

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - CCTV AND COMMUNITY SAFETY MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2006

Councillors *Davies (Chair), *Dobbie, *Mughal and *Portess

* Member present

Also present: Mr. N. Price and Mr. C. Lane (Tottenham Traders Association), Mr. S. Mehmet (Green Lanes Traders Association), Ian Sygrave (Harringay Community Safety Partnership), Profy Matebele (Garden residents Association), Ms. D. Miles and Mr. j. Hadju (Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association), Mr M. Pollak (CCTV Coordinator), Mr. S. Sweeney (Community Safety Team)

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

24. URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no such declarations.

26. MINUTES

AGREED;

That the minutes of the meeting of 2 October be confirmed.

27. CCTV AND COMMUNITY SAFETY - EVIDENCE FROM RESIDENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Panel received evidence from a number of local residents and traders from three locations within the Borough – Muswell Hill, Green Lanes and Tottenham.

Residents and traders from Green Lanes felt that they had been misled about the purpose of CCTV cameras that had been installed in the area. They had been told that their purpose was to help keep bus lanes clear and to promote community safety. Since their installation, people had stopped abusing bus lanes but the cameras were now being used to enforce yellow box junction offences. The camera near Endymion Road was now the 6th. highest earning camera in London. They felt that the cameras were not there for community safety purposes but to raise money for the Council.

Mr Pollak stated that the cameras in question had been installed using Transport for London (TfL) funding and were only used by the parking service. The community safety and parking control rooms were moving to new premises where they would share a single control room. TfL cameras would continue to be used for yellow box junction and bus lane enforcement whilst the community safety cameras would be used for solely for community safety purposes and not for parking except in areas where it was considered too dangerous for parking attendants (there were currently 4 community safety cameras that

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - CCTV AND COMMUNITY SAFETY MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2006

were being used for this purpose). The new working arrangements would better allow parking cameras to be used for community safety purposes in out of hours periods and the ultimate aim was that all cameras would be used around the clock.

Parking cameras were already sometimes used for community safety and the Police had recently used ones in Green Lanes as part of an operation. In addition to the parking cameras, there were also community safety cameras present in the Green Lanes area.

In respect of Tottenham, it was also felt by traders in the area that the cameras were not being used for the benefit of residents but to raise revenue. They had originally been told that cameras would be used for community safety purposes after 7:00 p.m. and at weekends and that they could also be used to monitor any incident that took place during the day. This did not appear to be happening as cameras appeared to be switched off after hours. Cameras that had been placed in car parks had proven to be very successful and made people feel safer.

There was a radio link between shops and the CCTV control room but this had proven to be very inefficient and it was difficult to get hold of anyone. It was felt that the system needed good management with operators being more proactive in their approach. They felt that having CCTV cameras was a good thing but community safety needed to be their highest priority and determine their use.

Mr. Pollak stated that community safety always took precedence in the event of an incident taking place near parking cameras and this was explicit within all the protocols. However, communication between the two teams of operators currently undertaking to work could be improved and the new joint control room would facilitate improvement in this.

Residents and traders present at the meeting requested that there be better information about the various systems. The Panel noted that residents from the Harringay Ladder appeared to be confused about the various cameras and their purposes. In addition, there appeared to be a high level of cynicism with residents feeling that they were purely there in order to gather revenue rather than to protect the public. It had taken residents a considerable amount of time to get cameras placed on the Harringay Passage and it was felt that this contrasted with the priority given to parking issues. They felt that there needed to be far greater clarity as well as consultation with residents although that it was recognised that some information might have to be withheld for security reasons. Information could be given out via Area Assemblies and through Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

In respect of Tottenham, it was felt that the location of some cameras was not ideal. Better positioning of cameras would enable greater usage. However, there had been a noticeable beneficial effect in the West Green Road area although it was possible that some crime had been displaced to side streets. Some of the revenue generated through parking cameras could be used to improve the community safety function.

In reference to Muswell Hill, there had been pressure from residents for action to be taken and the Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association had met with officers and contacted the Executive Member for Crime and Community Safety and the Borough Commander. Crime had increased in the area and it was felt that CCTV cameras would provide reassurance, act as a deterrent and help direct Police operations. The current community safety system that operated in the area only allowed the use of one camera at any particular time. The

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - CCTV AND COMMUNITY SAFETY MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2006

current system was not satisfactory and it was known that the Police did not feel that it was adequate either. The cameras needed to be upgraded and integrated fully into the rest of the system. It was unclear where the funding for improving the system was likely to come from. The current system had not met their expectations and had not helped to reduce crime. However, they felt that CCTV should be capable of making a contribution. Not everyone knew that the cameras were there and this meant that people were less likely to be reassured by them or deterred from committing crimes. Amongst those that did, it was felt that the outcome had represented a missed opportunity.

Mr. Sweeny reported that the Police Video Sentry system was being installed in Crouch End and Muswell Hill. This recorded around the clock and had been shown to be very effective in placing suspects in particular locations. In respect of the fixed CCTV cameras, two bids for funding had been put in by the Police to upgrade the system. Evaluations of CCTV had shown that, whilst it was a useful tool, it had its limitations and was not the solution that it had originally thought to be.

Mr Pollak stated that the community safety cameras were generally placed in areas where there were high crime levels. Parking cameras were placed on the principal bus routes. Video sentry was particularly effective in addressing street crime and had proven very effective in Wood Green. In addition, two housing estates had systems that were linked in. Housing cameras could be monitored in this way but there was a charge.

Residents and traders felt that signage was important so that people knew that the systems were working. In addition, it was important that traders the radio systems worked properly.

The Panel thanked residents and traders for attending the meeting and agreed to circulate them with the findings of the review.

28. PROGRESS WITH REVIEW

Noted.

29. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no such items.

**Cllr Matt Davies
Chair**