

CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS: Councillor Nilgun Canver
Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Safer Communities

From Councillor John Bevan

Question 1

I am aware that neighbourhood wardens have ceased the use of bikes, which enabled them to move much quicker between the various locations that they are involved in. I notice that the NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAMS have just introduced bikes for their teams and I understand that they are thrilled at how quick they can now get around their various areas. Please can I be advised as to when the issues that have prevented the wardens using bikes will be resolved and the date that the wardens will be able to resume the use of bikes

Answer

There have been 3 separate incidents where a warden has claimed to have had an accident which involved one of the warden's bikes and there has been a claim of injury. However subsequent investigations into these incidents have not found the council to be at all responsible.

As part of the investigations all bikes were taken off the road. The investigations showed that the allegations regarding maintenance was false, however regular inspections of each bike have identified a significant requirement for maintenance. The service has historically had difficulties in finding a suitable qualified and reliable mechanic to carry out the repairs, and in addition to this the current budget pressures that are present within the service prevent maintenance expenditure taking place.

Security of bikes has also been an issue and despite the purchase of secure locks over time a number of bikes have been stolen.

Our risk assessment of the use of bikes has identified a need for accredited training and assessment. Locating a suitable person to deliver cycling training to those wardens that have not already received as well as refresher training has proved problematic.

Evaluation by management of how the bikes are used and deployed by wardens show that although the bike allow wardens the ability to travel around the borough with ease they do not enhance the patrolling and observation function. Officers tend to be more rightly concerned with riding the bike as opposed to looking for street scene issues.

The police have achieve great success with bikes for several reasons, they allow access to difficult to reach areas of the borough, pursuit of offenders can be conducted where other police vehicles cannot travel for example alleyways and response to incidents can be quicker in certain circumstances due to traffic conditions locally.

A review of the future use of these bikes will now be undertaken.

Question 2

Please can I be advised when the manager responsible for licensing and other issues concerning houses in multiple occupations resigned. Please also advise me when the replacement manager was recruited, if this position has still not been recruited to please advise me as to why this is and the future plans / dates to recruit to this position.

Answer

The current structure for Housing and Health provides for a service manager responsible for private rented sector housing and a new lead officer for HMO licensing. The service manager position has not been recruited to as the substantive post holder is on secondment to the Adaptation service and the post is not available for permanent recruitment

Cover for this post was through an acting up arrangement which started in August 2006 and ended in February 2007 when the position holder left to take up a permanent position at that level in another authority.

The establishment for this service is 19 with two posts to be deleted as part of efficiency savings for 2008/9. There are currently 17 officers in post of which 4 are on secondment to the new Adaptations service, including the post holder of the Housing and Health service manager position. These secondments were scheduled to end in March 2007 but delays in that service has meant that permanent recruitment has not proceeded. Extensions were agreed based on an expected early timetable for recruitment and because of the service difficulties that would otherwise be experienced.

Formal notice to end the secondments with the Adaptations service has now been served, and post holders are scheduled to return to their substantive posts on 19th October 2007. As a consequence there will be a full establishment when the service transfers to the new Strategic and Community Housing Service in November 2007.

From Councillor Catherine Harris:

Question 3

What is being done to protect law abiding teenagers in the Wood Green area, given the series of gun related incidents and youth on youth crime that is currently being investigated by the police?

Answer:

The Safer Haringey Partnership is working together to ensure that the whole of the borough is safe for all law abiding citizens. Responses to youth violence and preventative measures to protect young people in the Wood Green area specifically are described below:

Video Sentries

The Video Sentries initiative was devised as a means of combating crimes such as street robbery, burglary, theft and violent assault using unmanned, fixed surveillance cameras, deployed within premises in a crime prone area. These cameras connected to time lapse digital video recorders record pedestrian traffic continuously within the hotspot area. In this way a "snapshot" is available of people in the vicinity of a reported offence at the time committed providing both evidence and valuable intelligence. From descriptions given by victims or witnesses, it is hoped that a still image of the suspect can be obtained from which a subsequent identification and arrest can be made.

Wood Green High Road is covered on both footways from Wood Green Tube Station to Turnpike lane Tube Station. This system includes a 25 Mega pixel wide angle camera at Hollywood green capable of capturing the whole footway and junction and giving a resolution capable of reading the headlines on a newspaper being held by someone on the pavement.

Safer Haringey CCTV van

This van is regularly parked outside Hollywood Green to act as a deterrent and to reassure the public.

Safer Transport Team:

The Safer Transport Team was launched in Haringey on 30th April 2007. This team comprises two Sergeants and 18 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The team has three priorities:

- 1. To reassure members of the public and transport staff*
- 2. To reduce crime in and around transport hubs*
- 3. To reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) in and around transport hubs*

The team provides high visibility patrols in three areas across the borough one of which is from Wood Green to Turnpike Lane; a team of 8 officers are dedicated to patrolling this area.

Since their launch the team has confronted over 1,000 individuals concerning ASB or suspected crime, a large proportion of these are known criminals involved in street robbery. According to central MPS research crime and ASB around the transport hubs in Wood Green and Seven Sisters has reduced by 30% between April and June 2007 compared to the same period last year.

Q-Cars

This is a dedicated rapid response team comprising highly experienced officers. The team responds to robbery reports at the scene and conduct a thorough investigation while driving around the borough searching for the suspect. The team works closely with the Borough Intelligence Unit and the Robbery Squad. The high quality information gathered by the Q-Cars team contributes to successful convictions. It is also reducing false reporting and contributing significantly to increased victim confidence and intelligence gathering.

This team operates across the borough but are deployed in robbery hotspots including Wood Green.

Operation Curb extended patrols in Wood Green

This is a London-wide operation to tackle violence among young people. Under Operation Curb, each London borough is proactively targeting known offenders and carrying out increased patrols to reassure local communities. Wood Green is one of the areas within which such extended patrols are taking place.

Say Yes Challenge (Social Awareness: Youth Enterprise Scheme)

From September 2007 to January 2008 a group of young people from St Thomas More School is participating in a business challenge to develop ideas to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Haringey.

Over a 12-week period the students will work as mini companies with their own business mentor to devise a practical and innovative solution to community safety issues in Wood Green. Their proposed project will be pitched to a panel of judges in January 2008. This programme provides the opportunity for local young people to take the lead in devising solutions to issues that affect them.

Question 4

What is being done to protect women walkers using Alexandra Park from attacks and sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour (men have been exposing themselves) from a safety angle. Is the council satisfying the requirements of the new 'gender duty '(April 2007) concerning this issue?

Answer

The Parks Constabulary patrols the park on a regular basis and spends an average of 70 hrs a month doing so. They attend all incidents that are reported to them. Since January 2007, the Parks Constabulary has received 2 reports from the police of men exposing themselves and both were in mid June. On both occasions, officers attended within 10 minutes of the report and the area was searched. No suspect was found and there have not been any further reports.

Should the situation, alter and warrant particular attention, a multi-agency meeting could be held to look at a gender impact assessment for the area.

The local Safer Neighbourhood Team patrols the park a couple of times per shift. They work closely with the Parks Constabulary and also draft in plain clothes police support where necessary. They have perfected a technique of approach and engagement with park users which is proving to be effective and non-alarmist. The team reports a small number of exposure offences during the Summer months. They are familiar with one serious sexual assault in the park which stemmed from an encounter in the West End. There is good cross-borough liaison with inner London boroughs such as Westminster.

The Council is fully complying with the new Gender Equality Duty, introduced this year. The details are as below:

Gender Equality Duty 2007

The Equality Act 2006 introduced the new gender equality duty which requires the public sector to promote gender equality. All public authorities as employers and service providers are required to have due regard to;

- The need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment*
- And to promote equality of opportunity between men and women*

Under the specific duties there will be three key duties which will have a focus on outcomes and actions:

- Publish a gender equality scheme and reviewing on a 3 year cycle*
- Publish an equal pay policy*
- Conduct gender impact assessment*

Haringey Council has published an Equalities scheme that includes gender and carries out Equalities Impact Assessments that include gender as part of the 6 key equalities strands.