

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL  
TUESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2013**

Councillors Adje, Reid and Winskill (Chair)

Apologies Councillor Basu and Bull

**LC19. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Basu and Bull.

**LC20. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**LC21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**LC22. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

None.

**LC23. MINUTES**

In respect of Tasers (item LC17; Minutes), the Chair reported that he had not yet been able to speak to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about this as he was currently abroad on holiday. He would be speaking to him on his return.

In reference to decision 2(d). of Item LC18 (Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-16), the Chair stated that he wished to place a greater emphasis on sharing responsibility for the mobile library service with other agencies within the recommendation. In addition the Panel had agreed to add another recommendation in respect of the proposed reduction in support for area forums/committees following its in depth work on this issue. This was as follows:

“That before any decision is made, clarity be provided on how the functions that directly support the work of forums/committees that are undertaken currently by the team to be deleted will continue to provided”

**AGREED:**

1. That, subject to the above mentioned comment in respect of the proposed savings from the deletion of the mobile library service, the minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2012 be approved;
2. That the following additional recommendation be made in respect of the proposed reduction to support for area forums/committees:  
“In view of Haringey’s stated commitment in the last Governance Review to devolving decision making and greater involvement of the communities in the Borough, the Panel is greatly concerned that the possibility has emerged of withdrawing the funding for a significant portion of the support currently available for area forums and committees. It recommends that, before any decision is made, clarity be provided on how the functions that directly support the work of forums/committees that are undertaken currently by the team to be deleted will continue to provided”

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**LC24. CABINET MEMBERS QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES**

Councillor Richard Watson, the Cabinet Member for Communities, outlined the main areas of work that were currently taking place within his portfolio.

- The new leisure contract was now operational. After a few initial teething problems, it was proceeding satisfactorily. A meeting had been arranged to receive feedback from users of Tottenham Green leisure centre. Any interested Members were very welcome to attend this. Similar meetings could be held in respect of other centres. The running of Finsbury Park Track and Gym had now also been passed on to an external organisation.
- Plans for the further development of libraries into community hubs were continuing. Consideration was being given to the potential for a range of additional uses. There were no plans to reduce the total number of libraries.
- The final version of the needs assessment for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Needs Assessment was almost ready. This would form part of the joint strategic needs assessment for the borough.
- The local policing model was currently being consulted upon by the Mayor's office. As part of this process, the deputy Mayor was due to visit Haringey on 20 February. The public were also welcome to give their views on the issues in question. One particular proposal was that there should only be one Police station that was open 24 hours per day and 7 days per week in each borough. The Police were also looking to reduce back office staff and costs whilst increasing front line resources. The Council had concerns about the proposal for there to only be one Police station that was open 24/7 within the borough.
- A successful exercise had been held in Noel Park ward to reduce crime. As a result of this, anti social behaviour was down by 54% and all notifiable offences by 12%.
- There was still uncertainty concerning funding as the bid for funding from the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) had yet to be determined. However, more preparatory work had been undertaken by Haringey than any other borough.
- In terms of integration, work was being done to see how partnership working could be further developed to address the issue of gangs.

The Chair reported that the Panel had agreed to look further at issues arising from the leisure procurement exercise and specifically how the community was engaged in procurement exercises. The Cabinet Member felt that the appropriate time to review the engagement that had taken place in order to make recommendations about future exercises would be after the contract had been running for a while. The next meeting of the Panel would probably be too early for this. The Panel agreed to come back to the issue in due course.

In respect of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), the Cabinet Member stated that work was needed to develop its role. In particular, it needed to be more cohesive.

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He was aware that there had not been a public meeting of the CSP in the last year and it was important that a date for one to be arranged.

The Cabinet Member reported that there was also a potential threat to fire stations. There was a need for pressure to keep facilities within the borough open. At this stage of the meeting, Councillor Adje declared an interest as he was an employee of the London Fire Brigade. The Panel noted any changes to fire services would be subject consultation.

The possibility of applying for European Social Fund money to address crime was raised. The Chief Executive reported that there were often stringent requirements for such funding and the application process could be very labour intensive.

### **AGREED:**

That a letter be written on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority expressing concern at possible reductions in fire services covering the borough.

## **LC25. CRIME STATISTICS**

Claire Kowalska, Community Safety Manager and Superintendent Mark Wolski, Police Deputy Borough Commander, reported on the latest crime figures for the borough.

It was noted that Haringey that there were a number of factors that could impact on crime figures. These included the comparatively high percentage of young people within Haringey and the high levels of population churn. In addition, the borough had high rates of mental illness, which could present a challenge. There was reason to suspect that the latest census figures for London underestimated the actual numbers. This could impact on crime figures by inflating the crime rate.

The Mayor's office had a target for reducing crime by 20% by 2020. The target was based on reductions in crime of a level that had not been previously seen.

The borough's current crime statistics showed very good progress in a number of areas. For the first time, there had been reductions in violence with injury and acquisitive crime in the winter months. This had also been achieved in the midst of a recession. In addition, there had been a large decrease in motor crime. This was due to a large extent to improved car security. One area of concern was the increase in domestic violence and one theory was that violent crime had been displaced into domestic violence.

It was noted that four of the borough's wards accounted for 40% of crime. All of these were to the east of the borough. The Cabinet Member commented that this showed the error of the proposal to reduce the hours that Tottenham Police station was open.

The Police were challenged by confidence levels locally. Although there were high levels of confidence amongst borough residents in the Police generally, there were significantly lower levels of confidence in the Police locally. How the Police engaged with the community locally was important. This might provide an opportunity to re-invent the service and they was recognised that it could do better.

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In response to a question, Mr Wolski stated that Police resources were deployed according to demand within each ward within the borough on a "pro rata" basis.

The Cabinet Member reported that community safety partners were looking at the issue of engagement generally. There were currently ward panels that focussed on crime. In addition, there were other ward and neighbourhood based bodies that focussed on a range of issues. In addition, population churn needed to be factored in.

It was noted that Haringey had been one of the leading boroughs for gang related violence. However, there had been recent improvements. Some prominent gang members had been imprisoned following the riots in 2012. In addition, interventions appeared to be having an effect. This included a gang exit scheme. There was a multi agency gang action group that co-ordinated action. Partners were looking at early indicators for gang activity. One of these was being a victim of gang crime. This suggested that early intervention was a key issue.

Mr Wolski stated that the reductions in burglary and robbery were no accident. They were the result of knowing who offenders were and targeting them. The figures for violence with injury including domestic violence were not so good. The majority of this figure came from an increase in domestic violence. It was unclear why this had happened. In terms of suspects, many had drug, alcohol and mental health issues. Noel Park ward was the highest contributor to violent crime statistics. It tended to be businesses who were the biggest victims of this.

It was noted that some boroughs had used anti social behaviour orders extensively. However, Haringey had not taken this route and had instead tended to use acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) or injunctions. Mr Wolski reported that dispersal orders could be used in exceptional circumstances but this was not taken lightly due to the effect that it had on people's liberties. One had nevertheless been imposed on Ducketts Common but would be reviewed in a months time. In certain circumstances, they could be a useful tool.

Mr Wolski stated that addressing domestic violence was a high priority. In some cases, it could be a murder waiting to happen. It was not just committed by men – two of the top ten offenders in the borough were female.

Concerns were raised at the possible closure and reduction in hours of some police stations within the borough. Mr Wolski stated the Police would prefer to keep two Police stations that were open for 24 hours a day within the borough but it was necessary for the Police to make large budgetary savings. Discussions were nevertheless at an early stage.

The Chair asked if it was possible to provide figures for the number of people who attended local Police stations. Mr Wolski stated that it was possible to provide figures for the last month and agreed to provide them. The Panel were of the view that without accurate statistics on demand, it would be difficult for informed decisions to be made.

The Cabinet Member reported that the political message that Members were receiving was that there would only be one Police station that was open for 24 hours per day for 7 days a week in each borough. The Deputy Mayor had already visited the borough and Haringey's view on this had been clearly communicated to him. He nevertheless

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felt that it might not be possible to convince him of the borough's case. If there was only one 24/7 Police station in Haringey, the likelihood was that this would be in the centre of the borough which was Wood Green. The best case scenario would probably be for a second 24/7 Police station in Haringey, which would probably be in Tottenham. There was also the possibility of some cross border arrangements with neighbouring boroughs. The Panel agreed that this issue would be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

The Chief Executive reported that the budget challenge that the Police faced was considerable and it was best to concentrate attention on the areas where there was some scope for success. Regrettably Muswell Hill Police station was not likely to be a high priority. Creative arrangements could be considered to mitigate the loss of facilities such as the use by the Police of churches or tennis clubs. There was a need by the Metropolitan Police to sell buildings. The Cabinet Member reiterated this view. Not all Police stations could be saved and it was therefore best to focus on those which could be. There was also potential for the Police to work out of community hubs in libraries. The issue would be discussed at area forums and he urged all Members to attend these meetings. He agreed to draft a short briefing note to all area committee Chairs about the issues in question.

It was noted that the MOPAC reported to the London Assembly and lobbying of the Members for Enfield and Haringey would be undertaken. In addition, local MPs were also being lobbied.

The Panel noted the Council's position and the budgetary pressures that the Police were under. It was recognised that it was best to concentrate resources on the areas where there was some prospect of success but it was also important that consideration was also given to the west of the borough.

The Chair raised the issue of the recent licensing review of the BG Max night club in Hornsey and requested that the Police provide him with a short briefing note on their position in relation to it and how they intend to enforce the revised licensing conditions.

### **AGREED:**

1. That a report be made to a future meeting of the Panel on clear up rates for crime within the borough.
2. That the Police Service be requested to provide attendance figures for Police stations within the borough for the last three months.
3. That, in respect of the proposal to reduce the number of Police stations open for 24 hour per day and 7 days per week within the borough;
  - A letter be sent on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime expressing concern at the proposal; and
  - An update be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel on the issue.

## **LC26. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - REVIEW**

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Hazel Simmonds, Community Safety Review Manager, reported on the recent review that had been undertaken on the community safety partnership. This had highlighted a number of issues:

- Although community safety was not the top priority for the Council, it was a high priority for the community.
- The partnership did many important and valuable things but was not good at keeping the community informed of them.
- The partnership needed to be better focussed. There were currently too many different and competing plans and too many different meetings.
- A better mutual understanding of the priorities of partners needed to be developed.
- Although the Community Police Consultative Group was to be disbanded, engagement needed to continue and an appropriate mechanism for it needed to be developed.
- Clarity was required on what the core business of the partnership was. Little of what the partnership currently did was funded from core sources and a collective view of what partners felt that the partnership should be doing would help to ensure that resources continued to be available.

A number of actions were planned in response to the review, including an awayday for partners. It was agreed that a timetable for these would be shared with the Panel.

The Panel thanked Ms Simmonds for her presentation. The Panel were of the view that many of the recommendations were timely, particularly the need for greater focus and better mutual appreciation of the specific role of each agency. In addition, it was important that there was clarity on the membership of the partnership and, in particular, the involvement of the voluntary sector. It was noted that HAVCO were now attending meetings.

The Panel requested details on what the partnership was doing to develop greater integrated working amongst partners. The Cabinet Member reported that, although progress had been made, there was still some way to go. There were nevertheless specific areas where it was being developed, such as anti social behaviour. In addition, the MOPAC funding arrangements would encourage greater co-operative working arrangements.

### **AGREED:**

That a further report on progress with the review be submitted to the Panel in due course.

### **LC27. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Mike Bagnall, the Anti Social Behaviour Action Team Manager (ASBAT) reported on the work of the team. He reported that the team took action through the use of the civil courts and this could be useful in acting against anti social behaviour in situations

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where action by the Police through the criminal courts was not possible. The team was now 10 years old. In that time they had trained over 1000 staff on how to take reports on anti social behaviour.

When a case was referred to the team, an assessment was undertaken and, if it was of sufficient seriousness, the team would take it on. Cases below this threshold were referred to the Housing Advice Team (Private Sector) or the Tenancy Management Officer (Public Sector). Unlike many other boroughs, Haringey's team dealt with the private sector as well as public sector housing. There were set time scales that applied equally to all cases. Performance was currently slightly below target. This was due in most part to a large increase in the number of cases. There were a number of remedies that could be used including ASBOs, injunctions and acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs).

The Panel noted that, despite the increase in workload, staffing levels had remained the same and were of the view that staffing levels should reflect levels of demand. It was noted that some limited additional resources had been identified. Discussions were also currently being undertaken with Homes for Haringey, who were responsible for 85% of cases referred to the ASBAT. They had agreed to deal with some initial parts of referrals. Although the number of ASB officers had remained the same, the team no longer included Police or voluntary sector members. The Cabinet Member reported that there might be scope for the Police and voluntary sector to be re-introduced as a result of the new MOPAC funding scheme.

The Panel commended the team for their work but felt that consideration may need to be given to amending targets to reflect the fact that the workload had increased whilst resources had remained the same. It was noted that Councillor Bull had submitted some questions in his absence and agreed that there would be circulated directly to him by the ASBAT Team Manager.

It was noted that whilst members of the public might not wish to report incidents to the Police, they could be happy to speak to the ASBAT team instead. A judgement was made concerning whether the Police or the ASBAT team were best placed to pursue a particular issue. This depended on the evidence available and how prepared people were to give evidence. Haringey had been measured in its approach to sanctions and had used comparatively few ASBOs. 38 had been issued whilst another 11 were pending. In contrast, Camden had issued over 500.

### **AGREED:**

1. That answers to Councillor Bull's questions be circulated; and
2. That the ASBAT team be complimented on their work and continuing high level of performance despite the demands on the service and the lack of additional resources.

### **LC28. MEMBERS ENQUIRIES**

The Panel received the results of the survey that had recently been undertaken of Members regarding Member enquiries and service requests. In addition, they received statistical information regarding the Member enquiries.

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It was noted that the survey showed high a high percentage of Members were unclear about the distinction between Member enquiries and service requests and agreed to recommend that appropriate training should be provided in order to ensure a greater level of awareness.

Panel Members were of the view that progress with service requests should ideally be notified to Members. However, it was noted that the Feedback Team did not have the capacity to deal with this. This was also the case for services, some of which received a very high volume of service requests. This was particularly true of Single Front Line who, along with the Feedback Team, had recently suffered from cuts in staffing resources.

The Cabinet Member reported that an app was being trialled which would allow residents to report issues by mobile phone. This would provide a response. The Feedback team determined whether an issue was either a Member enquiry or a service request. If a Member was not happy with the designation, it could be queried and ultimately could be referred to the Cabinet Member.

The Panel agreed to recommend that a training session be provided for Members on the issue. In addition, Councillor Bull would also be consulted for his views,

**AGREED:**

That, in order to develop greater clarity and awareness of obligations and expectations, a specific training session for Members on Member enquiries and the distinction between them and service requests be arranged.

**LC29. AREA COMMITTEES - IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNANCE REVIEW CHANGES**

The Chair reported that two focus groups for Members and, in particular, area committee Chairs, had taken place and a number of useful suggestions for improvement had been made. He proposed that another session be arranged to explore possible ways in which area committees could be developed further.

The Cabinet Member stated that a flexible approach needed to be considered which fitted in with the government's localism agenda. This need not be "one size fits all" model. It was incumbent on all Members to engage with their communities. Engagement was not just about formal meetings. In addition, consideration needed to be given to the reduced resources that the Council had.

**AGREED:**

That a further focus group meeting be arranged to consider possible improvements and developments of area committees.

**LC30. WORK PLAN**

**AGREED:**

That the following issues be added to the work plan:



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- Crime clear up rates;
- The use of teasers:
- Licensing reviews and how communities could challenge applications

**LC31. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**Cllr David Winskill**

**Chair**