

Sittingbourne Local Engagement Forum – 17 June 2014

You Said	We Did
Kent Police	
<p>A representative from Kent Police attended the meeting to provide an update.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a review of public sector spending in 2010 and there was a £50,000,000 nationally cut. This cut led to 2 directorates being formed; 1 to deal with the 999 service and 1 as a neighbourhood team, resulting in a 1300 staff cut. After another review took place, the Police have been looking at how to do things more effectively with less resource and have provided additional, proactive police dedicated to Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheppey town centres. This has freed up resource to introduce Sargeant-constables. Community Sergeants', who are part of a team of 4, have now started working as of June. Proactive policing has enabled 25 arrests to take place, seizing £1500 worth of stolen goods. • It was confirmed that PCSO numbers have not been reduced in Swale. • Further to the concerns of Island residents regarding response times, shift patterns have been introduced which include overlaps which will speed up response times at an incident. • Crime in the last 10-14 days has subsided in Sittingbourne. Recently, the football has been taken into account with the risk of increased problems. However, there have been no incidents of disorder.
<p>Cllr Mike Whiting asked if all local pubs stay open for the football?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all pubs have the facilities, such as big screens. A lot of pubs can not self manage big events.
<p>Cllr Baldock asked if the general trouble, leading to arrests, in Sittingbourne High Street is frequent?</p> <p>What is the likelihood to encounter a problem?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is only a small amount of trouble in Sittingbourne high street due to it not having a thriving night time economy. In Swale, the Island has the highest number of night time economy issues, especially throughout the Summer due to tourist numbers being higher. Due to the recent work restructure, an inspector is available to be on duty all night and inspectors have the authority to shut pubs/clubs down in 48 hours. • There is a low chance of a problem occurring due to regular license visits. Preloading of drink means that trouble is probably more likely to occur out of town.
<p>Cllr Roger Truelove asked if the KCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darkness can put people off committing a crime. Statistics are being gathered

lights out system will have an impact upon community safety?	throughout the trial period to see if an increase/decrease in crime has occurred in relation to the lights out.
Pete Flynn, Residents Association, asked if PCSO's will remain in the high street?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, the bid was won.
Cllr Ben Stokes asked if there could be more knowledge of PCSOs in villages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to PCSOs, have to service demands elsewhere. 2 or 3 PCSOs with more visible contact will be present in areas were the trouble is. There will always be an officer nearby to deal with any trouble in Wards.
A resident raised the issue of signage being on pavements and causing obstruction problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was stated that permission from KCC for signage to be placed on pathways is essential.
Kent Fire and Rescue	
Mark Innes from Kent Fire and Rescue attended the meeting to provide an update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark discussed that there is a large problem with fly tipping but liaison is occurring with the community safety unity at SBC. • Mark reported on 2 incidents in the last month, both being house fires. 2 appliances attended the scene, both taking different routes. Neither of the fire engines could turn the corner due to cars being parked inconsiderately. • If absolutely necessary, parked cars can be moved by the appliances in order to reach the destination. However, this is not a solution due to the economic value attached.
Cllr Mike Whiting asked how much of a fire hazard fly tipping was causing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a large fire hazard and also has a big impact on the environment, costs of running the fire service etc.
Is the issue due to people parking on double-yellow lines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, but in some cases, it is people not taking into consideration that emergency appliances may require access.
A member of the residents group stated that they would like to work with Council/Kent Fire and rescue to add yellow lines where necessary and reduce pathway width. Will engines be getting smaller?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison will occur between residents group, Swale Borough Council and Kent Fire and Rescue. Engines will not be getting any smaller as the pumps in the appliances are now designed to do everything and so there will be fewer fire stations with a more varied range of pumps.
Is there a solution to reduce car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no finalised solution but there are many options that could be taken such as

<p>vandalism figures so that people aren't as worried about not parking directly outside their property.</p>	<p>introducing restricted parking. A lot of roads are not designed to have more than one car parked per household.</p>
<p>Cllr Mike Baldwin suggested that there needs to be more enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Kitson stated that there are civil enforcement officers working in the evening. If yellow lines are present, a penalty notice will be given. Due to not having the power to deal with cars where there aren't yellow lines, it was suggested that a leaflet produced by KFRS relating to the issue could be placed on the car to make them think about their actions and the consequences it could cause.
<p>Spirit of Sittingbourne</p>	
<p>Pete Raine, Director of Regeneration, attended the meeting to provide an update.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Station Square which will transform the arrival at Sittingbourne, creating a welcoming, shared space for pedestrians, cyclists, taxi drop off, kiss-and-ride and bus and rail interchange. • A completely new Cultural Quarter with an 8-screen multiplex cinema and flexible performance venue. The square in the Cultural Quarter will be able to be cleared for weekends and special events such as markets, performances and sporting occasions. • A brand new Civic Quarter made up of three components: a civic building, a health centre and retail space. • A pedestrian-friendly spine of activity connecting the land to the north of the railway line with the town centre under the railway arch. High quality public realm, way finding, lighting and art works will increase footfall into the town centre. • Other phases of the development that will include residential and large format retail developments at other locations in the town centre. • The Legal make up has slightly changed and now consists of Cathedral, Essential Land, Quinn Estates and Architect Guy Hollaway. • Charlotte Street – 150 new houses which will go to Committee in July. • Bell Centre – Owners went to bankruptcy and the demolition has now been finished. The centre is now on the market in the hope of interest from developers. • Tesco Site – the Tesco site is a large unused area and a meeting has been scheduled with Tesco to discuss opportunities. • As part of the planning application, there will be a 6 week consultation period. Before submitting, a presentation will be available. This informal consultation is due to start

	<p>mid July and the formal consultation will be after Summer. It was suggested that a representative could be invited to provide the presentation at the next LEFs.</p>
<p>Andy Hudson asked about Phoenix House and why no community space provision had been included in the new civic building?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC own Phoenix House and lease to developers. He was unable to reassure that a community space would be included in the new civic centre as it is not part of Phase 1. It is down to KCC to keep the remaining land they currently have and lease again as a community centre.
<p>Parking Enforcement</p>	
<p>Jeff Kitson and Brian Planner provided a presentation on parking enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Kitson explained that Parking is an emotive issue. • Civil parking enforcement is necessary as it encourages the free flow of traffic on the highway, ensuring that all drivers have equal opportunity to park on and off street, to protect the Councils P&D income (£1.5m), to ensure that access to property is maintained and to ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians. • There was an explanation of when a penalty notice would be given and at what severity the contravention is. • Jeff Kitson discussed that introducing a 'pay as you leave' procedure is not an effective option as it is too expensive and tariffs would have to increase to cover the costs which is not appropriate. He informed residents of alternative solutions, such as the introduction of a system that enables the purchase of parking tickets on a mobile phone. This will not mean parking ticket machines will be removed, it is just an additional way of reducing the number of people receiving penalty notices.
<p>Andy Hudson asked what to do if the machine is broken?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't write a note. All machines are linked to a central computer and so all times/dates are recorded from when the machine stopped working to when it began working again.
<p>Why do the machines breakdown so often?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism is a large issue which is trying to be reduced. Also, a few of the machines are solar powered and therefore are dependent on the weather. These machines are being identified and looking to be upgraded.
<p>Pete Flynn asked if there would be an additional charge for the mobile phone app.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a small charge which has been negotiated to a much lower price than other areas. If a customer was buying a SBC tariff for £1.00 on their mobile phone, the price would be £1.08. However, for one year, it has been secured with the supplier to be free of charge. More details are to be obtained to identify whether it will

<p>How much has been put on top of the £1.5 million since improved enforcement has been in place?</p> <p>Legislation dictates you need to use any money you get with regards to highways, does this mean SBC maintain the highways?</p> <p>Could it not be used to improve machines that are very expensive, use additional money this way?</p> <p>Has no additional revenue been obtained by SBC since improving parking enforcement in Sittingbourne?</p> <p>Where has the additional money gone?</p> <p>Observed 2 officers giving a parking fine in 30 seconds. Why do two officers have to go together?</p>	<p>be free for Swale Borough Council or free for the customer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a considerable cost in running car parks and the operating surplus from car parks is around 800,000. Income is made from penalty charges but that income covers its costs of enforcement so is effectively cost neutral. • No, if there is a surplus generated, it can only be used for certain things • No you can't, there isn't a surplus. If there was a surplus, the money can only be used on highways or provision of new car parks, not maintaining old ones. • Without enforcement, Council wouldn't achieve that budget. This applies to on-street and car park enforcement. • More parking fines have been issued so there has been less of a loss in budget. • In some areas, it is much safer for two officers to be working together for safety reasons.
<p>Cllr Ben Stokes asked if double red lines would be more effective?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can only be used in London.
<p>Cllr Gareth Randall asked that, if the machine is down does the car park type (long/short stay) affect the procedure?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a machine breaks down in a long stay car park, the car park will be out of enforcement all day. If a machine breaks down in a short stay car park, the car park will be out of enforcement for 4 hours.
<p>Ownership of pavements/street lights</p>	
<p>Jean Spain tried to report sand being left on the pavement in Central Avenue and there was a lot of confusion over ownership?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill Ronan to provide a response over ownership of pavements. It was stated that there is a website where you can find out who owns what pieces of land etc.

Breastfeeding	
<p>Hannah Perkin attended the meeting to provide an update.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PS Breastfeeding CIC has a contract with KCC for public health. In Swale, there is a culture change to instigate. There is an aim to have one specialist clinic children centre in each district across Kent. • Peer supporters, who are all volunteers, have come together to provide support and advice for those looking to breastfeed. • Hannah Perkin spoke about the legalities with breastfeeding in public and informed all that it is against equality legislation to ask a woman to stop breastfeeding in a public area. • Recently piloted “bond with baby” sessions which provide breastfeeding information as well as other information on parenting etc.
<p>Pete Raine suggested putting in contact with CCG and Health and Wellbeing Board and asked why rates are so low?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah reported that the rates are low due to cultural differences, teenage pregnancies, educational issues, lack of training is provided for midwives and it is a deprived area. • She also identified that it is extremely easy to access formula milk for free and so there is no financial benefit from breastfeeding.