

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH
2022

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Joy, McKenna, Mortimer,
Newton, M Rose, S Webb (Chairman) and Young

Also Present: Councillor Mrs Blackmore

170. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Purle.

171. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Mrs Blackmore was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Purle.

Note: at the time of the meeting, Councillor Mrs Blackmore was not a designated Substitute Member of the Committee.

172. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

173. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

174. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

175. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

176. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

177. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

178. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

179. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

180. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

181. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

182. THE 2022-2025 COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN AND STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The Community Protection Team Manager introduced the report and outlined the core priorities of the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP). The comprehensive strategic assessment used data from across the partnership and included trends, impacts of the pandemic and key findings from the public surveys undertaken in 2021. The work and impact of the Task Force was outlined, and a significant reduction in crime had been noted in the Shepway area. However certain crimes which included violent crime and anti-social behaviour remained an area of concern in the community. It was confirmed that information on the youth survey within the Community Safety Plan (CSP) would be expanded to clarify that 80% of respondents were from one school and were female.

In response to questions, the Community Protection Team Manager confirmed that the Town Centre Task Force (TCTF) would be focused around the BID area. Many of the issues faced within Maidstone presented around activities and opportunities in the town centre. The TCTF would provide a mechanism for partners to use resources in a joined-up way, and to create a collective effort in enforcement and challenge of undesirable behaviour. An increase in crime statistics might be seen as crimes may be reported that would not have been previously but the long-term objectives were to reduce harmful crime and anti-social behaviour.

In response to concerns raised about tackling crime in rural areas, it was clarified that existing resources would be utilised more efficiently and therefore more effectively, rather than resources being added in the town centre. Therefore, there would not be a great impact on the rural communities as the level of policing would not change. In rural areas, the public were relied upon to report crimes so that action could be taken, and current resources were highlighted including Ward cluster meetings and

reporting tools such as Crimestoppers and My Community Voice. A contact sheet would also be provided to Borough and Parish Councillors to facilitate efficient reporting of concerns.

Alongside the addition of five new School Police Officers, an online equivalent of the Safety in Action training was being developed for school-age children, and it was acknowledged that this type of training had not been carried out during the pandemic.

The Committee felt that the CSP Plan and the strategic assessment was thorough and that the Task Force approach for the town centre was a positive step towards facilitating the effective management of crime in the town centre, although further information on preventative elements would be made ahead of the submission of the CSP Plan to Council for adoption.

RESOLVED: That delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing and Community Services to amend the draft Community Safety Plan 2022-25, as per the Committee's comments and in consultation with the Chairman / Vice Chairman of the Committee, ahead of its submission to Council.

183. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 7.34pm.