

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date:	Tuesday, 31 October 2023
Present:	Councillors James Butcher, Bridget Chapman, Laura Davison (Chair), Anita Jones, Alan Martin, Elaine Martin, Connor McConville and John Wing (Vice-Chair).
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor David Godfrey.
Officers Present:	Scott Butler (Community Safety Specialist), Ewan Green (Director of Strategy and Resources), Jyotsna Leney (Health, Wellbeing and Partnership Senior Specialist), Susan Priest (Chief Executive) and Karen Weller (Environmental Protection Senior Specialist), Andrew Rush (Chief Officer Place & Regulatory Services), Jake Hamilton (Committee Services Officer) and Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer).
Others Present:	Inspector James Wyles (Kent Police), Sam O'Connor (Home Start Shepway), Rebecca Button (KCC), Councillors Rebecca Shoob and Mike Blakemore.

22. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

23. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 were submitted, approved, and signed by the Chair.

24. **Minutes of the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 were submitted, approved, and signed by the Chair.

25. **Cabinet Member updates**

In accordance with the Constitution Councillor Rebecca Shoob, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness provided the Committee with a verbal update which included the following:

- The Councils housing stock and its current progress on retrofitting.
- An update on the Council Housing Repairs Contract.
- Procurement update in relation to Lifeline365.
- It was confirmed that the Council had just concluded its tenant's satisfaction survey, which the results will hopefully be coming to Overview and Scrutiny in January 2024.
- An update on Housing Strategy, the HRA Business plan (which will be coming to Overview and Scrutiny in November 2023), Housing Waiting List and Homelessness (20 verified cases of rough sleepers) and (35 cases currently in temporary accommodation) the team are also working with private landlords to try and make their accommodation available to the Council.
- Cost of Living Crisis, the Council is working with other authorities to put the case to Government addressing the current crisis.

Following Councillors Rebecca Shoob's update, members raised several points, including the following:

- What is the status of the Council's Housing Waiting List?
- The temporary accommodation figures quoted, are they families housed within the district or outside?
- Where can residents/members get information regarding the current Lifeline365 situation?

Councillor Rebecca Shoob, responded to points raised by members:

- The Council has roughly 1500 individuals currently on the Housing waiting list. The Council is aware of its need for more housing.
- The 35 cases placed in temporary accommodation are individuals being supported regardless of where they are.
- Councillor Shoob will provide the committee with information on where residents/members can find more information regarding Lifeline365 at a later date.

Councillor Mike Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Community and Collaboration also provided the Committee with a verbal update which included the following:

- An update of meetings attended throughout the district and places visited, such as the community hubs, Cycle Shepway.
- KCC workshops and the Launch of "Move Together".
- The Council's success in procuring Safer Streets funding from Kents Police and Crime Commissioner.
- An update regarding the new community policing model.

- Health and Wellbeing – Councillor Blakemore, advised the Committee of the current health measures which are declining within the district. Folkestone and Hythe District has been ranked 84 out of 317 local authorities.
- Folkestone Library – Councillor Blakemore wrote to KCC regarding the closure of the library. KCC responded by confirming that they could not afford to carry out the repairs needed and were looking elsewhere for funding. However, it was suggested that a meeting is due to take place where residents would discuss the future aspirations for Grace Hill.
- Councillor Blakemore also advised the Committee that he wrote to the leader of KCC regarding the proposed cuts to youth services.
- An update on the Mobile Food service.

Following Councillors Mike Blakemore update, members raised several points, including the following:

- What is the current progress on the shared prosperity funding?
- With the remaining funding is the council looking to introduce new projects or support the current projects?
- What is the current progress on Warm Spaces?

Councillor Mike Blakemore and Officers responded to points raised by the Committee:

- There are two parts to the shared prosperity funding, the Council is in year two of three. Current initiatives include, the Mobile Food Van, which is now on the road, cookery classes with aims to support individuals in becoming self-sufficient.
- The Council had to submit an investment plan to UK SDF, which outlines the outcomes and targets. However, potential future projects include community gardens.
- Warm Spaces, the Council is currently in the process of asking community organisations, and then the information will be collated and shared on the Councils website.

26. **Folkestone and Hythe Community Safety Partnership Plan Update**

Mr Scott Butler, Community Safety Specialist introduced the report (OS/23/04) and explained that Members would receive a presentation which included updates from some of the Community Safety Partnership.

The report/presentation provided the committee with an update on the Folkestone and Hythe Community Safety Partnership (CSP), its priorities, activities, CSP action plan, PREVENT and statistical data including, Crime within the District, deprivation, Fire and Hospital Alcohol Data.

Please see link to the current CSP three-year plan:

<https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/downloads/file/1097/community-safety-plan-2021-2024>

Inspector Wyles of Kent Police, provided the Committee with an update which included:

- Kent Control Strategy.
- NHP Model, which was piloted in Folkestone Town Centre. This model detailed the new community policing structure, which included the following teams:
 - Child Centred Policing Team (CCPT).
 - Neighbourhood Task Force (NTF).
 - Beat Team
 - Rural Task Force (RTF), and
 - Prevention Hub
- Multi-Agency Targeted Operations, including:
 - Violence against woman and girls (VAWG)
 - OP Sentry (Road safety in the district)
 - OP Piglet (Tackling organised cooking oil theft)
 - OP Assist (Environment & Waste Crime)
 - OP Chinook (NTF response to targeted area of concerns)
 - OP Sceptre (Tackling Knife Crime)
 - OP Drummer.
- My Community Voice.

Following the presentation members raised the following points:

- Noticeable differences in Police presents with the new NHP community policing model.
- How is Kent Police tackling hate crime within the community?
- Prospects of youth clubs closing, will potentially result in higher crime. Is there any support within the CSP to keep these youth clubs open?
- Why is the crime data (as seen in the presentation) presented by wards?
- Could Kent Police or the CSP run more engagement sessions, encouraging residents on the correct reporting procedures.
- Has CSP priorities change from offending to re-offending?
- Can the keys on the CSP Action Plan be explained?
- Will the integration of the migrant community action plan be shared?
- Can officers expand on “Improving prospects for youths” and Taxi safety (as seen on the action plan)?
- Will the CSP plans be coming to Overview and Scrutiny?
- Can we have a verbal update from KCC and Home Start Shepway on their current activities?

Officers responded to several points raised by members, including:

- How to tackle hate crimes are discussed regularly in meetings, including those with CSU and multi-agency meetings concerning Napier Barracks which includes work with the voluntary sector and projects with organisations such as friends or Napier.
- CSP does not receive much direct funding, however, the partnership is always looking to seek further funding where possible. The Partnership would support fund raising projects for the youth club closures.
- The crime data is collated by the analytical team; however, the committee's feedback will be passed onto the team.
- The police recognise under reporting, the high demand on 101 call centres and that the online reporting mechanisms may not be suitable for everyone.
- CSP priorities have not changed when it comes to offending, it will continue to tackle offending. However, the partnership is also working with the probation service to try and tackle re-offending.
- The keys on the action plan are for office use only, it is to help officers keep track on the status of projects.
- The integration of migrant community action plan is ongoing. The CSP are having discussions with other agencies and the information pertaining to the action plan is sensitive and therefore cannot be shared with the Committee.
- Improving prospects for youth is diversionary work. Identifying and diverting youths from criminality.
- The CSP is working to support taxi's, with the potential to utilise Taxi Driver Knowledge regarding crime (i.e., drugs, sex working/brothels).
- With regards to whether the CSP plan will be coming back to this committee. It is for the Corporate Leadership Team to decide.
- KCC and Home Start Shepway officers updated the committee with their recent activity, including, the one stop shop supporting victims of domestic abuse, the Safeguarding Road Show, which brings awareness of domestic abuse, prevent and knife crime to youths within school settings and domestic abuse champions:
 - <https://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/latest-news-articles-advice/become-an-end-domestic-abuse-employer-champion/> (Employer Form).
 - <https://forms.office.com/e/yW2R3mfjpu> (Employee Form).

The Committee resolved to receive and note report OS/23/04 and the Community Safety Partnership updates.