

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2016 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Campbell (Chairman); Councillors Falcon, Hayton, Martin,
D Saunders and M Saunders

In Attendance: Councillors Savage and Stummer-Schmertzling

5. ELECT CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

Members agreed that Councillor Campbell chairs the meeting in the absence of Councillor Curran, Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership Working Party.

Councillor Campbell in the chair.

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Councillor Dixon;
Councillor Curran, substituted by Councillor D. Saunders.

7. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

8. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Falcon proposed, Councillor M. Saunders seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting that was held on 03 October 2016.

9. SEXUAL OFFENCES VICTIMS SUPPORT IN THANET

Victim Support Presentation

David Naylor, Contract Account Manager, introduced the item for debate and gave an overview of the work of Victim Support at a national level as well as at Thanet level. Mr Naylor said that the organisation did not receive every crime type hence there was no detail about statistics for Thanet. They work with victims whether the case would have been classified as a crime or not.

The organisation started in Bristol and has been working in Kent for over thirty years. The work of the VS in Kent is funded by the PCC and is contracted till 2019 with the potential for a further three years in 12 month contract periods. The local Victim Support office is based in Ashford but does cover Thanet and the team is made up of permanent staff and volunteers. There are specialist volunteers who support victims of domestic abuse, child abuse and sexual crime. Mr Naylor made further comments that:

- Victim Support provides emotional support (but it is not counselling relationship);
- There has been a rise in domestic abuse in Kent (25% in the first quarter);
- This likely to be largely because of the awareness created by the Police that has led to victims coming forward and to report;
- People aged up to 44 years are at higher risk of online fraud than older people;
- Hate crime stats have gone back to the trend before 23 June 2016;
- Victim Support works with victims of Anti-Social Behaviour;

- Individuals with disability have a 30-40% higher chance of being victims than those individuals without disability;
- The organisation is partly funded by the Home Office (at the national level) as well as from their fund raising activities.

Next Steps

Mr Naylor said that Victim Support were looking at finding ways to provide more support to residents in Thanet. They would need a room to work from on given days of the week and have been working with Cllr Falcon to explore options in Ramsgate for a new Compass Point.

One Member suggested that the Victims support approach and work in partnership with an organisation called the Place To Be who are carrying out some great work with placement of children in schools and supporting these children.

East Kent Rape Crisis Centre

Jane Skeets, representing East Kent Rape Crisis Centre provided the second part of the joint presentation. Ms Skeets said that the organisation had only recently been changed from being a help line to a fully fledged organisation that provided face to face services to victims of abuse, whilst still providing the help line service. The majority of the service users were women and the organisation provides counselling services. Ms Skeets further said that:

- The organisation provides specialist services;
- All the volunteers were specialists;
- There were 40 volunteers working for EK Rape Crisis Centre;
- The organisation is funded by the Home Office, but the funding is now precarious as the Home Office was now un the process of devolving some of their work to PCCs;
- They are also funded by the NHS and Comic Relief;
- They get referrals from the Police;
- In 2014 there were 314 referrals and in 2016 there have been 700 referrals;
- They help individual victims to decide whether they wanted to take their cases to court or not;
- Working with one victim could take up to 18-24 months (if the case went to court);
- Although the Thanet cases constituted 25% of the help line workload, only 18% of face to face contact is with Thanet residents;
- This low figure shows that Thanet residents find it difficult to access the EK Rape Crisis Centre counselling services because the offices are based in Canterbury, possibly due to transport costs;
- Although they have a child counsellor funded by the NHS, the demand for such services had increased;
- There were close working relationship between Victim Support and the EK Rape Crisis Centre.

In response to the presentation Members suggested that the EK Rape Crisis Centre sough funding through their own fund raising activities, including crowd funding. Mr Naylor said that the dilemma was that fundraising required significant investment in order to ensure that the fund raising activity was viable option.

Ms Skeets advised that they were looking at developing satellite offices Thanet and other district, which would enable the organisation to attend to appointments for Thanet residents, one day per week. That would cost £188+rent per session that cover five to six individuals.

In summing up debate, Councillor Campbell, Chairman of the working party said that Members could come up with recommendations in view of the presentations made to date regarding sexual victims support facilities in Thanet.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor David Saunders seconded and Members agreed to recommend to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel the following that:

Thanet District Council approach town councils in Thanet to provide funding for £188 one day per week, EK Rape Crisis Centre counselling services if Thanet District Council would provide a room for the counselling sessions.

Councillor Martin proposed, Councillor Campbell seconded and Members agreed the following that:

Approaches are made to the Place To Be to provide their free children services to schools in Thanet.

Members also agreed that a letter be written to the PCC to raise concern about the changes to policing in the area and write a letter advising the PCC that approaches were being made to town councils in Thanet to support the EK Rape Crisis Centre and inquire if the Commissioner was willing to work with town councils in this effort.

Members further agreed that the next topic for consideration was Anti Social Behaviour Legislation, which would include a look at the changes made with particular reference to the Public Protection Orders. They requested for a meeting in the third or fourth week of January 2017.

Meeting concluded: 8.45 pm