

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

4 JUNE 2019

Chair:	* Councillor Sachin Shah	
Councillors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Richard Almond * Dan Anderson * Sarah Butterworth * Jean Lammiman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Jerry Miles (1) * Chris Mote * Kanti Rabadia * Chloe Smith (2)
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided)	(Parent Governors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mr N Ransley † Reverend P Reece 	
Non-voting Co-opted:	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
In attendance: (Councillors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Janet Mote Christine Robson Krishna Suresh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minute 69 Minute 67 Minute 67

- * Denotes Member present
- (1) and (2) Denote category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

Order of Agenda

With the agreement of the Committee, the order of the agenda was varied by the Chair. Agenda item 9 ‘Scrutiny review into Preventing Youth Violence’ was considered prior to item 7 ‘Community Safety, Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy - Annual Refresh, Youth Offending Team (YOT) Plan, Knife Crime Action Plan’ as the two were interlinked and it was essential to take a decision in relation to item 9 prior to the consideration of item 7.

However, for clarity, the business at the meeting is recorded in the order set out on the agenda.

61. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Jeff Anderson
Councillor Honey Jamie

Reserve Member

Councillor Chloe Smith
Councillor Jerry Miles

The Committee was advised that if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend had been noted arrived after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member could only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival. Accordingly, Councillor Chloe Smith did not participate in agenda items 1-6 and 9. (See also the note relating to the 'Order to Agenda' above.)

62. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Items 7/9 - Community Safety, Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy - Annual Refresh, Youth Offending Team (YOT) Plan, Knife Crime Action Plan/Scrutiny Review into Preventing Youth Violence

Councillor Sarah Butterworth, a member of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that she worked in a school that was mentioned in the reports. She added that she had also been a member of the Review Group which had conducted a review into Preventing Youth Violence. Councillor Butterworth added that she had been appointed as Portfolio Holder Assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Young people and Schools with the remit on 'Youth Initiatives' and would be briefed on this role in June 2019. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 9 – Scrutiny Review into Preventing Youth Violence

Councillors Chris Mote and Sachin Shah, members of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that they had been members of the Review Group which had conducted a review into Preventing Youth Violence. They would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

63. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 9 April 2019 and the special meeting held on 16 May 2019, be taken as read and signed as correct records.

A Member stated that the following action from the meeting held on 9 April 2019 remained outstanding and requested that relevant officers respond or make contact with the Partner and forward this information to Members after the meeting:

Minute 55 – Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2019

Different communities were targeted by criminals for different reasons. Was there any data regarding this available?

The Acting Borough Commander undertook to look into the matter and feedback to the Committee.

64. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

65. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

66. References from Council/Cabinet

RESOLVED: To note that there were none.

RESOLVED ITEMS

67. Community Safety, Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy - Annual Refresh, Youth Offending Team (YOT) Plan, Knife Crime Action Plan

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of People Services and Director of Strategy, which set out the strategic vision of Harrow's Community Safety Partnership in the Annual Community Safety, Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation (CSVVE) Strategy for 2019-2020 and the Council's Youth Offending Team (YOT) Plan. The report also included the Council's Knife Crime Action Plan 2019-20, a requirement for every Borough arising from the London Knife Crime Strategy which was launched in June 2017. Members were informed that both plans would be considered by Cabinet and Council in July 2019.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Crime introduced the Community Safety, Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy and reported that the Council had worked closely with MOPAC (The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) and the police in this regard. He added that:

- the previous seven major crimes targets had been replaced with a thematic approach which gave local areas greater control of local community safety priorities. The focus of this approach was to concentrate on harm crime and to tackle high volume crime, details of which were set out in his 'Foreword' to the Strategy;

- the Strategy covered a number of areas and it was important to have a clear focus in the following principal areas: burglaries, particularly aggravated burglaries, knife crime, young people being drawn into crime, domestic violence and hate crime.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the Director of Strategy and his team for the work undertaken.

The Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools introduced the Youth Justice Plan which had been closely aligned with the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation (VVE) Strategy and the Safer Harrow Strategic Assessment with a view to working together on shared goals. She also referred to her 'Foreword' which set out the strategic objectives within the Plan. The Portfolio Holder stated that:

- early intervention was essential and should not start when children were 11/12 years old. It was important to help and work with parents to help them understand their children;
- data and information had been based on a small section of the community. She highlighted the specific work carried out by the Youth Offending Team;
- separate documents of the Strategy and Plan had been produced as they were funded separately and there was a requirement to demonstrate achievements against specific outcomes.

The Portfolio Holder commended the work undertaken by the Corporate Director of People Services and his team under stringent financial situation. The Director of Strategy explained that the Strategic Assessment had been undertaken earlier in 2019 and the report before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be submitted to both the July Cabinet and Council meetings. He added that the Knife Crime Action Plan had also been produced as requested by MOPAC. He referred to the template provided by MOPAC which had been completed and submitted in May 2019 and noted the minor amendment required. The actions in the Action Plan would be progressed.

The Divisional Director of Children and Young People referred to the Youth Justice Plan which had been based on the work undertaken by the Youth Offending Team (YOT). He highlighted the following points:

- the child was prioritised over the offender – see the child first, the offence second;
- the Council was at the forefront in providing a multi-professional partnership focused on providing services to young people at risk of committing crime. The importance of 'catching' children when they were young was embedded in the culture of his team.

An officer explained the services offered by the Youth Offending Team and that the team had recognised the importance of providing support early. The team led on various programmes in school for children in Year 7 which were directed towards resisting temptations and building relationships, including the running of parenting classes. His team comprised of a lead for each school.

Members of the Committee made the following comments and asked questions:

- it was not possible to differentiate mandatory crime areas from policies of choice. The Member provided examples and also asked if modern slavery fell within the mandatory crime area. He asked if the various examples he had cited had consciously added to the mandatory areas and, if so, was there a risk of diluting the Strategy;
- was there a limit on areas that could be prioritised. It would appear that those listed on pages 18 and 19 of the Strategy collectively took the priority areas beyond the number which could be effective priorities;
- political priorities need to be clearly identified and Members invited the Portfolio Holder to comment on how these priorities had been identified.

The Director of Strategy and the Portfolio Holders responded as follows:

- given the statutory duties in relation to tackling modern slavery, the Council had agreed to include it as a mandatory crime and other areas could be added to this section. The Director also referred to the motion previously agreed by full Council and which was being progressed;
- the VVE Strategy brought together a number of other strategies together and as they were all interrelated;
- various organisations and partners, such as the voluntary sector, police, fire brigade, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Young Harrow Foundation had contributed to the priorities. The external bodies had provided statistical analysis and the priorities had been based on this information;
- the VVE Strategy and the Youth Justice Plan demonstrated the positive work that was happening across the Council. The overall priority was to ensure the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people.

A Member of the Committee asked if the report from the MOPAC-led taskforce had been received. The Committee noted that the taskforce had been exploring opportunities to secure sustainable CCTV provision in London and was in recognition of the challenging financial climate faced by Councils who were the primary funders of public space community safety CCTV. Harrow Council was one of the sites that the taskforce had visited. The Director of Strategy replied that the report had been received in 2017 and that there was now a move towards digitalisation in order to prevent crime and catch criminals. The same Member asked how the initiative was to be funded

and enquired when a report would be submitted to the Committee. The Director of Strategy stated that the development of the Council's Depot was part of this initiative. He agreed to brief his colleagues on the request for a report.

The following correction was suggested to page 27 under 'Going Forward' of the Strategy: the first sentence to be amended to read 'Harrow Council will increase its ... anti-social behaviour, gang crime and knife crime.'

Another Member raised the issue of modern slavery and enquired about the joint protection order at a site in Brent. He cited an example and enquired if similar ones existed in Harrow. The Director of Strategy undertook to investigate further. The same Member asked the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion if zero tolerance on drugs was his local priority. The Portfolio Holder stated that he wanted a zero tolerance policy but local knowledge was required and work was underway.

The same Member was also concerned about the discrepancy in figures in relation to the 'Finance Table' at page 33 of the Youth Justice Plan and enquired about the budget. An officer reported that without the grant, officers would not be able to achieve much of the work undertaken and that they worked as part of a multi-agency team.

The Director of Strategy responded to a question on how regeneration would help reduce crime levels. He explained that design methods could help to 'design out' crime. The impact would be subtle and the intention was to lessen scope for crime and anti-social behaviour.

Another Member commended the work undertaken and was impressed with the number of groups that had shown interest in the various initiatives. He asked if further information could be provided to Members on the work undertaken by Norbury School. The Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools suggested a meeting with the headteacher of the school.

An officer informed the Committee that positive responses had been received from young people about the work carried at the Wealdstone Centre. He commended the support received from Harrow Youth Parliament and he would remind them that they had a voice on the Committee.

Members of the Committee asked questions about stop and search, knife arches, school exclusions and aggravated burglaries. The Director of Strategy and the Corporate Director of People Services informed the Committee that:

- use of powers under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which allowed police officers to stop and search a person without suspicion were instigated by the Metropolitan Police;
- knife arches would be used randomly and the police provided information details to the Council;

- a bespoke service was provided to schools in relation to school exclusions. All schools were asked to contact the Council with a view to addressing the issue prior to an exclusion being considered;
- the HYOT Plan on page 9 of the Youth Justice Plan provided a summary on how children's issues were addressed;
- guidance was provided to residents on how to make their homes safe. The police were aware of the current model of aggravated burglary worked and were responding to the situation. There were two types of burglaries – opportunistic and targeted.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holders for their attendance at the meeting of the Committee. He requested a written response to the question on how priorities had been decided, the work at Norbury School and designing out crime.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) having considered the CSVVE Strategy, the YOT Plan and the Knife Crime Action Plan, the comments set out in the preamble above be submitted to Cabinet for consideration;
- (2) the Portfolio Holders for Community Cohesion and Crime and Young People and Schools respond to the question on how priorities had been decided;
- (3) That officers provide responses to questions relating to the work at Norbury School and designing out crime.

68. Final Report of the Scrutiny Review of Highways Maintenance

The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategy, which set out the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Highways Maintenance.

One of the co-Chairs of the Scrutiny Review Group, who was also a Member of the Committee, introduced the report of the Review Group and informed Members that the review had been undertaken as a result of the concerns expressed by residents in the 2017 Residents' Survey. The purpose of the review had been to better understand and influence how the work relating to the highways was prioritised in order to better inform, engage and consult residents. She explained how the Review Group had arrived at the recommendations set out in the Review Report. She highlighted the need for informed and effective communication with residents.

Members of the Committee made the following observations:

- that communication with residents was a key issue and, in order to create an effective database, it was essential that all complaints were logged. It was important that both residents and Councillors followed due processes, which would help with the RAG Status and identify

hotspots in the borough. She pointed out that the processes in place ought to be made easier to use. She alluded on her own experiences with her constituents and highlighted the need to keep residents informed of the actions taken by officers in order to show that officers had listened to them and to improve perception of the Council;

- frequent and open communication with residents was important. He also suggested that the Scrutiny Lead Members ought to give consideration to the timings of review group meetings as it was not always possible for Members to attend daytime meetings;
- it was important that residents did not feel disengaged. Communication with Councillors was also important. For example, it was essential that Members were kept informed of any contract renewals so that they were aware of possible changes to services;
- communication ought to be transparent and would help build trust. It was important that priorities identified were implemented. The Member cited an example of roads in his Ward which had been prioritised for re-surfacing only to find roads with less priority being re-surfaced;
- political input was important due to Councillor knowledge. It was important that the use of the EE-members portal for reporting issues did not result in Councillors becoming a form of a 'telephone exchange'. The Member referred to how addressing of 'little things made a big difference'.

The same co-Chair of the Scrutiny Review Group thanked members of the Review Group for their participation in the review process. She also thanked officers for sharing the challenges they faced in delivering services and showcasing their skills with humour.

The same co-Chair of the Review Group also thanked Members of the Committee for their comments that evening and suggested that, based on their comments, a 'wash-up' of the work of the Review Group was essential in order to 'home in' on their experiences and suggestions on communication and related matters.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report of the Scrutiny Review Group on Highways Maintenance be endorsed;
- (2) the report and the recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and response;
- (3) the implementation of the recommendations be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after 12 months.

69. Scrutiny Review into Preventing Youth Violence

The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategy, which set out the final findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review into Preventing Youth Violence, which had been established to scrutinise the Council's work into tackling youth violence. The purpose of the review had been to investigate how the Council might use all of its policies and strategies to contribute to reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour in a more 'Public Health approach' to Youth Crime.

The Chair of the Review Group introduced the report and made the following amendments to the report:

- page 1 – to include 'Councillors Camilla Bath and Maxine Henson' who were had been Members of the Review Group;
- page 20, first paragraph commencing 'Officers said that they have lunch at the Helix ..' – to delete reference to 'those children were from the Helix';
- page 34, last paragraph commencing 'In addition to this, last year, The Helix ...' – to delete reference to 'the Afro-Caribbean community, due to the statistics that supported that largely this sort of crime was perpetrated by the Afro-Caribbean community' and replace it with 'certain groups in the community'.

The Chair of the Review Group introduced the report from the Preventing Youth Violence Scrutiny Panel and referred to her 'Foreword'. She highlighted the following points:

- recognition was needed that young people were individuals and ought to be treated as such;
- the positive work into preventing youth violence in Harrow had exceeded her expectations and that, during the review, the message coming through from young people was that they wanted 'something to do' and it was therefore important that facilities were provided to allow them to engage in activities. She cited the example of Wealdstone Centre which provided various facilities to help engage young people;
- young people who had engaged in the review had been shocked to learn of the consequences of crime and how it could impact on their future. It was important that information and consequences of crime were also conveyed to primary school children. A strategy setting out information on where and how to get help and who young people could talk to was essential. Children would face both good and bad choices and required guidance.

The Chair of the Review Group responded to questions from Members of the Committee as follows:

- it was important to engage with primary school children. She was disappointed that a number of national initiatives to engage with young people had stopped, such as the Junior Olympics and the work that Claire Ginger from the police had done with young people. Harrow Schools had stopped the latter as a result of pressures on funding. She had asked the Safer Neighbourhood Harrow Board to identify resources and provide material such as books that other boroughs had provided. She referred to two books, one provided by Islington Council which had been sponsored by the Arsenal Football Club. She outlined the contents of the book which had also provided children with a useful contact list. A Rotary Club had sponsored a book titled 'Watch Out – Child Guide to Every Day'.
- the Cadet Programme run by the police at Harrow's Nower Hill School was to be disbanded as a result of the withdrawal of funding by MOPAC. Up to 160 young people attended this initiative and the funding had become an issue as the police had to also pay for the venue. The programme also attracted referrals from the Youth Offending Team (YOT). Additionally, some young people had a poor perception of policing and this programme had helped to correct and alter this image. A Member of the Committee expressed her disappointment that the programme would be disbanded and suggested that the representative Deputy Lieutenant, a champion of an inclusive society, might be able to identify other funding streams with a view to continuing this initiative;
- the initiative 'police in charge of schools' was due to commence in primary schools and it was important that the primary and secondary schools were encouraged to take up the offer. However, it was important to recognise that the police too had a resource issue as police recruitment levels were low;
- the recommendations of the Review Group would be added to the VVE Strategy and the YOT Plan with a view to their incorporation in their respective work areas;
- some of the additional points set out on page 48 of the Review Group's report were being addressed by the Council and the remaining ought to be progressed.

The Director of Strategy welcomed the recommendations set out in the report of the Review Group and pointed out that to implement some of the recommendations, new resources would need to be identified which could prove challenging. Improved communication, greater awareness and external funding bids would be explored. The work to consider how to implement the recommendations was already underway. He referred to recommendation 3 of the Review Group's report which stated that 'The Council explore interventions that would prevent young people from using and dealing in drugs' and explained that this recommendation had been a key driver of the report on 'Community Safety, Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy - Annual Refresh, Youth Offending Team (YOT) Plan, Knife Crime Action Plan' at agenda item 7. He added that the Council had commenced work in

addressing recommendation 2 - 'the Council to work in collaboration with the Police and Schools to address the priorities agreed within the CS, VVE Strategy' and the continued good relationships with schools would help drive this recommendation forward. He added that Recommendation 1, 'each time a strategy or policy was reviewed, a specific perspective on reducing youth violence should be included' was a matter for the Cabinet.

The Director of Strategy and the Divisional Director Children and Young People responded to questions from a Member of the Committee on the funding arrangements at item 7 of the agenda, page 137 of the agenda referred, and its inclusion in the Council's budget. They explained how the YOT was funded. They added that further funding would need to be explored and explained that the voluntary sector might be able to attract other funding streams. They added that funding for Children Looked After (CLA) had been reduced.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Crime thanked the Chair of the Review Group for a comprehensive report. The Portfolio Holder stated that Harrow was a diverse borough and the language barriers meant that constructive discussions were required between parents and schools. He added that effective communication was key to unlocking perceptions.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the Chair of the Scrutiny Review Group and the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Crime for their attendance. The Chair was pleased with the positive response of the Portfolio Holder and expected that the work of officers would help influence and enhance existing policies.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the changes to the report of the Review Group set out in the preamble above,

- (1) the report of the Scrutiny Review Group into Preventing Youth Violence be endorsed;
- (2) report and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and response;
- (3) the implementation of the recommendations be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after 12 months.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.58 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR SACHIN SHAH
Chair