

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2015

Councillors B Blake (Chair), Gallagher, Gunes, Hare, Jogee and Wright

Co-Optees Mr I. Sygrave (Haringey Association of Neighbourhood Watches)

CSP1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Newton.

CSP2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CSP3. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

CSP4. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 27 January 2105 be approved.

CSP5. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS; CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

Councillor Vanier, the Cabinet Member for Communities, reported on the key areas and developments within her portfolio as follows:

- Haringey was one of three boroughs that had been selected by the MOPAC to take part in a specific programme aimed at addressing the issue of gang violence. This was referred to as Operation Shield;
- The borough's Safer Neighbourhood Board was working well and had wide representation from across the borough;
- In response to anti semitic chanting on tube trains by West Ham supporters before a recent football match at Tottenham Hotspur, she had written to the British Transport Police asking what action they were planning to take;
- There had been effective partnership work with the Police to address anti social behaviour and drug dealing on the Love Lane estate in Tottenham. The ASBAT team had put up cameras and obtained evidence that had enabled action to be taken against several people. There had also been issues with prostitution. There had been no reports so far of people who action had been taken against returning to the area;
- A response was being prepared by the Community Safety Partnership to the issues raised by the recent report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham;
- Statistics for levels of non domestic violence with injury within the borough were still high compared with similar local authority areas. Operation Equinox had been

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launched to address the issue. In particular, this had included an SOS bus that was aimed to assist victims.

The Panel were of the view that the partnership approach that had proven successful on the Love Lane Estate needed to be replicated elsewhere. It was noted that the joint action on the estate had taken three years to achieve its objectives. Individual organisations now had fewer resources and therefore needed to pool them in order to address issues effectively. A similar process was being developed in Northumberland Park and the Department for Communities and Local Government had recently provided grant funding for capacity building work in the area. The model developed as part of this was intended to be transferable to other areas.

The Borough Commander commented that partners wished to have a model that fitted everywhere. The intention was to promote support and engagement with communities, as well as enforcement. It was important that any model was not over reliant on Police intelligence and was informed by wider local information. Prioritising particular areas facilitated the identification of resources to address issues. Although the model was intended to be transferable, it might be necessary for it to be adapted to fit local circumstances.

The Panel noted there had previously been issues with drug dealing in the Ladder area of Haringay. Action had been taken to address this, including the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs). However, the problem had re-surfaced in recent months and there was some frustration amongst local residents that it had not been possible to deal successfully with it. The perpetrators often disappeared before the Safer Neighbourhood Team attended the scene. Residents had asked for CCTV to be installed or for plain clothes officers to attend but had been told that there were not the resources available to do this.

The Panel noted that effective work with the local community had taken place in Hornsey. A dialogue had been developed between local businesses and partners in the area. Crime prevention work had been undertaken and a radio link established. There was now also a traders association in the area. Panel Members commented that action had been effective once it had been initiated. However, a more proactive approach by partners would be beneficial.

In response to a question regarding recent criticism of the Prevent scheme to address violent extremism, the Cabinet Member reported that positive work had been undertaken with the Muslim community in Haringey. This had included training for teachers. There had also been joint meetings of local mosques. Work had also been undertaken to encourage third party reporting. Although progress had been slow with this, it would nevertheless be pursued. The Panel noted that referrals were now being received from schools. Where there were concerns, multi agency case conferences were arranged.

The Panel were of the view that the new Counter Terrorism Act could have implications for civil liberties and community relations and felt that a briefing might be of benefit.

AGREED:

That a briefing be provided to a future meeting of the Panel on the implications of the Counter Terrorism Act 2015.

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CSP6. GANGS AND OPERATION SHIELD

Gareth Llywelyn-Roberts, the Offender Management Strategic Lead, reported that the Offender Management Unit was a single, co-located body. It included the Integrated Gangs Unit which had a dual enforcement and engagement role. It provided a single link to all support agencies and could mentor, support and intervene with individuals who wished to exit gangs. Gang Exit Workers worked with a cohort of up to 70 gang affected individuals and a range of different partners. Re-offending by those on the programme had been reduced by 58%, including a reduction in the seriousness of offences committed. The retention rate was 89% and over 60% were in either education or employment.

Operation Shield was an initiative that was aimed at reducing gang violence that involved a range of partners, led by the Police. It targeted those individuals whose behaviour had the greatest negative impact on local communities. It was underpinned by three key strands:

- Consequences for Violence - identifying and focusing enforcement on those groups involved in the continuation of violent offences;
- Community Voice - mobilising local communities and key members to reinforce key moral messages that violence will not be tolerated;
- Help for those who ask - allowing individuals the opportunity to exit from the criminal lifestyle.

A significant amount of drugs were distributed through gangs. It was considered disrespectful to enter another gang's area. Violence was also often caused by individuals seeking to escalate disputes in order to progress their position or by drug users. The vast majority of gang members were vulnerable and characterised by issues such as school exclusion and ADHD. Work was being undertaken through schools and there was now a clear referral route.

In answer to a question, Mr Llywelyn-Roberts stated that the Gang Intervention Model would not target people for enforcement on a 'by association' basis. This was an issue which had been promoted by groups opposed to the Shield initiative. In all circumstances, enforcement action could only be taken against those who committed the offence. The Shield model was clear that where a trigger offence was committed this would in turn trigger the enforcement action against the whole group identified as being part of the 'gang' but this would only be for offences they had committed.

In answer to a question, Mr Llywelyn-Roberts reported that 86% of offenders identified as gang members were young black men. There were also specific gangs that tended to have members from specific ethnic backgrounds i.e. Turkish, Albanian and Somali young people. The ethnic disproportionality was well known and long standing. Work was being undertaken with communities to assist in reducing the level of vulnerability of young people within them to becoming involved in gangs. In respect of Operation

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Shield, it was noted that it was time limited. What would come after it was important and consideration was being given to further preventative work.

The Borough Commander reported that the Police in Haringey had a team of 20 officers working on gang related issues and also had access to the Trident team. Whilst enforcement and deterrent could be effective in the short term, the issue that needed to be addressed was why young black men were committing acts of such extreme violence against each other. Until this was addressed successfully, long term progress would not be made.

The Panel noted that the drivers were not just economic. Some young people were coerced into becoming involved. It was noted that only a relatively small proportion of gang members were under 15. However, they could be groomed into becoming active gang members from that age and earlier.

The Panel were of the view that the performance statistics were impressive but felt that further detail on the volume of offences involved would provide clearer context. It was noted that it was not always clear whether offending groups were gangs or organised criminal networks and, in addition, many were active in a number of different boroughs.

CSP7. OPERATION EQUINOX

Victor Olisa, the Police Borough Commander for Haringey, reported that across London there had been an increase of 9,000 per year in the number of violent crimes, including 2,500 instances of violence with injury. In Haringey, there had been an increase of 19%, which equated to 36 more offences per month. Instances of non domestic violence with injury had increased by 10 per month or 23%. However, this did not mean that there had been a large increase in violence as this had been due to a change in how crimes were recorded. The new system of recording was more ethical and consistent.

Operation Equinox had focussed on the three wards within the borough that were in the top 30 in London for violent crime. These had also experienced increases in recorded violent crime. The intention of the scheme was to detect and prevent violent crime and reassure local communities. Just under half of violent crime took place in public places with slightly more taking place within premises. 2% of offences took place in licensed premises. Current detection levels were slightly down to 28% but this was not considered significant, bearing in mind the changes in recording methods. The target was to reduce violent crime by 6% in the next three years. The borough was no more violent than the average for London.

In answer to a question regarding the recording of violent crime, Mr Olisa reported that, for example, slapping had previously been recorded as common assault. However, if it caused bruising it was now recorded as Actual Bodily Harm. The re-categorisation of offences had inflated the statistics.

The Panel commented that initiatives such as the SOS bus and the Summer Night Lights scheme had shown that visible policing and community engagement worked. However, there was concern that the current cuts to Police budgets meant that there was now less visible policing.

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Mr Olisa reported that the Local Policing Model had involved increasing the number of uniformed officers on front line duties. As part of this, shift patterns were changed so that more officers were available during periods of peak demand. The changes had also meant that Neighbourhood officers were now responsible for investigating some crimes and that had led to them being off the streets for periods of time. In addition, there had a range of other responsibilities which could take them away from patrolling and community engagement. The Local Policing Model was being reviewed to see if it was possible to increase the levels of patrolling. Outside of London, Police numbers had been cut. The Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) had made clear that they did not wish to do this in London but it was possible that they might have to reconsider this in the future.

Members of the Panel expressed concern that reduced Council services and less engagement by the Police could lead to worsening relations with the local community. Mr Olisa stated that the changes did not necessarily mean less engagement. Neighbourhood officers still patrolled on foot. In addition, there were 20 Police officers linked to secondary schools and another 5 linked to primary schools. In addition, there was a programme of engagement work, including youth clubs and work with local churches.

In answer to the a question, Mr Olisa stated that there were times when Neighbourhood officers were away from their beat due to, for example, the need to process offences. However, the number of officers on neighbourhood duties had remained the same.

The Panel thanked Mr Olisa for his contribution.

CSP8. SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF CRIME

Tessa Newton, from Victim Support, provided the Panel with an overview of the support arrangements for victims of crime.

The Panel noted that the grant funding from the Ministry of Justice for Victim Support had been divided and would be allocated to local Police Crime Commissioners from April 2015 to commission local services to victims. In London, this role was undertaken by the MOPAC, who had been an early adopter of the new budgetary arrangements. A grant had been awarded to Victim Support to run a revised victim service for London from October 2014 for 12 months. As part of this, there were now new processes for Enhanced Priority and Standard Referrals. There was a particular focus on vulnerable and repeat victims. In addition, there were now new services for children and young people and international visitors.

Referrals were now received for all victims of crime, including crime types not previously funded for support, such as business crime and motor vehicle theft. Referrals were either categorised as enhanced priority or standard. The service that was offered as part of the enhanced service was much more intensive. Vulnerable victims were automatically offered enhanced support. In addition, the service was looking at the factors that could make people vulnerable.

There were a number of specific projects that were being undertaken in Haringey. These included projects focussed on support for young victims and people not

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engaging with the Police. Referrals generally came from the Police. Young people heard about the service from the Police. However, Victim Support was not as well known as some other charities. Other boroughs did not currently have the same approach as Haringey, which aimed to be proactive in engaging with young people.

The support provided could include emotional support as well as advocacy. Information could also be provided about the criminal justice system as well as compensation. In particular, victims were prepared for court by working with them so that they knew what to expect. They were also taken through what rights and options that they had.

The Panel noted that the Metropolitan Police had the lowest victim satisfaction rate of any Police service in the country. Ms Newton commented that the situation in Haringey was no different to anywhere else in London. The service could act as a go between with victims and the Police and, if necessary, advise them on making a complaint. The Panel noted that current victim satisfaction rates were had increased in the previous year to 84%.

Ms Newton reported that the Mayors Office were now funding a pan London domestic violence service which would provide additional resources to fund Independent Domestic Violence Advocates in the borough in order to provide greater support and more consistent support for victims. In addition, Victim Support in Haringey was working with colleagues in Hackney on a specific project focusing on Anti Social Behaviour. 70% of referrals in respect of anti social behaviour came from organisations other than the Police. Victim Support was now also funded to provide support for victims of business crime, which had not previously been the case. As part of this, there would be a new worker who would be working with businesses in the Wood Green area.

The Panel thanks Ms Newton for her presentation.

CSP9. WORK PLAN

Panel Members reported back on a recent visit to Organic Lea, that was arranged in response to concerns raised within the budget scrutiny process about the future of the Wolves Lane nursery.

The Panel noted that the Organic Lea site was 12 acres in size. It was run as a workers co-operative on a not-for-profit basis. They currently supplied 300 boxes per week. In addition, they also supplied 15 cafes. The organisation paid a peppercorn rent and had a 30 year lease on its site. It had obtained a lottery grant of £300,000 to fund its operations and provided, amongst other things, horticulture training to local people. 150 people volunteered at the site regularly. The organisation had expressed an interest in working on future plans for Wolves Lane and a meeting was being set up to take this further.

Panel Members commented that they had been impressed by the commitment of the organisation. The model that they were operating was well researched and effective and they had stated their commitment to work with satellite organisations. The development of a similar operation would be well fitted to Wolves Lane and the Panel was keen that action be taken to take this option forward.

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CSP10. VOTE OF THANKS

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

Cllr Barbara Blake

Chair