided by the Medway Control Centre showing a breakdown of arrests and occurrences (Appendix A). It was established that the stakeholder meetings were not public meetings. Members felt that future meetings should be advertised to all Councillors.

The Committee considered the use of mobile cameras in the borough. It was informed that mobile cameras were a pooled resources owned by partners within the Community Safety Unit. They were utilised on a temporary basis where there was an evidential need. Requests were made to the Community Safety Unit and cameras were deployed by the PSCO. All cameras were in use at present.

Members discussed the criteria for the permanent placement of fixed cameras in urban and rural areas, including parishes, and asked that this information be provided for them to consider. The Committee considered the purpose and effectiveness of CCTV cameras. It was ascertained that

when the right equipment was used correctly CCTV cameras provided reassurance to the public as well as providing evidence of a crime.

It was clarified that the contract at Medway was for fixed cameras and cameras were monitored in real time. Members considered whether mobile cameras could be used with batteries in areas where they could not be attached to an electrical supply. Mr Littlemore agreed to conduct an inventory to establish how many of the mobile cameras could be used in this way.

The quality of the image was discussed and the importance of this in the use of evidence. Mr Sahdev explained that a technical review of all cameras would be taking place and that operators flagged up any visual discrepancies on an ongoing basis. Members were satisfied with the reporting process at Medway but requested that the results of the technical review be provided to the Committee.

It was reported that a review of broadband cameras and the cost of replacing these was to be undertaken. A report by Mr Littlemore would be going to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure Services in the coming weeks that would address possible savings. The Committee requested the report be circulated electronically for its comments before it went to the Cabinet Member for decision.

Chief Inspector Bumpus provided the Committee with an update on crime figures in Maidstone. Members were informed that there were joint briefings between partners and a strong relationship with door staff in the Town Centre. He expressed how impressed he was by the operation that supported the night-time economy.

Chief Inspector reported the following to the Committee:

- 700 crimes fewer this year than last;
- 22 crimes committed a day (25 the previous year);
- Maidstone had a crime detection rate of 36.8%;
- Maidstone had the highest rate of sanctions in Kent;
- There were 100 fewer violent crimes this year and a detection rate of over 52%; and
- 98.6% of those surveyed felt safe.

The Committee questioned the Chief Inspector on reports that the number of cyclists being injured was increasing. Members considered whether there was a correlation to be found between accidents and sanctions given to cyclists for not wearing a helmet or cycling on the pavement. The Chief Inspector agreed to investigate this and report his findings back to the Committee. Mr Littlemore informed Members that road safety was one of the Safer Maidstone Partnership's four main priorities and that he would raise the matter via this forum.

It was recommended that:

- a) That Maidstone Borough Council and partners pursue a strategy for a live download feed for image collection to assist the police in the gathering of evidence. MBC should work with partners to produce the necessary protocols and produce a written up date to the Committee in 6 months time;
 - i. Chief Inspector Bumpus provide an update as soon as possible on the recruitment of the relevant individual for the post leading on establishing the protocols for a live download feed;
- b) The Head of Housing and Community Services provide the Committee with the criteria used for the installation of fixed CCTV cameras in urban and rural areas of the boroughs;
- c) CCTV stakeholder meetings be advertised to all MBC Members;
- d) The Head of Housing and Community Services should identify how many mobile CCTV cameras can be run on batteries and therefore used in areas without an electricity supply and report his findings back to the Committee via the Scrutiny Officer;
- e) The Committee be advised of the findings of the review of CCTV camera technology being undertaken by the CCTV Partnership within 3-6 months by the Head of Business Improvement at Medway Council;
- f) The CCTV monthly statistics of arrests and occurrences provided by the Medway Control Centre along with the Police Crime Statistics for Maidstone be advertised to the public via the Borough Update and other appropriate publications to increase public perception on crime and offer reassurance;
- g) Chief Inspector Bumpus investigate the correlation between cycling accidents and cycling sanctions and provide the Committee with a written update;
- h) The report of the Head of Housing and Community Service on the use of broadband cameras to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure Services be circulated to the Committee via email for pre decision comment; and
- i) A visit be arranged for the Committee visit the CCTV Control Centre at Medway by the Scrutiny Officer.

40. INFORMATION ONLY: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Protocols