

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2015 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Jeffrey Elenor (Chairman); Councillors Bambridge,
Campbell, Curran, Dixon, Falcon and Martin

In Attendance: Councillors: Collins and Smith

90. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Dixon proposed, Councillor Martin seconded and Members agreed that Councillor Jeffrey Elenor be the chairman of the Community Safety Partnership Working Party.

Councillor Elenor in the Chair.

91. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

92. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

93. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Dixon seconded and Members agreed the minutes to be a true record of the proceedings of the meeting that was held on 2 July 2015.

94. PERFORMANCE REPORT ON TACKLING THE DRIVERS OF CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Mr Martyn Cassell introduced the item and highlighted the following as key themes of the current Thanet Community Safety Plan for 2015-16:

1. Safeguarding people vulnerable to committing or being a victim of crime;
2. Reducing reoffending;
3. Tackling drivers of crime and anti-social behaviour;
4. Engaging with Partners and the Community.

Out of these key priorities were twelve emerging issues to focus and thirty action points to implement during 2015/16. In their first meeting the working group agreed to look at one priority at each meeting over the course of the year.

Chief Inspector Sharon Adley then led the first presentation on the 'Tackling Drivers of Crime and ASB priority'. She said that in the current safety plan the Police were focusing on tackling drivers of crime, particularly alcohol and substance misuse.

Chief Inspector Adley said that partnership working is key to fighting crime. The plan focussed partners on a range of subjects with alcohol and substance misuse being a major one.

- Police were working on early intervention approaches to reduce anti-social behaviour using new legislation, particularly the Dispersal Orders. Dispersal Orders were effectively used during this summer.
- Trading Standards and Police have worked together on operations to tackle underage sales and the sale of new psychoactive substances often referred to as “legal” or “lethal highs”.
- The partnership funded the Community Pastors project which sees volunteers from Thanet churches assisting those who may be vulnerable during the night time economy. A special operation was done as part of folk week festivities.
- Police officers in Thanet wear body worn cameras which assists them in the prevention and detection of crime and ASB. Licensed premises are also being encouraged to utilise this technology for their door staff.

Members of the working group had also asked Chief Inspector Adley to report on possible increase in gang related activities in the district. It was explained that this subject actually sat in the Safeguarding theme that will be discussed at a future meeting but there was cross over amongst all of the priorities.

A number of initiatives were introduced by Government following the summer of riots in 2011. The Home Office created the Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme (EGYV) that focussed on the areas most in need of support (generally the metropolitan areas and key cities). Learning from this programme showed that this was a national problem and elements of gang culture existed in every town and city. This mainly centres around ‘drug franchises’ and there was growing trend across the country of these moving into areas with high demand.

When the Home Office extended the programme to areas that wanted to benefit from the shared learning, Thanet voluntarily signed up to the scheme in order to proactively plan for any future issues. This means police and TDC take part in monthly teleconferences with the original EGYV areas and share good practice. Inspector Mark Pearson, who works with the Margate Task Force advised Members that a number of good initiatives were already in place in the district.

Neighbourhood Responsibility Panels were working with vulnerable individuals to provide them with multi agency wrap-around support to protect these individuals from harm. Mapping of whole streets through ‘Street Week’ operations was being done and regular enforcement operations were undertaken. It was important to continue to work towards effective strategies for partnership working and identifying drivers of crime to come up with effective interventions.

Members asked the following questions:

1. Does crime come from the local population generation or have dynamics changed?
2. Will the Margate Task Force initiative be extended to other Thanet areas?
3. Are loan sharks being considered as part of the drivers of crime?
4. Can information on Thanet District crime statistics to include local crime demographic be provided to the working party?
5. Policing on beaches and town areas?
6. Was there anticipation that there will be a spike in domestic violence due to the new ‘Benefits System,’ particularly towards Christmas?

Officers offered the following responses:

1. Crime in the area was being committed by both home grown and other individuals from other areas. Individuals may be coming from high cost metropolitan areas to Thanet. However Thanet District Council was doing a great job with the Selective Licensing Scheme which helped reduce crime in those areas designated for the scheme.

2. Senior managers in each of the key agencies have just agreed a new direction and governance and it would result in a bigger co-located Community Safety team of officers based at the Council offices. This will bring the Community Safety Partnership and Margate Taskforce together with wider benefits on using good practice from both. Street Week exercises were now being conducted in Ramsgate's Central Harbour and Eastcliff wards. Ward Councillors will be updated when this happens in future.
3. The Margate Task Force and Community Safety Partnership promoted community awareness regarding loan sharks in last year's plan. Enforcement proceedings were executed in instances where known loan sharks were identified. Credit Unions were being promoted and the team was working with the Citizens Advice Bureau.
4. This was previously provided but hadn't been requested in the setting of terms of reference meeting at the start of the year. TDC and Kent Police will work on a report on crime statistics to be brought to future meetings of the working party.
5. Officers agreed that future Summer Policing Plan will include ensuring that noisy partying during day time from visitors to Thanet beaches will be monitored.
6. Partners were aware of spikes in domestic abuse; Police have a newly established post to work with victims to reduce domestic abuse, signpost to support agencies and safeguarding. The Domestic Abuse Forum, which undertakes all the detailed work is part of the Community Safety Partnership.

The report was noted.

A Member requested that future meetings be held in the Austen Room whose environment was less formal than the Council Chamber.

95. THANET COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN UPDATE FOR 2015/2016

The report was considered in conjunction with minute item 94.

Meeting concluded: 8.20 pm