

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2019

Present: Councillors M Burton, Garten, Joy, D Mortimer (Chairman), Powell, Purle, Mrs Robertson, Springett and Webb

138. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rose.

139. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Springett was present as a Substitute for Councillor Rose.

140. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

141. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

142. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

143. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

144. 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.

145. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

146. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

147. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

There were no questions from members of the public.

148. 2019 - 20 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Mr Matt Roberts, Community Partnerships & Resilience Manager, addressed the Committee. Mr Roberts explained that:

- Data regarding specific crimes had demonstrated notable rises. Sexual Offences (All) had increased by the highest percentage (48.2%), followed by Violence Against the Person (40.9%), Most Serious Violence (38%) and Violence Without Injury (37.9%). On the other hand, Theft from the Person (20.5%) and Drugs (Possession) (19.3%) had decreased.
- 15% of all crime was related to Domestic Abuse. Domestic Abuse was therefore a focus of the Safer Maidstone Partnership for the year 2019/20.
- 0.4% of the youth population in Maidstone had received a sentence relating to crime, demonstrating the positive impact of work undertaken to tackle issues with gangs.
- Although work regarding gangs and County Lines was ongoing, the focus had shifted towards minimising Anti-Social Behaviour.
- The data regarding needle finds suggested that Lower Boxley Road was a hotspot, and that there was potential to link this to a needle collection scheme.
- Data from CGL - West Kent Recovery Service Maidstone, regarding the exchange of needles, was to be incorporated in the Strategic Assessment at a later date.
- Substance Misuse was to be embedded as an overarching priority for the Safer Maidstone Partnership, rather than being addressed through a specific sub-group.
- The service provided for victims of Domestic Abuse was good, however, it could take a significant amount of time for victims to be identified. Consequently, early interventions, such as promoting responsible relationships for teenagers, were to be undertaken.

In response to questions from the Committee, Inspector Mark Hedges (Kent Police) stated that:

- 200 additional full-time Police Officers and Staff were recruited in 2017/18, with a further 180 recruited in 2018/19. As it took two

years to complete training and probationary periods, it was expected that an increased Police Officer presence was to be noticeable shortly. The recruitment also meant that there was the potential to establish dedicated teams in Wards.

- Kent Police had been rated as “Outstanding” by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). This meant that victims of crime in Kent were more likely to have the crime recorded than elsewhere nationally.
- The approach to data recording had recently changed. Multiple crimes that took place during one incident were now recorded separately. Although the figures subsequently demonstrated an increase in crime as a result of the change in data recording, crime in Maidstone had remained static when compared to the rest of the County.
- A problem solving approach, comprising of scanning, analysis, response, and assessment (SARA) was being used to disperse groups such as the Shepway Boys.
- Core individuals of groups such as the Shepway Boys were being targeted. Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) had proven effective in dealing with gang related issues, with approximately 2% of individuals issued with a CPW then receiving a Community Protection Notice (CPN).
- Groups were known to congregate near free Wi-Fi spots, which could be intimidating for other members of the public. This had been tackled by disabling Wi-Fi at specific times.
- Work was undertaken with property developers, such as the “Secure by Design” scheme. This was designed to make homes as safe as possible when they were built. It was difficult to anticipate the impact of housing developments on crime as there was uncertainty regarding who would move to the developments. Data suggested, however, that those responsible for crime at new developments were not those who had moved to the area.
- Nationally, knife crime had intensified. The key issue was that young people carried knives as they were scared of being a victim of crime, which was a mind-set that needed to be reversed.
- Young people said that they felt safe in the presence of Police in the area. This was positive as it meant that the lack of trust in the Police, experienced in areas such as London, was not an issue in Maidstone.
- Kent Police had recently moved to a new IT system, which would enable improved statistical analysis of crime data.

The Committee requested that Ward Councillors be kept updated on crime reporting statistics to ensure they are informed of incidents.

RESOLVED: That the priorities recommended by the 2019 Strategic Assessment be endorsed for adoption by the Safer Maidstone Partnership for inclusion within the Community Safety Plan for 2019-20.

Voting: Unanimous

149. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.