

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 30 JUNE 2020

Present: Councillors M Burton, Joy, Khadka, Mortimer
(Chairman), Powell, Purle, D Rose, M Rose and Young

Also Present: Councillors Grigg and Perry

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillors Grigg and Perry were present as Visiting Members to speak on Item 12 – 2019/20 Strategic Assessment and Revised Community Safety Plan.

5. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

6. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

7. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

8. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

9. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

10. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

12. 2019/20 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND REVISED COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

The Community Protection Manager introduced the report and confirmed that Kent Police Inspector Mark Hedges was in attendance.

The Community Protection Manager highlighted that the strategic assessment included within the report looked at the time period of October 2018 to October 2019 so did not reflect the impact of Covid-19. The strategic assessment had been used to formulate the revised Community Safety Plan with the five priorities listed as violent or organised crime, protecting young people, domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health. It was observed that due to the impact of Covid-19, these priorities would likely become more significant issues.

The Committee were informed that each working group that corresponds to each priority, has its own action plan which was not included in the Community Safety Plan as these are live documents that would often change. An example was given whereby the Domestic Abuse Forum had met weekly since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to ensure victims were being supported.

Councillors Grigg and Perry were in attendance as Visiting Members and addressed the Committee. Specific reference was made to the prevalence of anti-social behaviour and public nuisance within the rural areas of the borough during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. In response, the Community Protection Manager highlighted that the resources used to carry out enforcement techniques needed to be proportionate to the problems experienced. In relation to the increase of needle-finds, the Committee was informed that data would be collated to show the areas that had the highest prevalence, in order that actions could be taken to reduce this.

Inspector Hedges confirmed that there had been an increase of 112% in anti-social behaviour related calls to Kent Police, many of which related to a breach of Covid-19 Government Guidelines. Inspector Hedges highlighted that Kent Police had adopted a four-stage strategy in addressing these issues; to engage with individuals, explain the guidelines, encourage adherence to the guidelines and enforcement. The committee was informed that Kent Police had been graded Outstanding in the recording of 101 calls to the force.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Strategic Assessment, including areas of concern highlighted by Committee and the growing and effective use of powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, be noted; and
2. The revised April 2020 Revision of the Community Safety Plan 2019-22 be approved, and its adoption recommended to Council.

13. DURATION OF MEETING

6.00 p.m. to 6.49 p.m.