

Compliance and Enforcement Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Compliance and Enforcement Board held on Microsoft Teams on the **24th January 2023**.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Chairman);

Cllrs. Feacey, Forest, Shorter.

Apologies:

Cllr. Buchanan.

Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager.

Also in attendance:

Team Leader Environmental Enforcement; Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader, Team Leader Planning Enforcement, Senior Planning Lawyer, Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer, Member Services Officer.

Simon Johnson – Kent Police.

1. Notes of the Meeting of 25th October 2022

1.1 The Board agreed the notes as an accurate record.

2. Environmental Crime Enforcement in Ashford

3.1 The Team Leader Environmental Enforcement introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the key points within the report.

3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points/questions were raised:

- A Member asked whether cannabis waste could be traced to source. The Team Leader Environmental Enforcement responded that no evidence had been found on the recent discovery to enable authorities to pursue the culprit. However, landowners were being made aware of how to dispose safely of any waste found on their land. In response to another question, the Team Leader Environmental Enforcement confirmed that the recent incident at Chilmington was not associated with the adjacent KCC-owned land. The Team Leader Environmental Enforcement advised that, based on current waste fly-tipping, there appeared to be a significant increase in the number of factories in the Borough.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour in Ashford - Update

- 3.1 The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader introduced this item and drew Members attention to the key points within the report.
- 3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points/questions were raised:
 - Members thanked Simon Johnson for attending as a representative of Kent Police.
 - A Member said that he recognized the work being done at present with regard to e-scooters but considered that there was still some way to go in South Ashford, where there was evidence of a continued problem with e-scooters on pathways. He wanted to see a consistent approach to this problem throughout the Borough. Simon Johnson responded that e-scooters continued to be popular, and this was an issue which required multi-agency action.
 - The Member went on to say that he was pleased to see the work currently being done in the Town Centre, but considered that there continued to be issues of anti-social behavior in the lower High Street, around McDonalds and the fountain. He congratulated the team on their current efforts but said that he hoped to see this work continued in an effort to improve the situation in future. Simon Johnson confirmed that the police service was committed to future operations in a coordinated approach, with Youth Services taking the lead. The Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader emphasized that this issue required a multi-agency approach and should not be considered solely the responsibility of the police service. She said that upfront preparation work was key to seeing future improvements and to this end PCC funding money would be used to engage youth provider workers and offer workshops in the Town Centre, as well as in other areas of the Borough. She added this this work was critical as the first stage in building a platform to support young people, with police involvement to be provided as a last resort.
 - A Member commented on current issues with the 101 service and unanswered calls. Simon Johnson agreed that there were challenges at present and significant demands on the service. He advised that the police service was going through a Neighbourhood Policing Review model at present, which would help to develop a new approach. The police service was in regular contact with local businesses, with monthly meetings and frequent liaison. The recent monthly figures had been positive with a lower need to provide enforcement action. This suggested that the approach was moving in the right direction, but there was still work to be done.

- A Member said that in May 2022 CI Matthew Burbeck had stated that a number of new police officers would be made available to the Borough, with named ward officers. The Member asked when that would come into being. Simon Johnson replied that the consultation period had just been completed. Officers would now review the feedback and finalise a model. A list of wards and officer names would be available in due course, but the final details had not yet been consolidated. The Chairman asked the Community Safety and Resilience Team Leader to let Board Members see a copy of this list when it became available.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

4. Planning Enforcement Update

- 4.1 The Team Leader Planning Enforcement introduced this item and highlighted the key points in the report.
- 4.2 The Chairman said that he was pleased to see that a small amount of extra resource would be available in future, and he and other Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to the team.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

5. Date of Next Meetings

- 5.1 25th April 2023 at 10am
25th July 2023 at 10am
24th October 2023 at 10am

Councillor Bell (Chairman)
Compliance and Enforcement Board

CEB
240123

Telephone: 01233 330349 Email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
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