

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2018 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber - Council Offices.

Present: Councillor Curran (Chairman); Councillors Campbell, Dixon, Falcon and M Saunders

In Attendance: Councillors Stummer-Schmertzing and D Saunders

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

30. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no apologies made at the meeting.

31. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Mrs Saunders seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting that was held on 28 September 2017.

Matters Arising

Councillor Curran, Chairman of the working party called upon Councillor Falcon to present an update to Members on the present situation regarding the on-going Rape Crisis support work for victims of violent crime in Ramsgate. Councillor Falcon gave the following highlights:

- Attended the Domestic Abuse Forum and received a report from Detective Inspector Tracy Anstis who gave a summary update on Operation Encompass which had been rolled out in Deal and Dover
- This work was for a trial period between end of Easter holidays and the beginning of summer holidays last year but has continued;
- It was hoped that if successful Operation Encompass would be replicated in other local areas;
- Initial results brought to the authorities' attention the plight of 31 children who were living in abusive environments. This was as a result of seventeen incidents that were attended to by Kent Police;
- In response to the good work by Kent Police, the Minister for Children had since asked through Radio 4 Programme that the Operation should be rolled out country wide;
- It is hoped that additional resources would be identified and allocated to this work as such an exercise was intensive and the Police were currently stretched for resources.

Victims Support:

- Sessions were being offered at the Ramsgate Library and the office was getting a good footfall in visits.

East Kent Rape Crisis Centre report:

- During the first nine months of the project to Ramsgate residents, the organisation and attended to 48 referrals for counselling;
- 412 counselling sessions have been offered to date in addition to assessments;

- The Centre was still operating from the Registry Office. The charge for using these premises was £50 per day;
- They had increased the sessions by an extra half day session each Wednesday;
- Ramsgate Town Council was considering offering a spare office for those sessions within their premises.

In addition Councillor Campbell advised that Ramsgate Town Council had agreed to fund these services again in the 2018/19 financial year.

Chief Inspector Sharon Adley thanked the support given to the work on victim support by the Community Safety Partnership Working Party as more people were now being directed to the right service.

Members noted the verbal update report.

32. KENT POLICE UPDATE ON POLICING IN RAMSGATE AND MARGATE (RE: YOUTH CRIME/ASB)

Sergeant James Ross from Kent Police led the first half of the presentation on this item and made the following key comments:

- Reports had been made regarding anti-social behaviour by young people within the Ramsgate Town Centre particularly near the KFC and Subway shops;
- Police had been conducting dispersals in those areas mostly on weekends;
- Youth Engagement Officers have also been conducting home visits. These were very effective ways of engaging the youths involved in unacceptable behaviour;
- There was gradual decline in reports in the areas under review;
- Ramsgate now has seven PCSOs, up from three a few months ago;
- As a result of the increased number of PCSOs Ramsgate had clearly benefited from a rise in visibility

CI Adley then led the second half of the presentation for this item and added the following key comments:

- In Margate a huge amount of work was done during the half term break as Police issued dispersal orders to young people;
- Police were responding to reports of ASB including public order offences;
- Some arrests were made and reports were made by Police to parents and schools.

In response to the two presentations, Members made comments and asked questions as follows:

- At the Corporate Performance Review Working Party meeting held on 15 February 2018, Members received a performance report that indicated that there 120 crime incidents per thousand reported as at December 2017. This had gone from 94 per thousand in the previous year for the same period under review;
- This is the kind of information that is highlighted by the local press and gets the attention of the local communities;
- Some areas experience what could be considered as intimidation by youths who congregate at certain locations in the district;
- There were concerns that a community hall in Garlinge was also subject of anti-social behaviour with some broken windows and residents in that neighbourhood feeling intimidated by groups of youth that congregate at that hall;
- Was the PREVENT project that was aimed at protecting young people from extremist tendencies still in place?

In responses to Member comments and questions, CI Adley, Sgt Ross, Penny Button and Trevor Kennett explained as follows:

- Yes, there had been an increase in reported crime incidents, with a rise of 27% between October 2016 and September 2017. However this should be taken in context of changes to crime reporting and recording;
- The data for all victim based crime has seen an increase across the force; officers follow strict Home Office guidelines when investigating and recording crime and many single crimes recorded previously are now recorded as multiple crimes. For example, previously if four people were found fighting outside a nightclub and it was not clear who was in the right or wrong one report of affray would have been recorded whereas now four counter allegation of assault and one of affray could be recorded;
- Furthermore, improvements in crime recording and improved victim confidence in coming forward have played a significant part in these figures both locally and nationally. These figures should start to level out from May 2018 onwards as true comparisons become easier;
- There has been a 15.8% decline in antisocial behaviour in Thanet. This was higher performance figures than the county average and it was a good news story;
- Currently there were two PCSO Youth Engagement Officers who have been engaging youth in the district, particularly those vulnerable to antisocial behaviour highlighting likely problems;
- There were now four PCSOs assigned to Broadstairs, with a fifth one stationed at Westwood Cross who can be called as back-up;
- A PCSO was now dedicated to Garlinge and Salmerstone patrols as from end of February;
- PREVENT was still an operational national project.
- Officers will check with KCC and advise Members on the focus of PREVENT project in Thanet.

Members agreed to review the crime statistics at a future meeting after May 2018.

The working party noted the report.

33. PARENTS SCHOOL PARKING CHALLENGES IN SOME AREAS OF THE DISTRICT

Trevor Kennett, Head of Operational Services introduced the item by making a presentation which highlighted the following:

- Inconsiderate parking at schools was a nationwide issue;
- Parents/carers were putting children's lives at risk through this bad practice;
- Officers who try to dissuade bad parking at schools often receive abuse from the offending drivers;
- Parents were under pressure to drop-off children at school and proceed to work;
- UK wide study had shown there were 86,000 casualties over the over a 5 year period and the most vulnerable age group was the 12 years+;
- Inconsiderate parking at schools was an action point on the current Community Safety Partnership Plan;
- 30 tickets had been issued so far for school zigzag offences;
- Council could consider issuing stiffer penalties through penalty Charge Notices for roads near schools and 'hotspot areas;'
- Enforcement will make 250 proactive visits around schools in 2018 to tackle this problem;
- Council was involved in county wide awareness campaigns;
- In 2018, the Council will be taking a much more robust approach to tackle inconsiderate parking at schools;

- Schools will continue to assist in creating awareness to the problem and will target parents.

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:

- Was it legal for councils to issue parking tickets using CCTV evidence?
- Given the limited resources at Councils disposal, issuing of tickets using remote enforcement approaches should be a logical way of effective enforcement;
- How autonomous was TDC regarding highway related issues like parking and other local road network issues(including double yellow lines and other traffic calming requests);
- In other parts of the country County councils introduced increased penalties for inconsiderate parking at schools. Could officers check how this was done and whether the council could learn from this experience and possibly canvass KCC to implement such an approach;
- Were schools encouraging parents to walk their children to school instead of driving (in instances where practically possible).

In response to Member queries, Trevor Kennett made the following comments:

- TDC was not a highways authority (KCC were the authority for highways);
- Officers from TDC and KCC highways department regularly meet with members to discuss highways and local road network issues;
- KCC was responsible for making decision regarding traffic calming, whilst TDC did the background work to inform such decisions (because it was in TDC's interest to do the background work);
- KCC usually took a sensible approach to local requests;
- Officers were looking at technologies that could be used for effective enforcement;
- Penalty charges are fixed by statutes. Some Councils were using Public Spaces Protection Orders for nuisance behaviour to issue £100 parking tickets for illegal parking at schools.

Penny Button Head of Safer Neighbourhoods confirmed that schools encouraged parents to walk their children to school as part of a 'walking buses' approach to help contribute to air quality in the area and Minster Primary was one such school.

Trevor Kennett agreed to research and report back to members in writing regarding the whether TDC could use CCTV for parking enforcement and increase the penalty charges for illegal parking at schools.

Members agreed to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on key issues emerging from the officer presentation and discussion.

Post Meeting Notes:

With reference to the questions asked by Members at the working party meeting, please find below the written answers provided by Trevor Kennett.

Question: Can the Council use CCTV technology to help enforce parking contraventions?

Answer: Only Unitary and County Council's (because they are the Highways Authority) can use CCTV to issue PCNs and only for the offences of Bus Lane, illegal turn and entering a box junction offences. CCTV cannot be used for double yellow line, loading bay and other civil enforcement contraventions.

Question: Can the PCN fine be doubled for offences around schools?

Answer: Parking ticket charges and rules are the same wherever you live in Kent and are set by legislation. (Traffic Management Act).

If you pay your parking fine within 14 days, you will only be charged half of the fine (£35). You'll get a parking ticket (Penalty Charge Notice) for £70. This set charge is not able to be altered or doubled.

Some Councils were using Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) for dangerous parking around schools offences, which change the behavioural offence from civil into a criminal act. Officers will explore this option further to see how it could be operated in Thanet.

See below story for further information.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/parents-face-fines-of-up-to-1000-for-dangerous-parking-at-london-schools-a6848671.html>

Meeting concluded: 7.55 pm