

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 21 February 2023  
Time: 7.00 p.m., or at the conclusion of the Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee Meeting, whichever is the later.

Venue: Town Hall, High Street Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors English (Chairman), Cannon (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Blackmore,  
Brice, Cleator, Conyard, Garten, Hastie, Hinder, Jeffery,  
Knatchbull, McKenna and T Wilkinson

*The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the  
meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.*

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<b><u>AGENDA</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 20 December 2022	1 - 5
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Question and Answer session for Local Residents (if any)	
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
12. Briefing Note - Safety in the Town Centre Review	6 - 12

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**Issued on Monday 13 February 2023**

**Continued Over/:**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

## INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 17 February 2023). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

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## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2022

##### Attendees:

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Councillors English (Chairman), Cannon, Brice, Cleator, Conyard, Garten, Hastie, Jeffery, Knatchbull, McKenna, T Wilkinson and Brindle</b>
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59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Hinder and McKenna.

60. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Brindle was present as Substitute for Councillor Hinder.

61. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that there were two urgent updates to Item 12 – Safety Review – Internal Stakeholder Consultation, which were the Communications Team’s Communications and Engagement Plan and written evidence from Housing Associations operating within the Town Centre. The documents related to the Committee’s evidence collection process.

62. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

63. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

In relation to Item 12 – Safety Review – Internal Stakeholder Consultation, Councillor Brice stated that she was a Council Representative to the One Maidstone BID Advisory Board.

64. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

65. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

66. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2022

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 October 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the ‘TCTF’ being referred to as the ‘Town Centre Task Force’ in the first instance.

67. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

68. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

69. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

70. SAFETY REVIEW - INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and highlighted the example questions contained within point 2.7 of the report. The review's timeline and the urgent updates provided were briefly outlined.

The attendees were as follows, with each attendee having briefly introduced themselves and their role at the Council:

- Julie Maddocks, Communications Manager
- Martyn Jeynes, Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager
- John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services

The attendees were asked for their views on the progress made to Town Centre Safety; the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services stated that public safety had been improved across the day-and-night-time economies. The requests made by the previous Communities, Housing and Environment Committee had been actioned in recognition of the previous concerns raised.

The Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager emphasised that the Town Centre Task Force (TCTF) had implemented fundamental actions to improve public safety but recognised that some of these may be long-term. The short-term actions, such as youth hub provision and increased communications were briefly outlined. Individuals were beginning to actively challenge against negative perceptions of the Town Centre.

The Communications Manager stated that Town Centre Safety had been a priority for their team across the past 12 months, with 16 press releases produced relating to Community Protection, Public Safety, Enforcement and Waste Crime. The 'Safer Streets' funding had enabled further advertising through posters and banners, with a radio campaign beginning on 23 December 2022. The Stay Connected Newsletters through the GovDelivery system and the Council's Borough Insight Magazine were outlined as additional methods to providing information to local residents. The communication with external stakeholders and partnership organisations had improved across the last year.

All attendees noted the difficulty in improving the Town Centre's reputation, but that progress was being made.

The Committee reiterated the need to ensure that the communications produced promoted the positive actions and achievements of the Council, particularly as

negative press often attracted greater attention, acting to outweigh the positive communications produced.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services stated that they would provide a written response to the Committee on the suitability of Licensing Officers attending the Town Centre Street Scene meetings; provided that the team were given sufficient notice, they could attend those meetings where appropriate. The liaison between the Council's Licensing and Community Safety Teams and Kent Police was excellent, with the teams co-located to assist in partnership working.

The Committee strongly expressed concern at violence and crime directed at women and young girls and the need to challenge inappropriate behaviour. In response, the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services referenced the long-term aspirations of the work currently being undertaken, such as educating young men and boys, in improving public safety.

The Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager stated that they and their colleagues had recently visited the Town Centre during a Friday evening, to directly engage with women and ask for them to complete a safety survey; cup covers were also distributed. In response to questions, it was stated that whilst it was difficult to numerically record incidents of spiking, due to its similarity with other incidents such as excessive drinking and there sometimes being a reluctance to report the crime due to its traumatic nature, there was not a significant spiking problem within Maidstone. The positive work conducted by Urban Blue and Street Pastors was mentioned.

The specifics of the survey undertaken in preparation for the current Community Safety Partnership had been shared with Kent Police, and the survey results, combined with the data held on police crime statistics, was used to assist the Council in securing the Safer Streets Funding. The Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager would follow-up with Kent Police on the feedback received, to provide further information to the Committee.

In response to further questions, the Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager stated that most young people did not live in the town centre and commuted from other local areas. The Maidstone Task Force based in Marden would be working with the British Transport Police in the new year to review young people's use of trains across the borough.

The success of Maidstone's policing had been demonstrated through those police officers' attendance in Snodland to address criminal activity in the area. Kent Police's ongoing Neighbourhood Policing Review was highlighted, with the Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager confident that the model implemented would work, as it was similar to that already implemented in Maidstone.

The attendees were questioned on the work being conducted within schools. The Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager stated that this was a challenge, but that work was progressing to include the provision of Active Bystander training in the new year. There were 40 youth workers, youth outreach officers and school staff delivering the previously mentioned Boys2Men training to challenge unacceptable behaviour. The importance of early intervention and education was re-emphasised.

Several Members of the Committee questioned the attendees on the actions taken by Housing Associations (HA) in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB), following the urgent updated provided. In response, the Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager outlined the good working relationship between the town centre HAs and the TCTF, with the HAs often attending the twice-weekly TCTF meetings to discuss individuals and locations of concern. During the Covid-19 pandemic an individual planning model was implemented to address five town centre buildings where inappropriate behaviour was taking place; three of the plans had since been closed due to the significant improvement shown, which included a marked reduction in ambulance attendance. The HA's management of its properties and tenants had improved, with an example given of how HAs assisted in identifying issues of domestic abuse, with the Council able to provide information on support services through its Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator. The Council's Domestic Abuse One-Stop Shops had also been publicised.

The Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager highlighted that whilst HAs possessed some powers to tackle ASB, their main power was their ability to end a tenancy. HAs would attempt to address ASB before ending a tenancy agreement was considered. The Head of Housing and Regulatory Services emphasised the importance of supporting tenants before eviction was considered, given the context of the legislative requirements, public sector duties and ensuring an understanding of the impacts associated with a tenancy's termination action. This was particularly important where the individual responsible for ASB was a victim of ASB themselves. The Housing Management sector had significantly improved its services over the past 30 years. For example, HAs and Local Authorities (LA) now exchanged good practice; this was facilitated in Maidstone through the Kent Housing Group.

The Head of Housing and Regulatory Services stated that the HAs contacted held between 50-200 units, with a written update on the exact units held to be provided outside of the meeting.

In response to Member concerns on out of area placements, the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services explained that other LAs had a statutory duty to inform the Council if they have placed an individual within the Maidstone Borough. It was not uncommon for the Council to become aware of the placement when an individual required support. There was no statutory power available to the Council to prevent in-area placements, but the Council took action where those properties fell below housing standards. The Council would persist in contacting the relevant LAs, to actively challenge against inappropriate placements. The Council could only advise the client on taking legal action against the placement, and clients did not often feel confident in doing so.

The attendees were asked for their views on the requested submitted by the External Stakeholders as outlined in Appendix 2 to the report. In response, the Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager stated that the requests reflected the actions included within the Council's Community Safety Plan and those being implemented in practice with the TCTF. Further details on the organisations represented on the Local Children's Partnership Group Forum and its meeting schedule were provided.

The Communications Manager stated that the Council used all communications channels available to promote the work undertaken. The importance of building

upon the established relationships with the Council's partner organisations was emphasised, with it stated that this was successful. During the evidence collection, the Committee expressed support for the actions undertaken.

The attendees thanked the Committee for its support and engagement as part of its review.

**RESOLVED:** That the Safety Review be contributed at the next available meeting of the Committee.

Note: Councillor Brice left the meeting at 8.22 p.m.

71. DURATION OF MEETING

7.15 p.m. to 8.38 p.m.

Note: The Committee adjourned between 8.22 p.m. to 8.27 p.m. for a short break.

# Agenda Item 12

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee – 21 February 2023**

### **Safety in the Town Centre Review – Briefing Note**

The Committee commenced its review into Safety in the Town Centre in October 2022. It met twice in October and once in December to continue the review.

The aim of the review was to:

*'review existing [safety] measures to identify any required changes'*

To complete the review and allow its submission to the Executive before the end of the Municipal Year, the Committee will need to produce any recommended actions and intended outcomes during the 21 February 2023 meeting.

A range of supporting written and verbal information has been provided by internal and external stakeholders throughout the review. To review this, please use the links provided in the 'background information' section of this note.

To support the Committee, a summary of the evidence provided, and Committee sentiment expressed across the above-mentioned meetings has been included as Appendix 1. The Communications and Community Protection Teams have also provided suggestions for the Committee to consider if it wishes to.

Appendix 2 includes a guidance note on recommendations, following the Committee's previous comments on producing recommendations with greater direction and achievable outcomes.

#### Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Summary of review evidence and Committee sentiments.

Appendix 2 – Guidance Note on Recommendations.

Appendix 3 – Scope of the Review

#### Background Information:

6 October 2022 Meeting, Agenda papers and minutes:

[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

18 October 2022 Meeting, Agenda papers and minutes:

[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

20 December 2022 Meeting, Agenda papers and minutes:

[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)



Appendix 2 – Summary of review evidence and Committee sentiments.

The below information provides a summary of the review evidence and Committee sentiment expressed across the meetings held as part of the Safety in the Town Centre Review.

The Communications and Community Protection Teams have also provided suggested actions for the Committee to consider if it wishes to, in the 'possible actions' column.

Meeting Date	Evidence Provided	Brief Sentiments expressed	Possible Actions
6 October 2022	<p><u>At the meeting:</u> Presentation and Q&amp;A session with:</p> <p>Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager (MBC)</p> <p>Youth Hub Delivery Manager (KCC)</p> <p>Partnership Sergeant, Community Safety Partnership (Kent Police)</p> <p><u>Appendix and Agenda Papers</u></p> <p>Extract from Community Safety Plan</p> <p>Extracts from Town Centre Strategy Data Pack</p>	<p>Greater communication on achievements of Town Centre Task Force</p> <p>Importance of Members continuing to report crimes witnessed.</p>	<p>Continue regular Meetings with Kent Police Press Office.</p> <p>Request to Kent Police Press Office promote the multi-agency work of the TCTF.</p> <p>Request Kent Police publicise their community engagement plans, to allow the Council to align its actions to this.</p> <p>Encourage all Members to sign up to the 'My Community Voice' facility provided by Kent Police.</p> <p>Provision of contact details for reporting mechanisms.</p>

Appendix 2 – Summary of review evidence and Committee sentiments.

<p>18 October 2022</p>	<p><u>At the meeting:</u></p> <p><u>Q&amp;A session with</u></p> <p>Martyn Jeynes, Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager (Maidstone Borough Council)</p> <p>Mark McLellan, District Commander (Kent Police) Steve Kent, Inspector (Kent Police)</p> <p>Ellen Shaw, Youth Hub Delivery Manager Maidstone (Kent County Council)</p> <p>Ilsa Butler, Bid Manager (One Maidstone)</p> <p>Emma Price, Violence Reduction Unit Co-Ordinator (Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit)</p> <p><u>Agenda Papers</u> Appendix 1 - Themes identified from the Member Briefing (6 October 2022) Appendix 2 - Presentation provided at the 6 October 2022 Meeting</p>	<p>Emphasised the importance of improved communications; specific reference to successful interventions, partnership working, provision of youth services, and contact details for partner organisations and council services such as Domestic Abuse support.</p> <p>Members to continue reporting crime.</p> <p>Members role in supporting the services provided and engaging with young people directly and through raising work undertaken with their political groups.</p> <p>Further information on delivery of training, such as Boys2Men and Active Bystander.</p> <p>Concern expressed over increased Nitrous Oxide use.</p>	<p>For updated Communications Plan to be circulated – all elements of communications work outlined.</p> <p>Encourage all Members to sign up to Stay Connected online newsletters.</p> <p>Recommend that the Lead Member investigate the possibility of an Annual Community Safety Partnership Event with all partners.</p> <p>See suggestion concerning Stay Connected Newsletter.</p> <p>Member representative engaging with Youth Forum.</p> <p>Provision of Member &amp; Officer Training – ByStander Training.</p>
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Appendix 2 – Summary of review evidence and Committee sentiments.

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<p>20 December 2022</p>	<p><u>At the Meeting:</u></p> <p><u>Q&amp;A session with:</u></p> <p>Julie Maddocks, Communications Manager Martyn Jeynes, Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services</p> <p><u>Agenda Papers</u></p> <p>Appendix 1 – Scope</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Requests from external stakeholders that attended 18 October 2022 meeting.</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Themes identified from the 6 and 18 October 2022 meetings</p> <p>Urgent Updates: Communications Plan 2022-23 &amp; Responses from Housing Providers.</p>	<p>Reiterated need to ensure communications produced promoted positive actions and achievements of the Council.</p> <p>Concern expressed at violence and crime directed at women and young girls and the need to challenge inappropriate behaviour.</p> <p>Support expressed for the actions taken by the Council and its partners.</p>	<p>Specific actions within Communications Plan - see above communications focused suggestions.</p> <p>Communications and engagement actions contained within Communications Plan (April 2023).</p> <p>Safer Streets funded initiatives to be delivered by the relevant partners.</p> <p>Continue engaging with Council activities, such as briefings.</p>
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**Guidance note - Making Quality Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations**

Scrutiny recommendations should seek to make a real difference to local people and the services provided.

Recommendations that note a change or request further information should be carefully considered against whether they will resolve a problem and/or lead to changes.

To assist the Committee, the following criteria have been identified for quality recommendations.

Do the recommendations:

- affect and make a difference to local people?
- result in a change in policy and/or actions that improves services?
- identify savings and maintain/improve service quality? or
- objectively identify a solution.

Good recommendations should answer the below questions, to provide recommendations that can be easily monitored and evaluated in the future.

<b>Who is being asked to do it?</b>	To ensure ownership of the action
<b>What needs to be done?</b>	The recommendation needs to be clear and specific.
<b>Why does it need to be done?</b>	This will help ensure the outcome is relevant and in the right context
<b>How will it be done?</b>	To include how it will be done and what the expected output is.
<b>Where does it need to be done/go?</b>	If it's a meeting – where is it needed If it's a report – where is it to go, who needs to see it
<b>When does it need to be done?</b>	What is the timescale? To ensure an action is completed in good time.

<p><u>Proposed Topic</u></p> <p>Safety and Enforcement.</p> <p>Safety aspect to be looked at first, followed by enforcement (two separate but related reviews) and take place at formal Committee Meetings.</p>
<p><u>Description and Reason for Review</u></p> <p>Description</p> <p>Review into safety and Council's provision of enforcement services, to identify actions and/or policies for implementation to improve these services.</p> <p>Reason for Review</p> <p>At its previous meeting the committee agreed to conduct a review into the topics, with the aspects of safety relating to the town centre and the night-time economy.</p> <p>A suggestion to review enforcement was also put forward by the Executive, with the Lead Member for Environmental Services in attendance indicating Committee input into the resourcing of enforcement would be welcomed.</p>
<p><u>Link to Priorities</u></p> <p>Strategic Priorities: Safe Clean and Green A Thriving Place</p> <p>Executive Priorities: Maintaining a tough stance on crime and anti-social behaviour, working closely with the Police and utilising the Council's own powers and resources.</p> <p>Other: Aligns with Executive proposal to review enforcement alongside support expressed at the meeting by the Lead Member for Environmental Services.</p>
<p><u>Safety Review (Primary Review)</u></p> <p>Review to be carried out at Committee.</p> <p>To include safety in the town centre and the night-time economy; <b>review of existing measure to identify any required changes (lines of enquiry).</b></p> <p><u>Approach:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Overview and Scrutiny Member Briefing – 6 October 2022 (briefing note to be provided)</li></ol>

## 2. Evidence Collection: Town Centre Safety

18 October 2022 meeting – External Stakeholder Evidence Collection

- Mid-Kent College
- The Mall
- Housing Providers
- Youth Forum

22 November 2022 meeting – Internal Stakeholders (now December 2022)

- Communications Team
- Economic Development Team
- Chairman of the CHE PAC
- Lead Member for Communities and Engagement
- Evidence from previous resident surveys.

Please see the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2022, whereby the Committee agreed to conduct the Night-Time Economy aspect of the review as a separate review.

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Night-time Economy

Evidence Collection

(as above)

- Kent Police, including Licensing Officer
- Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager
- Licensing Officers (MBC)
- Chairman and Vice-Chair of Licensing Committee
- Other groups associated with night-time economy
- Consider results from previous resident surveys
- Night-Time economy forum (One Maidstone)
- Street pastors & Urban Blue

Virtual attendance provided to consultees.

NOTE: The proposed timescales and stakeholders to be consulted may be subject to change as the review progresses. This may be due to overlap between safety and the night-time economy.