



**CRIME AND DISORDER
(OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY)
COMMITTEE**

Draft Annual Report 2018-19

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Introduction and Background

The Council has a legal duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all of its various functions with regard to the need to prevent crime and disorder and reduce re-offending in its area. '*Crime and Disorder*' is defined as including forms of crime and disorder that involve anti-social behaviour or other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment or the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

The **Crime and Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee** was appointed by the General Assembly of the Council (GAC) in October 2009 under the provisions of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and in direct response to the provisions of the subsequent Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

The 2006 and 2007 Acts and the 2009 Regulations granted the Council the power to scrutinise both crime and disorder matters and hold the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (the CSP) and its partner organisations to account for their performance. This includes partnership work with the Council to meet specific local targets, as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Council and the CSP (Appendix C to the covering report).

In accordance with its Protocol, the Committee is required to review, scrutinise, and make reports and recommendations regarding, the functioning of the responsible authorities which comprise the Dartford and Gravesham CSP as listed below:

Dartford Borough Council

Gravesham Borough Council

Kent County Council

Kent Police

Kent Fire and Rescue Service

Kent Probation [formerly Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company]

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group

The Protocol also requires the Committee to report annually to the General Assembly of the Council (GAC) on the work it has undertaken in the preceding municipal year. This report provides a *summary* of the work undertaken by the Committee during the **2018-19** municipal year. Comprehensive details of the Committee's work in the period under review are contained in the Minutes of their meetings, as published in full on the Council's website.

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The work carried out by the Crime & Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee compliments the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee and Policy Overview Committee, as defined by their separate Protocols, and set-out in their respective Work Plans, to avoid any duplication of Member and Officer effort.

CRIME & DISORDER (O&S) COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

In accordance with its Protocol, the Committee is required to consider on a **statutory** basis each year:

- The Dartford & Gravesham CSP's Strategic Assessment document;
- The CSP's projected three-year Community Safety Strategy or the annual Strategy Refresh document (as appropriate).

In addition, on a **discretionary** basis with the prior agreement of the CSP or the Council's Strategic Director (External Services) as appropriate; the Committee reviews on a rolling basis, the contributions made by individual partner agencies to the overall aims of the CSP; as set out in detail in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Partnership [Appendix C attached refers].

The Committee also considers stock agenda items. In the **2018-19** municipal year under review the Committee considered:

- The CSP's mid-year Performance Report;
- The published Minutes of the Kent & Medway Police & Crime Panel (PCP) meetings held in the period; and
- The annual update report from the Council's D-TAC (Dartford Town against Crime) team.

The Committee met twice during the **2018-19** municipal cycle on **25 July 2018** and **13 February 2019**.

At the initial meeting in the cycle Members agreed a rolling Work Plan for the Committee [set out in the table below] to be reviewed at subsequent meetings:

Rolling Work Plan 2018-19 and Beyond

Meeting	Work Plan Items		
Summer 2018 (July)	2018 Refresh to CSP Community Safety Strategy (2017-20)	D-TAC (Dartford Town Against Crime)) Annual Report	Committee Annual Report 2017-18
	CSP Performance Report June 2018	PCP Update	Work Plan for 2018-19
Winter 2019 (February)	CSP Strategic Assessment 2018		Review Work Plan

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Summer 2019 (July)	CSP Community Safety Strategy (2018 to 2021) 2019 Refresh	CSP Performance Report June 2019 D-TAC Annual Update	PCP Update Annual Report 2018-19 2019-20 Work Plan
Winter 2020 (February)	CSP Strategic Assessment 2019	PCP Update Review Work Plan	

Work Plan items considered by the Committee in the **2018-19** municipal cycle are summarised below for Members to note. Comprehensive details of the Committee's discussions in the period under review are contained in the relevant Minutes, as published in full on the Council website.

<p>WORK PLAN ITEMS considered in the 2018-19 MUNICIPAL YEAR</p>
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Summer Meeting - 25 July 2018

Standing Invitations

The Committee renewed their standing invitation to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development, Councillor Mrs Ann Allen MBE, to attend and contribute to their meetings in the ensuing municipal cycle. The continued guidance provided by the Council's Strategic Director (External Services) to the Committee's proceedings was welcomed, and contributions from Council Officers and Kent Police representatives in the Council's joint Community Safety Unit to future agenda items noted.

Item 1: Kent Police and Crime Panel (PCP) – Update

Members were asked to note the published Minutes for the PCP meetings held on 8 February and 25 April 2018.

The Chairman had attended the latter meeting in his role as Dartford representative to the PCP, and highlighted the following points for the Committee:

- **999 and 101 Service** – to improve response times for both services, the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) had sanctioned the recruitment of 40 additional staff for the Forces Control Room to answer calls, plus a further 20 staff for the Incident Management Unit;

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- **Public reporting of Crime** – online reporting of crime by the public had increased by 11% and public reporting of road traffic collisions had increased by 60%;
- **Policing of Road Traffic** – the Commissioner had put a case to central Government for Kent to be considered as a special case for extra funding from March 2019 to meet increased road policing demands post-Brexit;
- **Speedwatch** - Panel Members had fed-back positively regarding the speedwatch scheme including a noted improvement in their relationship with Kent Police;
- **Mental Health Update** - the Commissioner had welcomed the investment made by Kent's Chief Constable to increase the size of Kent Police's Mental Health Team. A further increase was proposed as part of the uplift of 200 additional police officers in 2018/19.

Members resolved to note the published Minutes of the PCP meetings held on 8 February and 25 April 2018 as included in the agenda papers, together with the Chairman's additional comments and background concerning the Panel meeting held on 25 April.

Item 2: Training Workshop for Dartford Hackney Cab & Private Hire Operators

The Council's Licensing Manager detailed for Members, the key elements of a new and unique '*workshop training day*' for new Hackney and Private Hire drivers and operators (and those renewing their licences) provided jointly by the Council's Licensing Team and Kent Fire & Rescue Service (KFRS).

The training had been held at the KFRS facility in Rochester and had utilised the Service's existing '*Road Safety Experience*' training module, dovetailed with mandatory training modules from the Council's Licensing Team, for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE Safeguarding) and the 'Prevent' element of the Government's Counter Terrorism measures.

The day-long Workshop comprised two distinct sessions. In the morning the Council's Licensing Team had covered the mandatory training modules for 'Safeguarding', 'Prevent' and law and policy, in an interactive session with drivers to enable them to obtain the required 'credits' for their licence. The afternoon session from KFRS comprising a full Road Traffic Crash role play experience, tailored to meet the bespoke needs of the Taxi Driver audience. The final part of the day examined statistics for road traffic accidents, the consequences of those incidents, and how small changes in driving habits could make significant differences to the benefit of other road users. Taxi drivers were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Police, KFRS and Council Officers and gave positive feedback and evaluation on the training they had received.

Members welcomed the Council initiative with KFRS and noted the unique nature of the multi-agency training within Kent, and suggested that the Council might wish to consider advertising the 1 day workshop more widely in the local press, and via the Council's twitter feed and website.

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Item 3: Dartford Town against Crime (DTAC) Scheme – Progress Report

The Committee received a progress report on the DTAC Scheme from the Town Centre & Business Manager, supported by a PowerPoint presentation from the DTAC Intelligence Manager, which detailed the progress made by the Scheme in the year ending 31 March 2018.

The progress report and accompanying PowerPoint presentation covered the following principal areas of the Scheme:

- Performance of DTAC by way of reports/information;
- Crime statistics from Police.uk web-site;
- Shop-safe radios and Council CCTV;
- Policing of the Town;
- DTAC finances;
- New/Leaving DTAC members;
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) / auditing of DTAC Disc

The DTAC Manager highlighted the following specific points within the above headings for Members:

- **Performance of DTAC via reports/information from DTAC Disc system** – reports from business members averaged 89 per month, business membership had peaked at 74 in August 2017 but dropped to 61 in June 2018 – a membership loss of 12%. Users with access rights to DTAC Disc data had also fallen from a peak of 116 in January 2018 to 99 in June 2018. A membership audit and the restrictions of the Government's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) post May 2018, were seen as principal causes for the drop. The average number of log-ins to disc had been 235 per month. The automatic DTAC Disc 'Alert' system which informed members of offences, crime methods and other matters of interest automatically, had averaged 4 alerts per month;
- **Reports of losses & recovery of goods to DTAC** –recorded losses had increased from £31.3K in 2016 to £55.7K in 2017 and were projected to reach £58.9K in 2018. However, similar increases had been recorded for recovered goods;
- **Crime statistics from the Police.uk web-site – Local & Most Similar Town Groups:** '*Shoplifting within 1 mile of Town Centre*' had remained constant with a seasonal 'spike' of 52 offences in December 2017 (the run-up to Christmas) preceded by a seasonal low of 22 in September 2017. Instances of '*ASB, Public Order offences & Criminal Damage*' had fluctuated. A peak had been reached in October and November (Halloween and Guy Fawkes's Bonfire night) preceded by lower figures in July to September. The offences of '*Violence against the Person, Robbery & Theft from Persons (Pickpocketing)*' had also fluctuated. Within Dartford's family of Most Similar Town Groups (MSTGs) and CSPs the Council had achieved varied results in the year ending December 2017. In terms of all crime recorded in the 15 most similar

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Towns/CSPs across England and Wales, Dartford's crime rate was second highest behind only Peterborough. For Shoplifting Dartford was 6th highest in the Group and 2nd highest for Violence against the Person. For Public Order offences Dartford was 4th highest within the Group;

- **Shop-Safe Radios & CCTV** – the expanded digital system was up and running with only minor technical issues concerning masts. The expansion of the DTAC radio system to Longfield had been agreed between the Parish and the Council and was 99% complete. Two more operators had been recruited for the Council's in-house CCTV operation to address some loss of coverage in the Town centre and the fall in DTAC membership;
- **Policing of the Town** – Dartford businesses were generally content with the level of policing in the Town from the dedicated Town Centre PC and PCSO;
- **DTAC Finances** - Business membership remained at £36 p.m. plus VAT with Charity shops paying £10 p.m. plus VAT, administered by the Council's Finance Department: combined with the Council's contribution this had given an annual income for the year of £31,000. Outward expenditure included; licence renewals of £250, the new mast and radio system for Longfield £4,000, the annual licence for the Disc system of £1200 and public liability insurance of £340. Capital revenue from membership fees had fallen, but new business membership and revenue was expected, once the new mast was erected in Longfield;
- **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)** – The advent of GDPR [from May 2018] had required all DTAC members to re-sign revised confidentiality agreements, liaison with Kent Police's Data Protection Officer, and new DTAC policies to be written for approval of the Council's Head of Legal Services. An audit of the Disc system had also been undertaken to 'cleanse' it of all information more than 2 years old to further comply with GDPR.

Members resolved to note the report and expressed their appreciation of the current DTAC Scheme and its operation by the DTAC Manager.

Item 4: Review of Dartford's Safer Streets Policy

Members were informed by the District Commander that the review of Dartford's Safer Streets Policy by Kent Police remained ongoing, and had yet to reach the final report stage.

Current work by the Dartford CSU Inspector had focussed on existing police patrol patterns for the Town Centre over three consecutive week-ends. This had revealed that:

- The majority of anti-social activity stemming from the night-time economy in the Town Centre occurred after midnight;
- Reducing patrols pre-midnight could free between 4 to 6 Officers for other duties;

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- Increased use of Special Constables to police the night-time economy could produce further staff 'savings' for re-location to other duties
- Venues in the Town Centre operating as part of the night-time economy would be re-visited and re-appraised;
- Existing hot-spots would be re-evaluated;
- Liaison with British Transport Police would be increased to address the issue of criminals from London and elsewhere in Kent and Essex commuting to Dartford station to commit offences in the Borough.

The District Commander confirmed that Kent Police were fully aware of the potential impact on public confidence that withdrawing patrols from the Town Centre prior to midnight, at week-ends might have. Data from existing patrol patterns continued to be reviewed by Kent Police, and public opinion to any proposed changes gauged, utilising social media the Council's CSU twitter feed.

Kent Police and Council Officers would undertake a media campaign via the Police website and the CSU twitter feed, to ensure that the public were made aware of any new proposals before they instituted.

Item 5: Performance

The Committee considered the Dartford & Gravesham Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) Quarterly Performance Report (July 2018) in closed session, given the confidential nature of the source material it contained, as provided by individual CSP partner agencies.

The July 2018 Performance report (previously agreed by the CSP), detailed performance in relation to recorded levels of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Dartford and Gravesham, as an indication of the CSP's current position within Kent as a whole. The report also highlighted key Community Safety activity that had been delivered in both Dartford and Gravesham since the CSP had last met, as a means of monitoring the Partnership's progress in addressing its strategic priorities.

Members were advised in a covering report from the Council's Community Safety Officer (CSO), that the format for the July 2018 Performance report differed from previous reports. National changes to crime data recording processes had been introduced in the interim, which meant that the data for recorded crimes in the July 2018 report, was *not* comparable to that for the corresponding period in the previous year. However, the new practices had *not* affected the recording of incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and year-on-year comparison for that offence was still valid. It was hoped that year-on-year comparisons of all crime rates would be possible from 2019-20 onwards.

Members asked a variety of questions concerning specific aspects of the July 2018 Performance report, to which Officers gave the following responses:

- **CCTV** - a grant from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had enabled the Council to recruit an additional CCTV operator on a 1

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year fixed-term contract to increase surveillance in the Town Centre. A further grant request would be made to the PCC in 2019;

- **Gang prevention Measures** – bids to the PCC and the Home Office’s “*Trusted Relationship Fund*” (TRF) had secured funding in support of Gang intervention work. Gang members and their families being temporarily accommodated in Dartford by London Authorities, was an emerging issue. Dartford Council was not notified of such moves in advance. CSU Officers were working to establish better working relationships with neighbouring London Boroughs going forward;
- **Fly-Tipping Enforcement Campaign** – the Council had a new dedicated Enforcement Officer and the campaign was being run as a multi-agency operation with CSU support and Kent Police back-up.

Members resolved to note the Dartford & Gravesham Community Safety Partnership’s Performance Report (July 2018).

Item 6: 2018 Refresh to CSP’s Community Safety Strategy (2016-19)

Members considered the CSP’s Community Safety Strategy 2018 Refresh document which updated the CSP’s Community Safety Strategy (2016-19) document, initially considered by Members in February 2018.

The 2018 Refresh reflected the priorities identified in the CSP’s Strategic Assessment 2018 document, together with the views of partner Agencies and elected Members, as agreed by the CSP in March 2018

Members resolved to note the contents of the 2018 Refresh to the CSP’s Community Safety Strategy (2016-19).

Item 7: Work Plan 2018/19 – Update

Members agreed the contents of the revised rolling Work Plan for the remainder of the 2018-19 municipal year and the Summer and Winter meetings in the 2019-20 cycle as detailed in the Agenda, together with the following additions proposals by the Chairman and agreed by the SD (ES):

- Gangs
- Presentation from Kent Trading Standards

Item 8: Annual Report 2017-18

Members considered the contents of the Committee’s *draft* Annual Report for the preceding **2017-18** municipal cycle and resolved that it be submitted to the General Assembly of the Council for noting, and expressed their thanks to the Committee Co-ordinator for his support of the Committee throughout the preceding municipal year.

Winter Meeting - 13 February 2019

Item 1: Kent Police and Crime Panel (PCP) Update

Members were asked to note the published Minutes of the PCP meetings held on 19 July, 27 September and 14 November 2018.

In his role as Dartford representative, the Chairman had attended the most recent PCP meeting on 6 February 2019 and summarised the principal matters discussed for Members:

- **Police Precept** - the Panel had approved a proposal by the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) to raise the Police precept element in Council Tax. The increase would equate to £24 p.a. in the Council Tax for each Band D property, and help fund the recruitment of 180 new Kent Police Officers. Training and deployment of the new recruits would be subject to the overall operational control of the Chief Constable;
- **Crime Recording** - Kent Police had regained its 'Outstanding' status for the recording of crime following the 2018 inspection of the Force by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary;
- **Brexit** –Initial funding of £150K had been allocated to Kent to finance measures in the case of a 'No-Deal' Brexit post 29 March 2019.

Members resolved to note the published Minutes for the PCP meetings held on 19 July, 27 September and 14 November 2018 and the feed-back from the Chairman concerning the PCP proceedings held on 6 February 2019.

Item 2: Kent Trading Standards (KTS)

The Committee received a PowerPoint presentation from Kent County Council's Principal Trading Standards Officer.

Members were advised that Kent Trading Standard' operation had been rationalised and re-situated in Ashford. It comprised four re-structured teams:

- The Complex Investigations Team - dealing with rogue traders on an in-depth basis;
- The Food Chain Team;
- The Business Advice Services Team (Brexit had increased the Team's work-load considerably);
- The Consumer and Public Safety Team

The Principal Trading Standards Officer covered the following major KTS work areas in his presentation, with particular reference to the work priorities his own Consumer & Public Safety Team:

Brexit

This remained a major unknown for Trading Standards in terms of a final deal approved by Parliament or a 'no-deal' Brexit. Both scenarios would have a

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major impact on trading and business in the UK. In the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit a degree of contingency and even emergency planning would also be required. Either final scenario would entail:

- Increased work at all the Channel ports and dock operations;
- An increase in Trading Standards' support to businesses;
- The potential for criminals to exploit the continuing uncertainty over the final outcome and subsequently, particularly in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit;
- Significant contingency planning to prevent fuel shortages post Brexit and gridlock on the motorway and road system. In particular access to and egress from the Channel ports.

Consumer and Public Safety Team: Work Areas

- The prevention of faulty goods reaching the domestic marketplace via intelligence led operations at docks and other points of UK entry, inspection of retail premises and product labelling, assisting companies in product re-call;
- To help combat underage sales of alcohol and tobacco via an holistic, intelligence led approach, with the Police, public and young people to identify and prosecute offending retailers;
- The prevention of illegal alcohol and tobacco sales [not overly prevalent in Kent to date] and the support of vaping sales as a healthier alternative;
- Combating knife crime via an Intel led approach against suspected retailers and the enforcement of the over 25 policy;
- Explosives monitoring, particularly fireworks and the possibility of bomb-making from such commonly sold products.

Illegal Tobacco

- Illegal tobacco could be recognised by its labelling, often in a Cyrillic script and absence of health warnings, and contained more impurities than legal brands. 'Mock Convenience Stores' were the principal outlet, concealing their principal illegal activity by selling a basic selection of consumer products. Genuine retail stores also sold illegal tobacco products, given the profit mark-up and as a means of attracting increased customer footfall for legal product sales. On-line and Facebooks traders dealing expressly in illegal tobacco products was a growing trend;
- Trading Standards targeted illegal tobacco sales because of the increased health risks the products posed particularly for minors, and the threat to overall Government health policy posed by these more affordable illegal products. The products also undermined local economies by removing revenue from legitimate businesses and passing it to organised criminal operations. The loss of tax revenue from illegal tobacco sales impacted on the Exchequer, and the Government's ability to fund its enforcement bodies;
- The 2018 survey of smokers in SE England had revealed that 70% bought illegal tobacco, with 75% doing so knowingly. Some 83% of smokers had a single illegal tobacco supplier so effective enforcement could changing their purchasing profile. Some 87% had agreed that all

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smokers bought illegal product at some time, and that cheaper illegal tobacco made it harder to quit smoking. If caught and prosecuted 70% of smokers surveyed would stop purchasing illegal products, 78% would stop if they thought their outlet was linked to criminal gangs, and 85% would stop buying illegal products if their outlet supplied to children;

- Approximately 20 shops of a criminal nature had been identified conducting illegal tobacco sales in Kent. However, successful prosecutions in the Courts were difficult to obtain, given the absence of any paper trail to establish ownership of the premises. Magistrates could impose significant fines against those convicted, but fines were insignificant in the context of the overall profit such illegal operations made;
- Alternative strategies to combat illegal tobacco sales included: Kent Police's Illegal Tobacco Unit Roadshow funded by Kent Public Health which visited Dartford in 2017], Primary and Secondary School theatre productions to warning against the dangers of smoking – particularly illegal products, Kent Police Open Day, spray-painting 'Smoke-Free Zone' signs in public places e.g. Young Mum's Centre in the Isle of Sheppey;
- Joined-up reporting across government agencies was important and helped demonstrate the 'nuisance' caused by 'Mock Convenience Stores' and the link that illegal tobacco [and alcohol] sales had to increased levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB). A sustained multi-agency approach was required to both disrupt supply networks and deter users.

Members thanked the Principal Trading Standards Officer for a comprehensive presentation and invited him to return and update the Committee.

Item3: Review of Dartford's Safer Streets Policy

Prior to receiving an update from Kent Police guests on Dartford's current Safer Streets policy, at the discretion of the Chairman, the Committee were addressed by a representative from Dartford's Nepalese community regarding their concern that organised criminal gangs committing burglary in the Borough were targeting Indian and Nepalese homes.

The Nepalese community representative informed Members that burglary offences in Dartford had risen consistently over the previous 6 year period, with the 100 plus families of Indian and Nepalese descent resident in Dartford appearing to suffer from this particular crime on a disproportionate basis.

He sought an increased Police presence in the town centre to combat this concerted rise in burglary offences, including more resources devoted to the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, and asked what measures his community association could adopt to help the Police to positively address the issue.

Members were advised by the District Commander that Kent Police were aware of the rise in burglary offences and had a Kent Control Strategy in place to combat it. A concerted 3-4 week operation was being undertaken by Kent Police in Dartford which had already produced arrests of key known criminals using Intel and CCTV footage. Dartford's CSU Police Inspector would continue to work with the local community and all residents and

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community groups and stood ready to attend any proposed meetings with them, to help educate residents over measures they could adopt to help the Police further combat burglary in their areas.

At the request of the District Commander, Members agreed to consider Kent Police's further refinements to Dartford's Safer Streets policy within the overall context of 'Offences of Violence', together with their consideration of the CSP's 2018 Strategic Assessment document, later in the agenda.

Item4: Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy and County Lines

Members received a joint presentation from Kent Police representatives and the Council's Community Safety Manager which addressed the following principal areas:

- National Picture
- Gangs
- Signs, Risks and Vulnerabilities
- Kent and Medway Strategy
- How Dartford is Responding

Spread of City Gangs and County Lines

So called 'County Lines' operations had spread out North, South, East and West from the Metropolis into the Home Counties, with the number of London Gangs believed to have reduced from 230 down to 180 with an overall gang membership of some 3,000 individuals. 'County Lines' activity appeared to operate across most of Kent. Dartford was *not* a 'hotspot' but had its issues.

Definition of a Gang

The Home Office (HO) definition of a gang was '*a group of 3 or more people involved in violence*' **and** had '*one or more characteristics that enabled its members to be identified by others*'. Kent Police had refined the HO definition further by recognising a distinction between:

- Organised criminal gangs associated with level 2 criminality [Kent, Surrey and Sussex];
- Gangs maintaining 'drug lines' across the county of Kent;
- Those who have a more nebulous link to gangs and a '*youth culture*' based on a '*tag line*' or postcode affiliation.

The activities of the second and third categories listed above in particular, exhibited a potent form of Child Criminal Exploitation.

Gang Structure

Gangs could be broken down into the following tiered structure:

- **Highest Tier** – the 'Elder' or 'Boss' who often owned their own business for laundering drugs and money with average daily turnover of £3K upwards;

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- **Middle Tier** – ‘Shotters’ or ‘Generals’ were the main enforcers in a gang, researched new areas for drug demand, organised recruitment, supervised the lower tier and crossed ‘county lines’ during their activities;
- **Lower Tier**- ‘Wrappers’ were back room staff who prepared Class A drugs for sale. ‘Youngers’ (including kids) carried knives and committed street robberies. New recruits entered the gang family at this level.

Safeguarding – National Issue

- The age of children dealing drugs in gangs was getting progressively younger, prompting education around gangs to be targeted at a younger audience and age-group;
- Youths, early school-age teenagers and even younger children were all easy targets for gang recruitment. Children from single parent families or with a parent who was a drug user were particularly susceptible, and attracted by the gang role model;
- Younger pre-Secondary school age children were increasingly recruited by gangs because they were harder to identify and re-educate.

Cuckooing

County Line drug dealing was the practice of metropolitan crime gangs supplying drugs outside London to dealers in the Home Counties. The term ‘*Cuckooing*’ described the practice whereby drug dealers took over the homes of vulnerable persons to use as a base for dealing. The practice represented a significant risk to both the ‘*cuckooed*’ individual and the wider community. Indicators of the practice included:

- Individuals taking over a vulnerable person’s address;
- Vulnerable people being threatened or coerced into co-operating;
- Frequent high numbers of visitors to the address;
- Signs of drug misuse at the address including deal bags and weighing scales;
- Individuals displaying large amounts of cash and having multiple mobile phones.

People in the social housing market were particularly vulnerable to this gang activity, and the Council’s Housing Department liaised closely with the Community Safety Unit and Kent Police to prevent ‘*Cuckooing*’ operations in the Borough.

Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy 2018-2021 - *Approach to Ending the Criminal Exploitation of Vulnerable Children and Adults by Gangs*

Vision

- To protect and prevent young people from becoming involved with gangs, to tackle gang-related harm and youth violence, to pursue effective enforcement action to deal with those embroiled in gang activities; through collaborative working across Kent & Medway local agency partnerships, to achieve the key objectives that have been identified as central to driving this vision.

Action Plan – District Involvement

- Multi-agency ‘problem profiling’ of gangs and nominal gang associates operating in Kent & Medway;
- To obtain a more comprehensive and sophisticated understanding of where and how gangs operated in the County, in order to better target resources and channel collective energies to tackle this issue for both vulnerable children and adults, drawing on the Margate Taskforce geo-mapping and peer group analysis approach;
- To provide individuals and their families at risk of gang involvement, with focussed support and wrap-around services to dissuade them from entering into gangs and criminal groups;
- To Work across the tiers of local government to use all available powers to create and manage public spaces and discourage gang congregation.

Members were advised that Dartford was *not* a ‘trail-blazer’ in terms of County Line activity in Kent. Thanet (Margate) had been the first major location for such activity in the county with lessons to be learnt from that local authority’s experience, and how it had addressed the issue with early help from and liaison with, London Boroughs and the Kent and Metropolitan Police Forces.

In addition to drawing on KCC’s Safeguarding policy, Dartford worked closely with Kent Police and held a seat on KCC’s Serious Youth Crime Reduction Group, currently occupied by Councillor Ann Allen MBE, as a Kent Member and Dartford Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development.

Dartford contribution to Objectives of Kent & Medway Plan

Prepare

- Manage public spaces to discourage gang congregation and associated anti-social behaviour (ASB) using Dartford’s CCTV operation, enhanced with funding from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner; expansion of the Council’s DTAC (Dartford Town Against Crime) Scheme;
- Create a shared understanding of gangs across the agencies of the Dartford & Gravesham Community Safety Partnership, develop a common language and approach to gang work via the Dartford Serious Youth Violence Group, continued staff training in the field.

Pursue

- Effective enforcement and offender management to deal with gang members who refuse to reform, enforcement of the Night-Time economy, use of the Housing Act, Community Protection procedures and Policing Operations and Initiatives.

Prevent

- Strengthen early intervention and prevention work to stop young people becoming involved with gangs through improvements in information sharing, Police input into schools, working with the St. Giles Trust and

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NatWest as a 'community banker', Head Teacher education, Youth Hubs, Kent Serious Youth Violence Crime scheme, and the Kent Police Dartford Youth Engagement Officer.

Protect

- Develop support pathways to help young people out of gangs and violent behaviour including: the Challenge scheme, attendance at Adolescent Risk Management Panel (ARM) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) meetings, via the Vulnerability Forum multi-agency operation co-ordinated via the Kent Police CSU Inspector, via the CSO attending London Borough meetings, increased Cross-Border Liaison with Metropolitan Boroughs.

The CSM confirmed the following additional points in response to questions from Members:

- The Vulnerability Forum had no matrix of activity in Dartford, or profile of gang members, but work was being undertaken by reformed gang members to provide current offenders with positive male role models;
- Cuckooing was *not* prevalent in Dartford;
- The CSO was liaising with London authorities over their gang profiles and the nature of their County Line operations including any implications for Dartford.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Development advised Members that the Local Children's Partnership Board was undertaking excellent work in Dartford. Dartford's Youth Council was also undertaking a vital and effective role in getting young people to talk to each other and she paid particular praise to the work being undertaken by the CSU and Kent Police to educate young people to the dangers of gang activity and involvement.

The Chairman and Members thanked the CSM for an excellent presentation and his positive responses to their questions, and noted the excellent work being undertaken by the CSO.

Item 5: Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment 2018

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, and as an Overview function on an annual basis, Members were asked to consider the Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Strategic Assessment 2018 document.

Members were reminded that the Strategic Assessment (SA) process was conducted annually by the CSP to address crime and anti-social behaviour issues impacting on its communities. The views of residents concerning those issues also formed part of the Strategic Assessment process. The 2018 SA exercise was particularly significant, as it formed the first stage of the CSP's new three-year Community Safety Strategy, to guide the Partnership's work between April 2019 and March 2022.

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The Community Safety Manager (CSM) drew Members attention to the following detailed points in the 2018 SA document

Total Crime 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018

- **Total Crime** in Dartford for the period under review was 13,310 offences amounting to 123.4 offences per 1,000 of the population, slightly higher than the Kent-wide average of 107.7 offences;
- **Violent Crime** in Dartford had also increased and was above the Kent average. Changes to national crime recording practices accounted for part of the increase, but it was nevertheless a concern for the CSP. He advised that only 50% of crimes categorised as violent resulted in actual injury to a person;
- **Domestic Abuse (DA)** cases had risen sharply in the year under review, again due in part to changes in recording practices, whereby each historic offense disclosed by a victim involving the same perpetrator, was now recorded as a separate crime. Funding from the Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Transformation Fund, to deliver the '*Altogether Safer Project*' across the Dartford and Gravesham CSP had been increased by £19K in 2018 to extend the '*Out of Hours*' Service and strengthen '*Choose Respect*' work;
- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** had seen a significant reduction in Dartford of 26.7%, greater than elsewhere in Kent. A drop in the number of repeat offenders was seen as particularly positive. There had also been a significant drop in deliberate fires (arson) in Dartford;
- **Reducing Offending and Reoffending:** the focus within this priority was the disruption of serious and organised crime and preventing and reducing Youth reoffending (with an emphasis on gang-related activity). The CSP would draw-up a 3 year plan to address the issue, but funding would be key to its success.

Members were then addressed by the District Commander on the recent spike in burglaries in Dartford, which had been subjected to increased Police activity, including an element to address burglaries in the Nepalese and Indian community. Police contact with the Sikh Temple and community in Dartford was also being strengthened. Those exercises had been dovetailed with his continued review of Dartford's Safer Streets policy. The Review had shown that Kent Police had good intelligence and a strategy in place to react to any future spikes of anti-social behaviour in the Night-Time economy.

Members were advised that the recruitment and training of new Police constables was underway following the increased funding to the Police precept element of Council Tax, approved by the Kent Police and Crime Panel in February 2019. Police numbers would increase on the ground in Dartford following training. The key nature of the combined Police and Council operation in Dartford CSU was highlighted to Members. Also the effective inter-face with Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham Councils, and best practice shared with Gravesham CSU and other partners within the CSP.

APPENDIX A

The CSM concluded the presentation to Members with details of the CSP priority for '*Protecting Vulnerable People and Strengthening Communities*'. Mental health issues, homelessness and vulnerable adults were key issues which demanded effective co-operation and co-ordination across all agencies in the Partnership, to help the individuals concerned and to strengthen the Dartford and Gravesham communities as a consequence.

He confirmed that the next step was for the priorities from the 2018 SA to be subject to a public survey, prior to their incorporation into the Partnership's 2019-2022 Community Safety Strategy and 2019 Action Plan.

Members resolved to note the CSP's Strategic Assessment 2018 document, and the CSP's intention to submit a new Community Safety Strategy (2019-2022) document to address the priorities identified in the Strategic Assessment 2018 to the next meeting of the Committee on 24 July 2019.

Item 6: Work Plan Update 2018-19 and Beyond

Members agreed the contents and timeframe for an updated Committee Work Plan for the remainder of the 2018-19 municipal year.