

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL 10 SEPTEMBER 2012

The draft minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Panel are herewith attached. The main items discussed were as follows:

1. ADDRESSING GANGS IN HARINGEY

The Panel received a presentation on gangs which defined their features and provided an outline of activity in Haringey. A multi agency approach to addressing the issue was undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership which aimed to prevent and minimise violence between gangs. The Police also undertook specific work to address the issue. In addition, the Police undertook work to engage with children and young people in schools as well as diversionary activities.

The Panel noted that there appeared to be only one strategic objective behind interventions and that there was currently nothing explicit on stopping gangs from forming and preventing young people from joining. We also noted that the Mayor's new strategy had a greater focus on prevention. The overall approach to gangs was nevertheless wider and would be outlined within the borough's violence strategy.

We noted that work was currently undertaken with schools from year 6 upwards. These interventions aimed to provide young people with a clear picture of the reality of gangs. There were an increasing number of girls involved and this was being addressed within schools. Gang activity often started in schools and continued outside.

The Panel was of the view that the strategic objectives of activity in response to gangs needed to be refined further and, in particular, preventative work given a higher and more explicit profile. In addition, efforts to address the issue within schools needed to be re-doubled as part of the preventative agenda.

We **AGREED** that the Gangs Action Plan would be circulated to Panel Members.

We **RECOMMEND**:

That the Community Safety Partnership be recommended to;

- Include a more explicit focus on preventative work in its strategic objectives in respect of action to address gangs;
- Take such measures as necessary to re-double efforts to address the issue of gangs within schools as a key part of preventative work to address gangs.

2. THE USE OF TASERS

The Panel received a presentation from Sgt. Andy Harding on the extension of the distribution of tasers amongst Police officers within the borough. The Territorial Support Group (TSG) and the Police firearms unit currently had them but their distribution was to be extended to officers within boroughs. Following appropriate training, officers within Haringey were due to receive them in February 2013. 40 officers would be trained and there would be a maximum of 4 officers in two patrol vehicles that would be equipped with tasers within each borough.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked whether it would be possible to delay the deployment of tasers within the borough until the issues relating to the death of Mark Duggan had been resolved. Sgt. Harding stated that the decision to extend the

deployment of tasers had been a Metropolitan Police wide decision. Any issues in respect of this would need to be determined by the Borough Commander, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead person.

The Panel were of the view that it was important that the Police engaged fully with local communities about the roll out to ensure that there was wide awareness of the device, its potential and in which circumstances it might be used. In addition, it was important that any use was monitored closely to ensure its use did not disproportionately impact on specific communities or individuals.

We **AGREED** that the Community Safety Partnership would be invited to report back to the Panel in a years time on progress and provide appropriate monitoring information on any use of tasers within the borough.

We RECOMMEND:

1. That the Police Service be requested to give consideration to updating the public information leaflet that had been produced so that it was more specific on the potential use and impact of tasers on individuals and communities;
2. That the Police Service be invited to give a presentation to all Councillors and community leaders on the use of tasers so that the issues may be better communicated to the local community; and
3. That the Community Safety Partnership be requested to share its proposals for community engagement with the Panel so that it may feed in any suggestions that it may have.

3. LEISURE SERVICES

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that he had been informed that it would be unwise to enter into debate about the leisure contract at the moment as a decision on the award of the contract was shortly to be taken by the Council's Cabinet. It would therefore be prudent to defer debate until the process had been completed.

We were of the view that it was important that there was an opportunity for contract specifications to be scrutinised to ensure that they reflected the needs of the community. We noted that this process preceded the procurement process. Consideration could be given to how engagement was built into processes with a view looking at how this could be done at an earlier stage.

We **AGREED** that the issue would be referred back to the Panel in the new year and, in particular, the Panel would consider the engagement process with a view to making recommendations about how future processes could be improved.

Councillor Dave Winskill
Chair