

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2013**

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

Co-opted Mr. F. Andrew (HAVCO)

Members:

CSP74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair reported that Ian Sygrave had been nominated to act as a co-opted Member of the Panel by Haringey Association of Neighbourhood Watches Committee. Mr Sygrave had given his apologies for the meeting. He also reported it had been agreed to involve Haringey Youth Council in the work of the Panel in a more targeted way in future. They would therefore be requested for input on specific issues and outside of scheduled meetings.

AGREED:

That Ian Sygrave from Haringey Association of Neighbourhood Watches be appointed to the Panel as a non voting co-opted Member.

CSP75. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

CSP76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CSP77. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

CSP78. MINUTES

The Panel noted that a meeting would be arranged in December by the Head of Leisure Commissioning on possible measures to promote cricket in the east of the borough. This included the option of obtaining external grant funding.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 26 September be approved.

CSP79. HARINGEY SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP - PERFORMANCE STATISTICS AND PRIORITIES

Claire Kowalska, Community Safety Strategic Manager, reported on the latest crime statistics. Overall crime levels in the borough had dropped by 40% since 2002/3. The gap between the perception of levels of crime in the community and actual recorded levels had also narrowed. The Panel requested further information on whether this trend had been mirrored across London and it was agreed that figures would be provided for this. Mark Wolksi, the Police Deputy Borough Commander for Haringey, reported that public confidence in the Police had dropped by 15% in Haringey. Confidence levels were multi-layered and influenced by a range of factors. Victor

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Olisa, the Borough Commander, reported that reporting levels for crime tended to increase when confidence levels were higher.

The Panel noted that current crime levels had gone down more in Haringey than the London average and in Haringey's most similar group (MSG) of other local authorities. Performance against targets for reductions in respect of key offences was showing that virtually all of these were being achieved. Figures for burglary and criminal damage were particularly good. Domestic violence had also reduced, although community safety partners were still working to improve the level of reporting. The ratio of incidents to offences had increased from 38% to 43% which could indicate improved evidence gathering. Mr Olisa commented that it could also be an indication that officers had been better able to convince victims to report offences.

Mr Olisa stated that it was important that the improvements were communicated effectively to the local community and the Safer Communities Partnership had an important role to play in doing this. In particular, organisations and institutions that were in a position to influence the community, such as churches and community centres, needed to be targeted.

The Panel noted that there had been temporary surges in crime that had originated from certain high profile events within the borough, such as the Stone Roses concert in Finsbury Park. Such large gatherings of people were could be targeted by gangs. The Panel noted that theft from the person was not "mugging" but stealing of personal possessions. Partnership work could have an impact on this through encouraging people to look after their property and giving a message to criminals that they would be caught. A week of action was being planned to publicise this and major shopping centres and tube stations would be targeted as part of this. The Panel requested further information on who messages were being targeted at and how.

Sanction detection performance for domestic violence had improved despite targets not being on track to be met. Mr Wolski reported that there was now a positive arrest policy being followed. Efforts were also being made to arrive at incidents more quickly as this made it less likely that statements would later be withdrawn. Mr Olisa reported that there were particular challenges in respect of improving the detection of motor vehicle and opportunistic theft. Performance was nevertheless close to hitting targets. Improvement would be driven by good intelligence and effective offender management. It was also possible that offenders would ask other offences to be taken into account, which would further improve detection rates.

The Panel noted that the borough had been the best performing authority amongst its MSG family group but had since been moved into a different and more challenging group. Mr Olisa commented that comparisons were not always fair as other authorities were not facing the same sort of challenges. When compared with similar boroughs, the performance figures for Haringey were remarkably good. The challenge was getting this across to the community and, in particular, the fact that there was now a lower chance of being a victim of crime and a bigger chance of recovering property. The Panel requested further information on how the local authorities that Haringey was compared to in its MSG grouping were determined.

The Panel noted that a survey undertaken by the Single Front Line service had shown that the confidence levels of residents had increased by 4%. A partnership

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communication strategy was in the process of being approved so that the key messages within the performance statistics could be shared with the community.

The Panel noted that there was a need for further discussion about how under reported crimes, such as rape, were dealt with. Higher reporting rates in these areas could be a sign of improved confidence and therefore might not necessarily be a negative sign despite the fact that they could impact adversely on performance statistics. Mr Olisa reported that there had been considerable changes in the way that rape was dealt with. Sapphire units now dealt with such offences and both the quality and the methodology of investigations were now very different. Stranger rape was the biggest source of concern for local residents and it would be useful if figures for these could be disaggregated from the wider rape statistics.

Ms Kowalska commented that figures for sexual offences could be misleading as the numbers involved were very small. Any change was therefore likely to result in comparatively large percentage increases or decreases. It was agreed to recommend that community safety partners be requested to consider further what success might constitute in respect of interventions relating to under reported crimes.

In respect of racially or religiously aggravated offences, it was noted that work was being undertaken with religious leaders. Part of this work would be to determine whether there was evidence that there was under reporting of religiously aggravated crimes. The Panel requested information on whether this category of crime included offences committed against people from eastern Europe.

Although figures for re-offending amongst young people had gone up, the figures had been inflated by the effects of the successful triage programme, which worked to prevent young people entering the criminal justice system. This meant that the group of young people that remained contained a far higher concentration of young people who were likely to re-offend. Youth services had adapted its focus to prioritise preventing offending. In addition, Families First, which was Haringey's troubled families initiative, was focussing on working with the families of offenders. It was a two year programme so it was too early for it to have made any difference yet. The Panel noted that a report on the issue was due to go the Children and Young People's on 12 November and agreed that it would be circulated to the Panel.

The Panel were of the view that re-offending statistics should focus on levels of re-offending amongst targeted young people so that the effectiveness of interventions could be assessed. They also emphasised the importance of the current reduction in recorded crime and improvements in detection being communicated effectively to the local community.

AGREED:

1. That the following additional information be requested:
 - Whether the gap between the perception of crime and recorded levels has narrowed in other London boroughs;
 - How the current reductions in levels of recorded crime and improvements in detection will be communicated to the local community;
 - How the local authorities that Haringey is compared to in its MSG grouping were determined; and

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- Whether racially/religiously aggravated crime includes offences committed against people from eastern Europe.
2. That the Community Safety Partnership be recommended to consider disaggregating figures for stranger rape from wider rape statistics.
 3. That the Community Safety Partnership be requested to consider further appropriate performance measures in respect of under reported crimes.

CSP80. USE OF TASERS

The Chair outlined the issues relating to the extension of the distribution of tasers to borough based officers that had been raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee since the decision to extend their deployment had been taken by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner. Particular efforts had been made to engage with the Police regarding the roll out and to articulate the concerns of the local community. Of particular concern was the potential for tasers to be used disproportionately against people from particular ethnic minority communities or suffering from mental illness. Despite these concerns, the Committee had nevertheless not said that it was opposed to the use of tasers. The Chair reported that he wished to ensure that there was transparency in the use of tasers and their effects.

Mr Olisa reported that three presentations had been provided for the local community as part of the engagement process. These had attracted 12, 8 and 25 people respectively. He had offered to set up a monthly independent scrutiny body to look at the use of tasers within the borough but this had been declined. This offer still stood. Tasers were far more effective than the alternatives to them which were currently the use of truncheons or CS gas. Both of these had greater potential for causing injury and/or affecting innocent bystanders.

Mr Wolski reported on the use of tasers to date within Haringey. 40 local officers were now able to use tasers. There were now four officers per shift that had tasers and these worked in pairs. One incident could result in more than one recorded use of a taser if more than one officer was equipped with one. The figures recorded on the use of tasers were to date and not for a complete period. Tasers has so far been used in 13007 incidents and deployed 1760 times across London. This equated to 55 per borough. In Haringey, there had been 41 incidents where tasers had been deployed and 4 actual examples of tasing. This was a discharge rate of slightly less than 10%. The 41 incidents had included Police officers being threatened with a range of implements including guns, crowbars, knives and machetes as well as individuals threatening to stab themselves.

Of the 41 individuals involved in the various incidents, 36 were male. Roughly half came from ethnic minority communities. The majority were between the ages of 30 and 40. The youngest person who had been tasered was 17. The location of most of the taserings was in the east of the borough. In addition, 4 had taken place in Noel Park ward.

There was a London wide Taser Scrutiny Committee, which had met twice. Its role was to monitor the use of tasers and it contained a wider range of individuals. The Panel noted that Mr Wolski had been invited to be a member of this committee. Use

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of tasers locally was closely monitored. Any discharge was reported immediately and was reviewed thoroughly.

Panel Members requested assurances that tasers could not be used indiscriminately and where there was no perceived threat. Mr Wolski reported that intelligence checks were undertaken whilst officers were on the way to incidents. There were also normally witnesses to incidents. In addition, a comprehensive note was taken of any incidents where tasers were deployed. He was confident that there was no abuse of their use. The Panel noted that there had been no complaints so far.

Mr Olisa reported that there were only 40 officers that were able to use tasers and they had been chosen due to their aptitude for the role. They had all received the same level of training as firearms officers. There was a recording mechanism and data on their use could be downloaded. Tasers were not firearms nor were they a replacement for firearms. The fact that they had only been discharged in 10% of incidents where they had been deployed demonstrated their effectiveness as a deterrent. They were particularly effective in calming people down. They were also rarely used by officers to defend themselves and more likely to be used to prevent self harm.

The Panel thanked Police officers for the information that had been provided. They were of the view that there were already enough forums that were in a position to monitor the use of tasers within the borough. They requested that the Panel be included in future reporting of their use that the figures be included in the overall crime performance figures for the borough. In addition, they felt that the statistics should be referred to the next meeting of the Safer Communities Partnership as well as Haringey Youth Council. Ward panels could also be used to disseminate information. The wider circulation of information would assist in helping to develop confidence within the community.

The Panel thanked Mr Olisa and Mr Wolski for their report.

AGREED:

1. That the Police Service be requested to provide a written summary of the statistics for the use of tasers within the borough since the extension of their deployment to borough based Police officers;
2. That the Safer Communities Partnership be requested to include current statistics on the use of tasers within the agenda for their next meeting and as well as the next meetings of Haringey Youth Council and Safer Neighbourhood ward panels; and
3. That statistics be routinely included in future crime performance statistics reported to the Panel and other relevant bodies.

CSP81. MOPAC POLICE PLAN - IMPLEMENTING/MONITORING OF IMPACT

Councillor Richard Watson, the Cabinet reported on the progress that had been made in setting up the Safer Neighbourhood Board in Haringey. The borough was considerably further ahead than many other boroughs. A paper containing proposals would be coming to both groups shortly. Partners wished to ensure that the Board was

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representative of the community. There would be a core membership plus a lay Chair and lay members. Appointment of lay members would be via HAVCO (Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations). The aim was to get the core group together quickly and for the first meeting to take place in January. It was also intended to appoint two non Executive Councillors to the Board.

CSP82. SCOPING REPORT - COMMUNITY SAFETY AND MENTAL HEALTH

It was noted that work was taking place on a bid for grant funding of £1.2 million for a project that involved working with young people with mental health issues. This was being done in partnership with Mac UK.

AGREED:

1. That the scope and terms of reference for the in-depth piece of work on mental health and community safety be approved; and
2. That the interim Head of Community Safety be requested to circulate a brief note to the Panel on the funding bid for work with young people suffering from mental health issues that is being prepared with Mac UK.

CSP83. WORK PLAN

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

CSP84. ISSUES FROM AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRS

None.

Cllr David Winskill

Chair