

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2015

Present: Councillors Mrs Joy, D Mortimer, Round, Sargeant, Mrs Stockell, Vizzard and B Watson

Also Present: Councillor Mrs Blackmore

86. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEB-CAST

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

87. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies were received from Councillor Newton.

88. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

89. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Blackmore was in attendance as a Visiting Member.

90. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures.

91. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

92. MINUTES OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2014.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2014 be noted.

93. MAIDSTONE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2013 - 2018

The Chairman welcomed the following witnesses to the meeting to discuss the draft Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2018:

- Alison Broom, Chairman, Safer Maidstone Partnership;
- Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishley;
- Chief Inspector Mice Gardener, Vice-Chairman, Safer Maidstone Partnership;
- John Littlemore, Head of Housing Community Services;
- Sarah Robson, Community Safety Officer, Maidstone Borough Council;
- Inspector Jody Gagan-Cook, Kent Police; and
- Kim Salisbury, Maidstone Mediation.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) updated the Committee. They were informed of the SMP's five key areas of focus and its four subsidiary priorities, identified through the strategic assessment process:

Priorities

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Reducing reoffending
- Road Safety
- Substance Misuse
- Violent Crime – domestic abuse
- Violent Crime – night-time economy
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Subsidiary Priorities

- Safeguarding, educating and engaging young people
- Hoarding and Self Neglect
- Legal Highs
- Victim Support and Restorative Justice

The following points were highlighted:

- Changes to anti-social behaviour (ASB) Legislation, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 had come into force.
- In line with new ASB legislation, Public Spaces Protection Orders were being trialled.
- There had been a continued reduction in ASB.
- Funding had been given by the Police Crime Commissioner to address issues of restorative justice.
- There was a focus by the partnership on legal highs.
- Local initiatives on alcohol included 'reduce the booze' and similar initiatives were in place for substance misuse.
- The Maidstone Trigger was a process that let you ask your local Community Safety Partnership to review responses to incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- There was support for rural areas in terms of community policing, with a number of recent PSCO appointments.

Particular mention was given to of Angela Painter and the Kenward Trust and its contribution to the partnership.

A number of initiatives were being introduced around Violent Crime (domestic abuse). Inspector Gagan-Cook informed the Committee on a project to stop repeat domestic abuse cases. It involved working with a men's group at the Fusion Café in Parkwood. A course for perpetrators was being put in place and training for 16 people was being undertaken to deliver it. Funding was being sought from the Police Crime Commissioner. There was also a project called 'engage' that involved diversionary activities with young people.

It was reported that there had been an increase in Violent Crime (night time economy). Members raised concerns about the way in which this information was presented. It was understood that the crimes were committed in the Town Centre; however, the way in which incidents were recorded attributed them to the High Street ward as a whole. It was felt that the draft Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2018 should specify Town Centre.

Sarah Robson updated the Committee on Maidstone's street population. The Committee was given a case study showing the progress that had been with a female, aged 26 with long term substance misuse. The case study (at appendix A) detailed the progress made over a two year period. In response to Member's questions, the Committee was told that persistence was the key to success in these cases as well as trust.

Sam Scales, Community Safety Officer, presented a case study on self-neglect and hoarding (at appendix B) involving an 83 year old female. She described the process and involvement of various partners over a two year period. The first intervention was in 2013, made by Environmental Health, following a noise complaint and report of rats. It described the relationship established by Environmental Health Officers and an Age UK officer. Progress was slow due to lack of trust and engagement by the resident.

Members felt that there was an opportunity with all interventions made to address cases of loneliness and isolation. It was recommended that a multi-agency checklist was created which included loneliness and isolation.

Kim Salisbury from Maidstone Mediation informed the Committee on the work undertaken by Maidstone Mediation with restorative justice. It was explained that mediation was available for anyone to access; the organisation accepted self-referrals as well as referrals from agencies. The following was highlighted to the Committee:

- Restorative conferencing in schools tackled conflicts between the pupil, parents and the school.
- Mediation was also a way of dealing with some adolescent crimes that occurred within families, such as theft. Self-referrals could prevent young people being criminalised.
- 31 schools in Maidstone delivered Peer Mediation, trained by Maidstone Mediation.

- Maidstone Mediation's Schools Co-ordinator had been invited as far as South Africa to deliver Peer Meditation training.

Sarah Robson informed the Committee that training for frontline practitioners within the SMP was to be provided by Maidstone Mediation. There would also be a partnership with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council that would bring together techniques for those involved in community engagement.

The changes to the way in which crime statistics were reported was addressed as were the concerns over cuts to police budgets. Crime statistics in Kent were no longer compared with the same period the previous year, but instead compared against anticipated volumes calculated using the seasonality of crimes during the past five year period.

In response to Member's questions on budget cuts Chief Superintendent Steve Corbishley told the Committee that there was a commitment for the next two year to maintain a district based policing structure. He informed members that the police would adapt to the challenges on resources. He explained that it was not so much about addressing rising crime but changing crimes; hidden crimes such as human trafficking and child sex crimes. This was something that was echoed by the SMP; that going forward the structure of the SMP would change and be refreshed. It would continue to be a dynamic organisation, open to new ideas.

Concerns were raised about the lack of engagement with the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group and the SMP. Mrs Broom reassured the Committee that every effort had been made by the SMP but that she would address the issue in person at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED: that

1. The way in which Violent Crime (night time economy) is reported is attributed to the High Street ward as a whole. The Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-18 should specify Town Centre for accuracy.
2. A multi-agency checklist is created for all interventions made by the Safer Maidstone Partnership that includes loneliness and isolation.
3. A 'scene setting' introduction be included in the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2018 to offer a more proportional and balanced view of Maidstone in the context of the statistical information presented in the document.

94. INFORMATION ONLY: MAIDSTONE PROTOCOLS FOR CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

95. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 8.20pm