

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
THURSDAY, 28 MARCH 2013**

Councillors: Adje, Basu, Bull, Reid and Winskill (Chair)

Also Councillors: Engert, Newton and Watson
present:

LC32. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

LC33. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair stated that he wished to raise the issue of the future of White Hart Lane Community Sports Centre as a late item of urgent business. The Cabinet Member stated that due to relevant staff not being available due to annual leave and the late notice of the item, he would not be able to respond to the issue at this stage.

LC34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

LC35. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

LC36. MINUTES

In respect of the Council's bid for MOPAC funding, the Cabinet Member for Communities reported that a response was awaited. Details of the outcome would be shared with the Panel in due course. He also reported that consideration was currently being given to alternative ways of providing the mobile library service. In reference to the Roma and Gypsy Needs Assessment, he reported that consultation on this would close shortly. The work had been widely praised, particularly in view of the fact that very few local authorities had addressed the issues in question. The final version of the document was likely to be available at the end of April.

It was agreed that the appropriate time for the Panel would look at issues arising from the leisure procurement, particularly how the community had been engaged, would be after the contract had been running for a year, which would be in December.

In respect of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority's (LFEPA) Draft Fifth London Safety Plan, the Panel noted that there were no plans to reduce the number of fire stations directly covering Haringey, although services might be affected by the increased pressure on resources that the proposed changes could result in. A public consultation event had been arranged in Haringey by LFEPA on Thursday, 18th April at 7.00 pm at the Civic Centre.

In respect of Crime Statistics, the Panel noted that six of the boroughs wards accounted for 40% of crime. These were:

- Noel Park;
- Tottenham Hale;
- Bruce Grove

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- Northumberland Park;
- Seven Sisters; and
- Tottenham Green

Mark Wolski, Police Deputy Borough Commander for Haringey, reported that he was still trying to obtain footfall figures for Haringey Police stations, as requested by the last meeting.

In respect of the item on Members enquiries, it was noted that a Member development session was currently being arranged.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 8 January 2013 be approved.

LC37. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN HARINGEY

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy, the Council's Director of Public Health, reported on how the Council and its partners addressed the issue of domestic violence.

The Panel noted that there had been a change in the Home Office definition of domestic violence. It would now include coercive control and cover 16 and 17 year olds. It did not just apply to physical violence but also included threatening or intimidating behaviour to partners or family members. The average level of domestic violence was 6.65 offences per 1,000 female residents. Data showed how particular areas of the borough compared with the average. Alcohol was flagged within this by the Police based on reported incidents. It was noted that, in such instances, it was not necessarily the cause of incidents but associated with them.

There had been a 20% rise in reported incidents during the past year. However, it was possible that this was due to more incidents being reported rather than a greater prevalence. 80% of offences occurred in the east of the borough. Victims were mostly young, female and heterosexual. There were strong links with mental health, alcohol and substance misuse for both victims and perpetrators. In addition, it was a presenting issue in a high proportion of child protection cases.

The Panel noted that the figures were entirely reliant on reporting and it was possible that a lot of domestic violence was hidden. Dr de Gruchy stated that it was important to communicate the fact that domestic violence was wrong and unacceptable. The Council was now responsible for public health and therefore was now in a position to address the mental health and alcohol issues that could lie behind incidents of domestic violence.

The Panel noted that:

- People with a learning disability could be vulnerable to domestic violence;
- It could escalate during pregnancy;
- It was possible that some teenagers mistakenly believed that domestic violence was normal behaviour; and
- Children who were exposed to domestic violence were more likely to be involved in it themselves when they grew up.

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More work being done on building an understanding of domestic violence and its relationship with gangs and young people. In respect of teenage pregnancy, it was noted that Haringey had previously had one of the highest rates in the country. Haringey had also lost a lot of the funding that had been used to address this issue when Area Based Grant had been abolished. Encouragingly, the latest figures had shown a reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate.

There was a co-ordinated response to domestic violence that involved both the voluntary and community and the statutory sector. The Domestic Violence partnership reported to the Community Safety Partnership. The two main outcomes for the partnership were:

- Increased prevention and early identification & intervention
- A seamless service offering timely, effective and user-focused support
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It was noted that there was a Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence which was made up of a number of employers committed to reducing the human and economic cost of domestic violence. The Panel suggested that the Council might also have a role to play in respect of its work force. It was also noted that domestic violence could occur amongst older people and between fathers and sons.

In answer to a question, Claire Kowalska, the Council's Community Safety Strategic Manager, reported that there had been a considerable shift in Police attitudes to domestic violence. In addition, there had been a lot of investment in services. The new Borough Commander for Haringey had made addressing it as his top priority. It was now also a key priority for the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The Chair reported that data on the reporting rate and level of prosecutions would be an indicator of performance by law enforcement agencies. Ms. Kowalska agreed to find out if such statistics were available.

It was noted that older people were much less likely to report domestic violence and a helpline had been set up that was aimed at this group of people. It was possible that some areas of the borough that appeared to have low rates of domestic violence had, in reality, had rates that were higher due to low reporting rates amongst older people.

Dr de Gruchy reported a mentoring scheme for victims of domestic violence had been set up and it was agreed that details of this would be circulated to Panel Members.

The Panel thanked Dr de Gruchy for her contribution.

AGREED:

1. That the Community Safety Strategic Manager be requested to identify any relevant local data or indicators relating to reporting levels of domestic violence and prosecution rates; and
2. That the Director of Public Health be requested to share details of the mentoring scheme for victims of domestic violence with the Panel.

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Alex Grear, Senior Project Manager from the Chief Executive's Service, reported on progress with the development of the borough's libraries into Community Hubs.

The Panel noted that the work had established a number of characteristics and trends within Haringey libraries. These included;

- The number of visits to libraries had reduced in recent years;
- Haringey's opening hours were significantly higher than those of other boroughs;
- Loan transactions were still predominantly undertaken by staff;
- Haringey had the lowest net cost per usage compared with nearest neighbouring boroughs;
- Unlike other boroughs, Haringey still had a free events programme;
- The commercial potential of libraries was low; and
- There had been a lower level of investment in them in recent years.

The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that the review had been set up at his instigation. The borough's libraries were well loved and had very low unit costs. There was potential for their use to be developed. However, the way in which libraries operated had changed and the role of staff was now more concerned with communicating with customers.

Mr Grear reported that although advertising of the facilities within libraries was undertaken, it could be improved and plans were being developed for this. The rates that were charged for community or commercial use were nevertheless competitive. However, the condition of such facilities needed to be improved so that what was offered was all of good quality. The nine different library sites were very different from each other. The Panel noted that Wood Green library had the 13th heaviest usage of any library in the UK and the 2nd in London.

The Panel noted that there would be consultation with library users, including friends groups, as part of the next phase of the review process. It was suggested that one option might be to gather all of the friends groups together in order to elicit their views.

The Panel questioned the figures within the report for net cost per usage for London boroughs as there appeared to be a large amount of variance within them. Mr Grear reported that different boroughs had different service models but Haringey nevertheless had very low levels of cost per usage, which was a good indicator. It was nevertheless acknowledged that there were limits to the level of comparison that could be drawn.

In answer to a question, the Cabinet Member reported that it was hoped to enable parking fines and the purchase of visitors vouchers for parking to be paid for in libraries although some further work was required first, including investment in IT.

The Panel noted the low level of external events for which Wood Green library had been booked. Mr Grear stated that this issue needed to be addressed. One possibility was that there were better alternative venues nearby.

It was noted that the plan for the next phase of the project would be available in mid April. The Panel thanked Mr Grear for his presentation and report.

AGREED:

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That a further report on the next phase of the development process for community hubs, including plans for consultation, be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.

LC39. MOPAC POLICE AND CRIME PLAN 2013 - 2017

Superintendent Mark Wolski, Deputy Borough Commander, reported on the changes introduced as part of the Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017.

He reported that the new model of neighbourhood policing was due to go live on 24 June. The changes were likely to be challenging for the borough. As part of the Plan, an additional priority had been set in addressing criminal damage and targets for these were currently being set. Recent performance data showed that targets for the borough had been exceeded for all categories of crime with the exception of violence.

He reported that levels of public confidence in the Police within Haringey had dropped from 65% to 50%, which was the lowest level within the country. Addressing this issue successfully would be a major challenge. It was essential that engagement was improved. In particular, the service needed to be able to share its successes better with the community.

In respect of Police stations within the borough, Tottenham would now be open for 24 hours per day for 7 days a week. Wood Green and Hornsey were planned to be open to the public for 40 hours per week. In addition, another three contact points within the borough would be established. In terms of the new Safer Neighbourhood Boards that were to be established as part of the MOPAC plan, there was no detail yet regarding their terms of reference. Interim boards would need to be in place by 21 June.

It was recognised that stop and search was a source of mistrust between young people and the Police within the borough and plans were being made to engage with them on this issue. It was envisaged that a specific event would be arranged for this.

It was recognised that the introduction of tasers was also a potential threat to community confidence. Four events had therefore been arranged to engage with the community on this issue. A total of 50 people had attended these. Some of the dates had unfortunately clashed with Council meetings which may have reduced the number of Councillors who were able to attend. Further briefings were planned though. He stated that he was convinced of the benefits of the use of tasers. A monitoring group would be set up to monitor their use within the borough. There had, however, only been 7 incidents so far.

Panel Members were of the view that engagement with young black people was likely to be particularly challenging for the Police service. They also felt that there was a risk that tasers might be used disproportionately against black people.

Mr Wolski stated that detailed statistics on the use of tasers were not yet available but there appeared to be a fairly even balance in terms of the ethnicity of those who tasers had been used against. Many older people had negative perceptions of the behaviour of younger people and these could lack foundation. Figures in respect of stop and search showed a high level of effectiveness with a 19% outcome rate. It was acknowledged that there was a need for the service to be smarter in its use but the service was unapologetic about its use where it was based on sound intelligence.

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Youth engagement was a key local priority and a sergeant had been appointed to lead on this.

The Panel noted that Trident's work in addressing gang related violence was continuing. However, any murder investigations that Trident would previously had dealt with were now being covered by the Homicide Unit. In terms of youth engagement, Mr Wolski reported that this was taking place through CoNEL. In addition, regular meetings were taking place with secondary Headteachers.

Cllr Newton reported that Muswell Hill Police station had been kept open due to the support of the local community. The new model would entail the loss of this facility and he was concerned that this might affect local levels of confidence in the Police as well as leading to an increase in crime. He was of the view that ward panels in the area had worked very well and attracted a wide range of people, including young people and teachers from local schools. There was a danger that the benefits of this model of engagement would be lost under the new arrangements. He had drafted two letters to the Deputy Mayor for Policing expressing the concerns of local residents and suggesting alternative options for a Safer Neighbourhood Team base and Front Counter. However, a response had not yet been received. Mr Wolski agreed to follow this matter up.

Panel Members expressed concerns that the level of local knowledge within Safer Neighbourhood Teams would be lost under the new arrangements. In addition, many had built up good local contacts and levels of goodwill. The Panel noted that a letter had already been written on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime regarding the MOPAC Plan that, amongst other matters, expressed concern at the lack of clarity regarding the proposed new model of neighbourhood policing. It was agreed to recommend that a further letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Deputy Mayor requesting clarification of how the arrangements will work.

Ms Kowalska reported that the Council had a key part to play in work to prevent crime. The Police were only in a position to focus upon the criminal justice element of community safety. The MOPAC Plan aimed to shift the focus of work to prevention and the Council would be key within this.

AGREED:

1. To recommend that a letter be sent on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime requesting clarification of how the new arrangements for neighbourhood policing will operate; and
2. That copies of the letters sent by Councillors Engert and Newton to the Deputy Mayor for Policing regarding the proposals within the MOPAC Plan and its implications for the west of borough be passed to Superintendent Wolski so that a response to the proposals within them from the Police Service may be sought.

LC40. AREA COMMITTEES - INTERIM CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF PANEL PROJECT

The Chair reported on the draft conclusions and recommendations of the Panel's project on area committees. Feedback from engagement with Members and residents

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indicated that they were keen for them to continue. However, a number of issues had been raised:

- There was a feeling that the Council controlled the agenda;
- Attendance could be more representative of people living in the borough;
- New ways of engaging with the community should be explored;
- The responsiveness of services to issues raised at meetings was variable.

The Panel were of the view that the Panel's draft final report should provide clarity regarding the definition of "hard to reach" groups. It was noted that arrangements for engagement with the community needed to take into consideration the fact that not everyone was IT literate. In addition, they also needed to consider how to involve younger people. It was noted that there appeared to be a low level of engagement amongst some of the newer communities within the borough, such as those from eastern Europe. The Panel were also of the view that there was currently a lack of diversity amongst Members.

Panel Members noted that the budget for publicity for each area forum/committee meeting was only £105 and were of the view that engagement with the community would require resourcing adequately if it was to be effective.

AGREED:

1. That a definition of "hard to reach" groups be included within the report; and
2. That, subject to the above, the Panel's draft report be agreed and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

LC41. USE OF TASERS

The Panel noted the response that had been received by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from the Metropolitan Police Commissioners to concerns that he and the Panel had expressed regarding the extension of the distribution of tasers to borough based Police officers

It was also noted that the Police and Crime Committee of the London Assembly was undertaking a specific piece of work on tasers and were inviting contributions from interested parties. In view of the Panel's previous concerns on this issue, it was agreed that a submission would be drafted to the Assembly on its behalf and that this would focus on the following issues:

- Governance arrangements;
- Communication/engagement; and
- Possible disproportionate impact on minority communities.

It was noted that the letter to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had suggested that a further reply relating to engagement with the wider community would be sent to him from the Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing. It was agreed that the Chair would be asked if this had happened.

AGREED:

That a submission outlining the concerns that have been expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the extension of the distribution of tasers to

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borough based Police officers be drafted and submitted to the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee in order to assist with their work on this issue.

LC42. BUDGET SCRUTINY - RESPONSE TO PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON MTFP

AGREED:

That the Cabinet response to the Panel's recommendations in respect of the Mid Term Financial Plan be noted.

LC43. WORK PLAN

AGREED:

That the following issues be added to the work plan:

- Community hubs – next stage

LC44. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

Councillor Reid stated that he had been made aware of the Council's possible intention to dispose of White Hart Lane Community Sports Centre through seeing a public notice advertising it as for sale.

The Panel agreed to request a briefing on the issue from the Assistant Director of Place and Sustainability – Leisure Services.

LC45. VOTE OF THANKS

It being the last meeting of the Panel for the current Municipal Year, the Chair was thanked by the Panel for his work as Chair. The Chair thanked Members and officers for their kind assistance and co-operation.

Cllr Dave Winkill

Chair