

Compliance and Enforcement Board

Notes of a Meeting of the Compliance and Enforcement Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on the **28th January 2020**.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Chairman);

Cllrs. Bartlett (ex-officio), Buchanan, Chilton, Shorter.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c) Councillor Chilton attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Ward.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Barrett, Ward, Neighbourhood Services Manager, Housing Operations Manager, Senior Planning Lawyer.

Also Present:

Director of Law and Governance, Head of Development Management and Strategic Sites, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager, Senior Area Manager, Community Safety Officer, Planning – Work Experience, Member Services Liaison Manager

1. Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Buchanan made a Voluntary Announcement as he knew one of the owners of a site referred to in the Planning Enforcement paper.

2. Notes of the Meeting of 7th October 2019

- 2.1 The Board agreed the notes as an accurate record.

3. Enforcement Activity Update – Housing

- 3.1 The Senior Area Manager introduced the report which gave an update on the various enforcement activities in relation to housing services. The report provided information on Court Wurtin, Closure Orders, Other Enforcement Tools, Chilmington, and Private Sector Housing.
- 3.2 The Chairman opened the item up to the Board and the following responses were given to questions/comments:-
 - The Senior Area Manager agreed to check the position in terms of progress in identifying the owners of other properties in Court Wurtin.

- The Senior Area Manager explained that the imposition of a full Closure Order prevented residents from occupying a property and it also restricted other people from visiting the property. The granting of a full Closure Order also provided mandatory grounds for repossession of the property. A part closure enabled a tenant to remain but restricted access for visitors other than representatives from public bodies. The taking of such action helped reduce the operation of county lines activities in the Borough.
- The metal fencing recently installed at Chilmington Caravan Site was around the boundary of the site owned by the Borough Council and tenants had been asked to bring items within their ownership back to within the overall site area. In terms of the maintenance of the boundary of the Kent County Council site, the Senior Area Manager agreed to refer this question back to the Housing Operations Manager. It was also noted that all pitches on the site were currently occupied.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the Board received and noted the report.

4. Environmental Crime Enforcement in Ashford

- 4.1 The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager introduced his report which identified environmental crime enforcement activities for the most recent period, and highlighted the key points in the report. The recruitment process had commenced for the establishment of an in house enforcement team and the posts were currently being advertised externally. The necessary equipment was also in the process of being purchased and the project to implement an electronic Fixed Penalty Notice system (Star Traq) had been completed.
- 4.2 In response to a comment about the success of the Duty of Care training undertaken with businesses, the Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager agreed to use the outcome of this event in a proactive way and he also said that an evening training session would also be arranged to enable more businesses to attend.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

5 Anti-Social Behaviour in Ashford - Update

- 5.1 The report provided the quarterly Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) performance update. The Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager ran through the performance data for the last quarter. The report also detailed work underway or planned through the Community Safety Partnership and complex ASB cases that had required a multi-agency approach. There had been a reduction

in the number of ASB reports made to ABC this quarter from 107 to 57, with 45 being through the Report It App. The reduction could largely be attributed to the fact that the previous reporting period had covered the school summer holiday period.

- 5.2 In terms of the Community Protection Warnings given to persistent beggars, the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager said that these cases related to beggars who operated in several towns as part of a gang. Officers were also working with other local authorities on this particular issue.
- 5.3 With reference to Public Space Protection Orders, and in particular gating orders, the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager said that she had copies of the Orders with her if members of the Board wished to inspect them. In terms of the use of the mobile CCTV camera and its placement on lampposts, which required load testing which incurred a fee, it was suggested that this issue be raised with Kent County Council as part of the District Deal arrangements.
- 5.4 A Member advised that from his KCC ward member grant he had helped fund a decibel meter for the police to use when dealing with incidents of anti social behaviour associated with 'boy racers'. Residents would be encouraged to report such incidents via the report it app.
- 5.5 In terms of the payment of fines issued by the Court, the Director of Law and Governance advised that the Court was responsible for enforcing the payment and would pursue those who had not paid.
- 5.6 In conclusion the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager introduced the Board to the Officer who had been appointed as the Community Safety Officer on an initial 18 months contract.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

6 Planning Enforcement Update

- 6.1 The Head of Development Management and Strategic Sites introduced the report which provided an update on the work of the Planning Enforcement team. She drew particular attention to: - a reduction in the number of live cases; High Court Injunctions and Committal Proceedings; Planning Contravention Notices; Appeals Against the Issuing of Enforcement Notices; and future Anticipated Action.
- 6.2 In terms of one of the static/holiday home sites listed under Anticipated Action, the Head of Development Management and Strategic Sites explained that the implications for the Council of taking action in this case were being carefully considered.

- 6.3 In response to a question from a Member about legislation dealing with the proceeds of crime and whether this was relevant in terms of some of the cases under consideration, the Director of Law and Governance agreed that this could be examined.
- 6.4 In conclusion, the Head of Development Management and Strategic Sites advised that this would be her last Board meeting as she would be leaving the Borough Council to take a post in another part of the Country. The Chairman and Members of the Board thanked the Head of Development Management and Strategic Sites for all of her work and wished her well for the future.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

7 Date of Next Meeting

- 7.1 Tuesday 28th April 2020 at 3.30pm in the Council Chamber.

Councillor Bell (Chairman)
Compliance and Enforcement Board

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