

Maidstone Borough Council

External Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 14 July 2009

Community Safety Statistics

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 17 March 2009 the Committee requested that the Community Safety Co-ordinator, David Hewetson, provide the Members with particular statistical evidence. The relevant extract of the minutes is as follows:

“Partners and Communities Together (Formerly Police and Communities Together)

The Chairman invited the Community Safety Co-ordinator, David Hewetson, Sergeant Mick Hayes from Kent Police and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Supervisor Trevor Knowler to outline the progress of Partners and Communities Together (PACT) over the last twelve months.

Mr Hewetson informed the committee that PACT groups provided local residents with the opportunity to identify, to the local partners, their three key priority concerns for the local area. PACT groups then aimed to address these three concerns.

The Committee was told that PACTs continued to receive support and enthusiasm and had assisted in achieving a decrease in crime of 8.2% within the last year. PACTs had adopted a less formal approach to ensure feasibility of adequate public engagement.

Sergeant Mick Hayes identified that PACTs receive more direct support within rural than urban areas of the borough. Within the rural areas the number of PACTs and the resources available for each had increased. There were 33 PACTs established within the 16 rural wards of Maidstone as opposed to only 1 within each of the borough's urban wards. Within the rural areas of Maidstone PACT surgeries had been held, within each ward, monthly and letter drops were carried out regularly. Urban areas tended to rely more heavily on the support of local PCSOs to encourage community engagement.

The PACTs identify three priorities for the local area. Kent Police assisted in a number of campaigns which had involved the local media as a result of priorities identified through PACT meetings. Recently, “Operation Reconsider” was publicised with the aim of discouraging heavy goods vehicles from using roads which they

may easily damage. Kent Police had also recently assisted the local PACT at Grove Green to carry out a litter pick. In answer to a question concerning the decline in attendance at PACT meetings, Mr Hewetson suggested that this may reflect resident's increased satisfaction with their local area.

The Committee were informed by Mr Knowles, that PACTs had been less successful in urban areas. PCSOs however encouraged community engagement, within urban areas, without the requirement of attending monthly PACT meetings.

The Committee were in agreement that within rural areas, fear of crime had decreased and satisfaction of policing had improved. The Committee requested that they be provided with figures which enabled a comparison of crime figures between the urban and rural areas. In response to a question Mr Knowles confirmed that PCSOs were able to monitor more than one ward, ensuring regular PCSO presence. The Committee was informed that Kent Police had liaised with Parish Councils and attended community events such as tea and coffee mornings.

Mr Hewetson recognised that young people may be more difficult to engage with, however the Safer Maidstone Partnership had worked with the Multi-Agency Youth Development Action Group (MAYDAG) in order to ensure the involvement of younger people. The Committee was also informed that MAYDAG provided funding for a number of outreach workers. A Member questioned whether enough work had been carried out with regard to the area surrounding Shepway South shops, which had a bad reputation with regard to anti social behaviour. The Cabinet Member for Community Services requested that these concerns be raised at the next Safer Maidstone Partnership, partnership and tasking group, and a response be given directly to the relevant Councillor.

David Hewetson presented the Committee with statistical data relating to PACT and crime issues. It was identified that speeding featured most frequently as a priority for the PACTs, during 2008/09. The CDRP performance report was presented and it was indicated that perception of crime within the borough had fallen suggesting that the work of PACTs was beneficial. It was requested that the Committee be informed as to why crime associated with the night time economy had increased.

Members congratulated Kent Police on the success of the PACT scheme.

Resolved:

That the Community Safety Co-ordinator David Hewetson:

provide the Committee with data enabling a comparison of the crime figures within the rural and urban areas of the Borough.

provide the Committee with greater information with regard to the increase in night time crime and how Maidstone's night time crime rate compares to the Kent average.

provide figures with regard to primary and secondary fires, which enable a comparison of winter and summer months.

David Hewetson and Kent Police report back to the External OSC in six months time to provide the Committee with an update of crime rates within the Borough.

The concerns of Councillor Mrs Williams and Councillor Ring with regard to the perceived lack of police presence in particular areas of Shepway South, be raised at the next meeting of the Partnership and Tasking group and a response be given to Councillor Mrs Williams."

- 1.2 The please find attached the requested statistical information.
2. **Recommendation:**
 - 2.1 The Committee is recommended to note the information.