

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL  
MONDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2013**

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

Co-opted Mr D Njoku (Haringey Youth Council)  
Members

**CSP59. WEBCASTING**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and informed them that the meeting was being webcast.

**CSP60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair reported that Daniel Njoku was deputising for Paul Njoku, who was unable to attend the meeting, as the co-opted Member for Haringey Youth Council.

**CSP61. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**CSP62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**CSP63. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

None.

**CSP64. COMMUNITY ENABLEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING**

The Chief Executive reported that volunteering was a significant part of life in Haringey. It helped to keep services going and was accepted as a key part of future Council plans. For examples, the recent report of the Education Commission had highlighted the significance of the role of school governors. Friends of parks also played an important role within the community and added value to Council services. Volunteers were nevertheless not intended to be a substitute for the Council services.

Volunteering provided people with a stake in the local community and helped bring people together. Corporate volunteering was also increasingly significant and it was hoped that the borough would be able to gain benefits from this. The Council was currently working with HAVCO to develop further support for volunteering. The support would be delivered through voluntary sector partners as it was felt better that they took the lead in this area. The overall needs of the local community would be looked at together with who was best placed to meet them but it was not assumed that it would be possible to fill all of the gaps. Developmental work would be undertaken with voluntary groups with the aim of creating additional opportunities.

Panel Members requested information on what limits there might be to the use of volunteers. They also asked what action was planned to address the cultural change that was likely to be required to better promote and develop volunteering.

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The Chief Executive stated that devolving budgets for services to voluntary and community groups was probably not within the scope of volunteering. It was important that there was clarity about the outcomes that were expected. The Council had to prioritise in providing services – if they did one thing, it might not be possible to do another. Irrespective of structures, it was important to consider how individuals could best be enabled in order to build a thriving community. It was not possible to meet all the needs of the community as things currently stood.

The Panel noted that voluntary organisations were encouraged to share accommodation so that they could pool resources and to encourage joint working. Commercial premises were probably best used for commercial purposes. The Council was keen to encourage smaller local groups but acknowledged that it might be best for this developmental work to be done outside of the Council. Some areas had provided support for small groups on line. Other areas had Pledge Bank schemes and the Council could consider facilitating such a scheme locally.

In promoting volunteering, care needed to be taken that it did not appear that the Council was withdrawing. Volunteering was not a substitute for Council services. It was not likely to resolve all local problems but could nevertheless make a significant contribution. There was a need for the Council to be clearer about outcomes. In addition, there also needed to be an appropriate relationship between the Council and voluntary sector organisations.

### **AGREED:**

That an update on progress, including the development of shared capacity with the voluntary sector, be presented to the Panel in due course.

### **CSP65. MINUTES**

The Panel noted that it had been agreed that the Panel would seek to co-opt a representative from the Safer Neighbourhood Panels. However, there were 19 of these within the borough and it was therefore felt that it might be better to instead seek a representative from the Association of Neighbourhood Watches.

The minutes of the previous meeting had included a recommendation that the Cabinet consider a replacement for the now defunct Race Equality Joint Consultative Committee. The Panel noted that the recommendations of the last meeting of the Panel had not yet been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as required by the constitution, and had therefore not yet been formally referred to the Cabinet Member.

### **AGREED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of 25 July be approved.

### **CSP66. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES**

Councillor Richard Watson, the Cabinet Member for Communities, updated the Panel on matters arising from his portfolio and answered questions. He reported that the Community Safety Partnership had received an update on performance. Amongst other things, this showed that local confidence levels had increased by 5% up to 55%

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. This now meant that the Partnership would be able to exceed its target for improvement against this. There was also good performance in burglary and acquisitive crime. However, reoffending rates amongst young people were still high and improving this was a key target for the YOS board.

The Partnership was working to establish a Safer Neighbourhood Board and currently developing options. There had been a workshop with MOPAC but this has only been a limited success. He would report back in due course on the options that had been developed for the make up of the board.

Progress still needed to be made on the internal review of libraries and an external organisation had now been selected to take this forward. Focus groups of users would be included in the exercise. It would be necessary for the service to be more commercially orientated in order to safeguard its future. As part of the review process, a meeting was being arranged with Chairs of Library Friends groups. In terms of the possible payment for parking vouchers, permits and fines within libraries, he stated that work was continuing and he would report back in due course.

In respect of anti social behaviour, it was now proposed that the majority of instances of anti social behaviour would go through the Anti Social Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT), who would act as a conduit. He was happy to update the Panel on progress in due course.

There had been a discussion on the development of area forums/committees at a recent meeting of their Chairs. There had been a high level of consensus amongst the Chairs. There was not a great level of support for the continuation of area plans and meetings of the area committees but there was support for continuing with area forums. It was proposed that a looser and less prescriptive arrangement with more responsibility placed on Chairs to engage should be the way forward. Chairs were also keen to explore the possibility of establishing a small budget for forums. Further engagement would be undertaken with ward Councillors.

In addition;

- Further work was being undertaken to develop the boroughs leisure centres;
- Work to establish a Muslim network was proceeding and he would come back with further details in due course; and
- There was currently no budget for events but this issue was currently being reviewed;

The Chair raised the issue of the engagement of service users in discussions on the refurbishment of leisure centres, particularly Park Road. It had been suggested by some users that the number of showers planned would be inadequate to meet demand. The Cabinet Member reported that this issue had already been raised but the service provider was of the view that provision was sufficient for future demand. He stated that he would be meeting with Fusion and service users to discuss further the ongoing development work programme.

In respect of the new Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams, he reported that their performance to date had been variable. However, some had a number of vacancies that needed to be filled. There was also evidence that they were getting called away from their neighbourhood duties regularly. However, the development of the teams

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was at an early stage. He urged all Members to come along to the regular meetings that there were with the Borough Commander to air their views in respect of this.

Mr Njoku requested details regarding how services consult with young people, the Cabinet Member reported that the Youth Council was often used for such purposes. In addition, the Police had held a specific event for young people recently. One particular issue that had come up was stop and search. There were also safer neighbourhood panels in all areas of the borough where young people could feed in their views about policing and community safety issues. As part of this, an annual survey was undertaken in each area to determine priorities for the year ahead.

In respect of the high re-offending rate amongst young people entering the criminal justice system, the Cabinet Member reported that the Cabinet accepted that this needed improvement and an action plan would be developed to address this. However, the Panel noted that part of the reason for the high figure was that the Youth Offending Service (YOS) had a very successful triage system which aimed, where possible, to prevent young people entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily. As a result, the remaining young people contained a higher percentage of young people who were likely to re-offend.

### **CSP67. DOMESTIC AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN HARINGEY: UPDATE**

Althea Cribb, the borough's Strategic Domestic and Gender Based Violence Lead, reported on recent developments in respect of action to address domestic violence. There was currently no local comparative data on the religion of victims but national data indicated that there was unlikely to be any disproportionate levels amongst individual groups.

Data indicated that young women were most at risk from domestic violence. In terms of the ethnicity of people reporting domestic violence within Haringey, the white other category was over represented as was black African and black African Caribbean. Future snapshot data would include religion but it would not be possible to compare this with national data regarding the proportion of Haringey residents from particular religious groups as this information was not included within the census. It was not clear why a disproportionate percentage of "white other" people were reporting domestic violence. Efforts were being made to determine the reasons for this. Information on victims of domestic violence was patchy. Health could play a particular role in reporting through, for instance, accident and emergency departments reporting instances but information was not always shared.

Panel Members were of the view that it was essential that the underlying issues leading to domestic violence were identified so that action could be targeted and more effective. Education had a key role to play. The Panel noted that there were no clear and obvious reasons for domestic violence. A mapping exercise was currently being undertaken to identify what specialist services were in place, who could access them and if there were any gaps or duplication. It was also looking at how statutory services responded to, referred and recorded domestic and gender based violence. The first part of the exercise was now complete. Information regarding specialist support services would be advertised amongst the local community.

The Panel noted that the increase in reporting levels amongst some communities could be a good thing as it indicated a higher level of confidence in services and a

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lower likelihood of people suffering in silence. Under representation was possibly a greater concern. In particular, there appeared to be under representation amongst people of mixed race. It was not clear why there were different reporting rates amongst different communities but it was important to determine the reason for these differences. Further detailed information regarding ethnicity would be circulated to Panel Members.

Ms Cribb reported that the biggest issue that required addressing was the involvement of health services. There was currently a lack of clear pathways for them to report instances of domestic violence. Specific efforts were being made to encourage people to report, including the use of advertising.

The Panel were of the view that domestic violence needed to be given a similar level of priority as safeguarding adults and children. In particular, the Safeguarding Adults Board had access to an excellent range of data to inform their deliberations. There were parallels between safeguarding of adults and children and domestic violence and it was possible that they might be considered to be part of the same problem in the future.

### **AGREED:**

1. That further detailed information on ethnicity be circulated to Members of the Panel; and
2. That a further report be submitted to the Panel in due course on proposals to develop action to address domestic and gender based violence within the borough, including encouraging higher reporting levels and improving the quality of data.

### **CSP68. BUDGET MONITORING**

Matthew Gaynor, Head of Finance in the Place and Sustainability Service, reported on progress with the budget for 2013-14. He reported that Cabinet had recently agreed to add £300k to the community safety budget. There had been particular pressures within the libraries budget which were due to a reduction in rental income and DVD rentals. There was currently an overspend in its budget due to slippage in the granting of a long term lease for White Hart Lane Community Sports Centre.

The Cabinet Member reported that a paper would be coming to a future meeting of the Panel on the future of the mobile library service. Whilst measures were being taken to ensure that the service to housebound people could continue, it was unlikely that the service for schools could be maintained. He had asked specific proposals to be developed in respect of housebound people. Consideration was being given to working with HAVCO on this. He had received a high level of correspondence on this issue. The Cabinet Member stated that he was keen to ensure that there was proper consultation on future options for the service. The Panel noted that a saving of £100k was being targeted.

Panel Members reported that the fees for football pitches within the borough had been increased and there was a view that facilities were inferior within the borough than elsewhere, despite being more expensive. It was noted that this issue was included within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Environment and agreed that these comments would be referred to him.

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Previous concerns of the Panel regarding the lack of cricket facilities in the east of the borough were reiterated and the Cabinet Member for Communities agreed to take up the suggestion made at the previous meeting of the Panel that an approach be made to the England and Wales Cricket Board regarding assistance in the development of facilities for cricket in the east of the borough. He was also happy to speak to Fusion. There were currently no grass cricket squares in the east of the borough. Although there were some artificial squares, these were in poor condition and there was a lack of funding to improve them. It was nevertheless important to ensure that there was interest amongst young people in cricket.

Panel Members raised the possibility of re-dedicating Perth Road recreation ground for cricket. It was felt that improved facilities had the potential to bring in higher fees. It was, however, noted that there was also a lack of officer resources to take such issues forward.

**AGREED:**

That the comments by Panel Members regarding football pitches within the borough be referred to the Cabinet Member for Environment.

**CSP69. USE OF TASERS**

The Chair reported that Superintendent Mark Wolski, the Deputy Borough Commander, was no longer able to attend the meeting and he had therefore been agreed to defer this item until the next meeting of the Panel.

**CSP70. BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

The Panel noted that there had been over 70 events planned for Black History Month, including 5 within libraries and complimented the Cabinet Member and officers on the quality of the programme. Panel Members were of the view that the main issue that needed to be addressed in the future development of the event was funding. In particular, a critical look needed to be taken at the event, what it meant and how it could be provided. It was suggested that Panel Members assist in the planning process for the next event by working with officers involved in the planning process to review the programme and identify potential future sources of funding. Other boroughs had been creative in their approach and lessons could be learnt from them. In addition, it was suggested that might be useful to compare levels of funding that other London boroughs provided for the event.

**AGREED:**

1. That a letter be sent to the Chief Executive congratulating officers on the programme that had been arranged for Black History month;
2. That the Assistant Director for Frontline be requested to arrange a meeting between Panel Members, the Chief Executive of HAVCO and relevant officers to assist in the planning of the programme for next years Black History Month, including the identification of potential sources of funding; and

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3. That information be provided to the Panel on funding levels for Black History Month celebrations in comparable London boroughs.

**CSP71. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

In respect of the figures for Member enquiries, Panel Members were of the view that they would benefit from some historical context. They were pleased to note the continuing reduction in crime levels within the borough. They also requested information on the definition of violence with injury. Disappointment was expressed at the performance of the Council's call centre. Panel Members were of the view that the underlying reasons for this needed to be identified so that the necessary improvements could be made. In terms of the response times to Member enquiries, the improvement was welcome. However, quality of response was also an issue.

**AGREED:**

1. That the Assistant Director (Single Front Line) be requested to circulate the definition of violence with injury, as used in the performance statistics, to Panel Members; and
2. That Assistant Director (Single Front Line) be requested to send a copy of the Customer Services Strategy to Councillor Bull.

**CSP72. ISSUES FROM AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

None.

**CSP73. WORK PLAN**

**AGREED:**

That the issue of Tasers be added to the agenda for the meeting on 7 November.

**Cllr David Winskill  
Chair**