

MINUTES OF MEETING ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON Thursday, 12th November, 2015, 6.30 - 9.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Adam Jogee (Chair), Patrick Berryman, John Bevan, Barbara Blake, Sarah Elliott and Bob Hare

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Peacock.

28. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

30. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

31. LICENSEES

Daliah Barrett, Lead Officer – Licensing, reported on joint action by the Council and the Police to improve engagement with licensees and, in particular, address problems associated with the sale of high strength lager, which could be a factor in violent incidents. Efforts had been undertaken to promote engagement on-line but this approach had not proven to be successful. Attempts had therefore been taken to encourage them to attend meetings. The initial meeting in Tottenham had not attracted representation from any off licenses. A number of licensees nevertheless attended, including several from premises that had been involved in Pubwatch. The meeting had been useful as it had provided an opportunity for the licensees to air their concerns. A slightly different and more proactive approach had been undertaken for the meeting in Wood Green and this had produced slightly better results with improved attendance and representation from some local off licences. Of particular significance was the fact that one off licence had said that they would consider no longer stocking high strength lager once their current stock was exhausted.

Licensees had been made aware that they were being monitored. This was undertaken through regular visits and test purchasing. A licensing forum had been set up on-line for them to share information and guidance. Pubwatch was also being revived in Tottenham and elsewhere within the borough.

Members of the Panel suggested that local Pubwatch representatives could be linked into Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels. Officers agreed to investigate if this was feasible. Councillor Barbara Blake asked for further information regarding the area covered by the Wood Green Pubwatch and it was agreed that details would be sent to her.

It was noted that it was not possible to require attendance by licensees at Pubwatch meetings and a number were not involved in it. However, there was a lot of communication with licensees. New licensees were given two days of training including reference to responsible trading and they should therefore be aware of expectations. Appointments were also made with all new applicants to go through their responsibilities should they be successful.

Acting Detective Superintendent Paul Trevers felt that the Safer Communities Partnership could consider improving the sharing of information regarding anti social behaviour. Sharing such data with licensees as this could help them be better informed about local issues and encourage them to respond accordingly should any instances be linked to their business.

Panel Members suggested that a video could be used to communicate with licensees. In addition, they felt that the Licensees Forum should obtain feedback from licensees on what they felt would be the most effective means of communication with them. They also felt that the Forum should consider how best to address the training needs of new staff in off licenses.

AGREED:

1. That officers give further consideration to the comments and suggestions of the Panel, as outlined above;
2. That information regarding the area covered by Wood Green Pubwatch be shared with Councillor Barbara Blake; and
3. That a report on progress be made to the Panel in due course.

32. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS; CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

The Panel questioned Councillor Bernice Vanier, the Cabinet Member for Communities, regarding developments concerning her portfolio.

The Panel noted that progress had been made with the development of the forum of local businesses and crime reduction partners and a senior partner from Metro Bank had been appointed as Chair.

The Cabinet Member stated that a large amount of reassurance work had been undertaken with the Muslim community, including visits to local mosques. This had been done with the assistance of Haringey Racial Equality Council (HREC). The Council participated in the Prevent programme and outreach was an integral part of this. Data had been analysed to determine whether there had been any recent increase in hate crime against the Muslim community and it had been determined that

there had only been one additional incident in the period examined. It therefore appeared that any perceived increase in Islamophobia might not be reflective of the actuality. However, it was possible that there was under reporting.

Mr Trevers reported that he had attended a meeting with Leon Joseph, Senior Co-ordinator (Prevent) and HREC where some communities had indicated that they were unsure of when they should call 999. It was possible that Islamophobia was similar to how domestic violence had been historically in respect of under reporting. The perception was that attacks were commonplace. A greater focus on reassurance would help to address this. In particular, information on action that had been taken against perpetrators could be shared better, via social media in particular. It was noted that further work was taking place in respect of the data and agreed that an update would be provided to the Panel once this was completed, which was likely to be in two months time.

The Panel noted that £600,000 over 3 years had been used to fund additional Police officers for the borough. Mr Trevers commented that the funding gave the Police a clear partnership focus. In the absence of this, the deployment of officers might be led by other priorities. In particular, it gave the Council greater influence over where Police were used. A report was being prepared on the impact of the additional officers in the last 12 months.

A Panel Member asked whether guidance was given to Police officers about informing victims of burglaries that they were at risk from being a repeat victim. It was not uncommon for people had been burgled to be burgled again soon after. Mr Trevers stated that officers should be aware of this and, if this had not been relayed to residents, it was an issue that needed to be taken up as part of training. Officers normally undertook a thorough assessment following a burglary, which included calling at neighbouring houses. It was noted that the levels of burglary had been coming down and that this was one of the positive aspects of the most recent crime statistics.

It was noted that there were a number of performance targets in respect of community safety in order to monitor the effectiveness of action taken. Quarterly returns were required to be made to the MOPAC. Targets were now fewer in number but tighter. Community safety was mainly funded by grants, particularly from the MOPAC. Of particular note was the funding that had been obtained for a project focussed upon mental health and gangs. Funding from the MOPAC was not more strategically focussed and was set for a period of 4 years, renewable annually. Additional funds could be obtained by pooling resources and match funding. Additional funding had also been obtained for a joint project with Enfield Council focussed on accident and emergency at the North Middlesex Hospital.

Action was being undertaken to join together all enforcement activities. This would align services, improve communication and assist in the prioritisation of action. In particular, it would assist in addressing a range of issues arising from houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). There was a desire to encourage residents to complain when necessary so that action could be taken.

Panel Members felt that there was a need for quicker and more robust action to be taken. It was noted that joint enforcement would mean that one officer was able to deal with a number of different matters.

AGREED:

That the issue of Islamophobia be considered as an agenda item at a future meeting of the Panel.

33. CRIME PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

The Panel received a presentation regarding the latest crime statistics. It was noted that burglary levels were down but it was hoped that significant further reductions would be achieved with the introduction of MetTrace traceable liquid. There was a dedicated team rolling this out in Haringey.

In addition to violence with injury and robbery, there were also issues with confidence levels and the re-emergence of knife enabled crime. Confidence was now a priority issue in 7 different wards within Haringey. The presence of Police officers on the street and where they could be seen would make a difference to this. However, there had been an overall reduction in MOPAC 7 crimes of 20.1%

Mr Trevers reported that there was a Haringey wide plan for the Police to address the issue of confidence and the target was to achieve a borough wide figure of 70%. It was agreed that he would report on plans to address this issue to a future meeting of the Panel. Communication of successful action to residents was one way in which confidence levels could be increased as they were currently not always aware that particular crimes had been cleared up.

In respect of violence with injury, Mr Trevers reported that there had been an overall increase of 40% in it last year. However, the MOPAC had earlier accepted that much of this was due to an increased efficiency in reporting of violent crime following a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate. The result of this was that incidents had been being recorded where previously they would not have been. The figures were now levelling out. The actual incidence of violence with injury had not changed markedly though.

On terms of theft from the person, these figures could be inflated by events at Alexandra Palace and Finsbury Park where the loss of mobile phones often occurred. These were recorded as stolen if this was alleged by individuals and the Police were obliged to record it as such.

Councillor Elliott raised the issue of the increase in burglaries in the Crouch End area. Mr Trevers felt that it was likely that it had been caused by displacement from the Ladder area, where MetTrace had been promoted. In addition, burglars often returned to premises which they have already burgled.

It was noted that there had been an increase in knife enabled crime. This category referred to any sharp instrument. There had been 25 victims in an 18 week period. None of the injuries had been life changing in nature. There had been massive

reductions in some other forms of crime, such as theft from a motor vehicle but Panel Members felt that it would be preferable if these reductions had been for knife crime. The issues that residents were most concerned about were robbery and violent crimes. Whilst the reduction in theft from a motor vehicle was welcome, much of this was due to cars now being more difficult to break into.

Reference was made to a number of violent incidents that had taken place in parks recently. Mr Trevers reported that there was a higher risk of crime anywhere groups of people gathered. Plain clothes officers regularly patrolled parks. Tasking was based on available data and officers could be deployed in parks in response to any increase in offences.

Panel Members also raised the issue of diversionary activities, which could play a useful role in engaging with groups of young people. Mr Trevers reported that the Police were trying to bring diversionary activities together and were hoping to go live with a specific programme in January.

AGREED:

That the Police Service be requested to report to a future meeting of the Panel on their plans to improve confidence levels amongst residents within the borough.

34. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING MODEL

Mr Trevers reported that there were currently no plans in place to reduce Police numbers or amend the Neighbourhood Policing Model pending the outcome of the upcoming Public Spending Review.

In respect of Tottenham Police Station, there were currently two options;

- To refurbish it; or
- To find alternative accommodation.

The Police were sensitive to its symbolic status and local sensitivities but the current accommodation was regarded as not fit for purpose. In particular, access was poor and there were very few private areas. However, leaving Tottenham could be viewed as a negative move by the local community. Funding would be sought to address this issue from the MOPAC.

AGREED:

That the Panel be kept informed on further developments.

35. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE

Claire Kowalska, Community Safety Strategic Manager, reported that action was being taken to develop plans to address the low levels of confidence that there were locally. This was to increase levels of reporting and provide reassurance. There was still some way to go before a strategy was developed but progress was being made.

Of particular note was the work being undertaken in schools to address hate crime. The Police were filling the void over what had previously been undertaken by the

Council but resources were still considerably reduced. Specific work was being done to address violence against women and girls. In addition, the Police were currently putting together a public engagement plan.

Eubert Malcolm, Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services, reported that work to improve confidence was being undertaken in 7 high crime wards. This included joint work to reduce violence with injury and the deployment of the SOS bus in agreed locations. It was currently a trial programme but would be rolled out further if successful.

In answer to a question, it was noted that the current Noel Park programme had been funded from a successful lottery bid. Joined up enforcement was currently being developed and it was hoped that this would lead to a range of officers picking up and addressing a range of issues and more joined-up activity. It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be doing specific work on this issue.

In respect of the SOS bus, it was noted that this brought together a range of health professionals and was not aimed at enforcement but more focussed on alcohol reduction. Haringey Advisory Group on Alcohol (HAGA) had reported that they had undertaken the equivalent of 6 months work in the 8 nights they had worked on the SOS bus.

AGREED:

That updates on progress to improve confidence levels be provided to the Panel in due course.

36. MINUTES

In reference to item CSP17 – Cabinet Member Questions - of the minutes of the meeting of 13 October, it was noted that the issue in respect of the recycling of glass was that it was necessary to recycle it separately rather than mingled with other items. The current arrangements led to a loss of both energy and glass. In addition, although it had been stated that re-use of items left at recycling did not currently take place, NLWA had not stated that it was not possible.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 13 October be approved.

37. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Chair proposed that the work plan be amended to include a piece of work on crime in parks. Cllr Wright, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported that there were a number of issues that needed to be addressed, including drugs, rough sleepers and people feeling unsafe. Other potential issues that were raised by Panel Members were closing of parks at night and by-laws, which differed from park to park. It was agreed that initial scoping for this piece of work would be undertaken before Christmas.

AGREED:

That a short piece of work on crime in parks be added to the work plan and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to endorse this amendment at its next meeting.

The meeting ended at 21:00 hrs.

CHAIR: Councillor Adam Jogee

Signed by Chair

Date