

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

20 SEPTEMBER 2012

Chairman: * Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillors:

* Sue Anderson	* Krishna James
* Kam Chana	Zarina Khalid
* Ann Gate	* Paul Osborn
* Susan Hall (4)	* Stephen Wright

Voting Co-opted: (Voluntary Aided) (Parent Governors)

† Mrs J Rammelt	Mrs A Khan
† Reverend P Reece	

In attendance: * Phillip O'Dell Minute 305
(Councillors)

- * Denotes Member present
- (4) Denotes category of Reserve Member
- † Denotes apologies received

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

305. Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment

Members received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which set out the joint response of the Council, the Police and other partners to the crime and anti-social behaviour issues identified in the Strategic Assessment. In addition, it broadened the definition of community safety by including other aspects of safety including safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people,

addressing domestic violence, hate crime and community tensions and helping people recover from abuse of drugs and/or alcohol.

The officer advised that the Community Safety Plan was a statutory plan and differed from previous plans in that its scope was expanded. It was hoped that the next plan would be ready in February 2013. This would mean that there would be a common reporting date for the strategic assessment.

The Borough Commander reported that the plan contained retrospective figures and that there was a downward trend for burglary and violent offences. He reported that, in terms of the most up to date figures, there were reductions in terms of property crime (4.8%), robbery (7.7%), residential burglary (10.9%), theft of vehicles (14%), domestic violence (3%) but an increase in theft from vehicles (14%). These figures were available to view on the Metropolitan Police website. At the moment there was a significant reduction in crime but he reported that over the last 5 years there had been an increase in crime during the autumn and therefore there would be an increased deployment of resources.

Members made comments and asked questions as follows:

- A Member expressed his dissatisfaction at being provided with figures verbally that had not been included in the report as he had spent a considerable amount of time going through the report.
- A Member stated that whilst she was pleased to note that the remit of the Safer Harrow Partnership had expanded she was extremely concerned that it did not have cross party membership. Similarly, the Health and Well Being Board did not have cross party membership. The Borough Commander responded that traditionally it had been the relevant portfolio holder that had been the member of the Safer Harrow Partnership but that he would raise the comments with the group and Chief Executive.
- The officer undertook to provide a written response to a Member's query as to which budget funded the 24 hour Hate Crime line. Another Member questioned whether the helpline had been successful and was advised that it was an additional reporting mechanism and that it was difficult to ascribe a change in outcome to any particular measure.
- A Member expressed concern at the variation in statistics from one year to the next and from one ward to the next. The Borough Commander responded that as some wards had a low level of crime, percentages did not necessarily give a true reflection of the situation.
- In terms of the use of Local Area Agreement funding, the officer reported that £90,000 had been made available for equipment purchases but that the police had decided that this was not the way forward and that instead the resources could be used for the autumnal work.

- A Member stated that the Borough Commander had previously reported that snatch and robberies typically occurred at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and were carried out by young people. He questioned what work was being done with schools and the Borough Commander advised that he had met with all of the Head teachers but that no one school was a main source of victims or perpetrators.
- A Member commented that analysis behind the data would be helpful in order to give an indication of the difference between Harrow and other boroughs, for example, in relation to the percentage of women that were victims. The Borough Commander stated that policing was fast moving and resources needed to be deployed quickly and this would be done as the result of the use of intelligence received. Members were welcome to attend the Grip and Pace meetings. The officer added that there had been discussions with the scrutiny leads as to how best to provide Members with statistics drawn down from the Metropolitan Police website in terms of month, time and ward in order to be more time relevant.
- Referring to the proposal to save an additional £18.6m savings, a Member sought clarification as to what these included. The officer advised that this was in the context of the Council's budget.
- A Member expressed concern, in relation to the Wealdstone corridor, for the safety of children attending the I Foundation school and whether any additional resource was being deployed in this area. The Borough Commander responded that the profile of the borough was predominantly Black and Minority Ethnic and that the police would continue to work closely with local businesses and respond to any information received.
- A Member questioned, in terms of reducing re-offending, the number of young people the Youth Offending Team (YOT) were currently working with as the report only appeared to include figures for adults. The Borough Commander advised that the YOT had done effective triage work at the police station and that only 3 of the 100 seen had re-offended. He undertook to provide Members with some additional figures. In terms of robbery, he reported that the vast majority of victims and burglars lived in Harrow but that the main challenge facing the police were those burglars coming into the borough. He referred to the work being done with Mothers against Gangs, which Harrow Boys' School was keen to support, and other ways in which to make an impact when a victim would not testify.
- A Member suggested that if statistical data was to be provided, it should be forwarded to Democratic Services for advance circulation to Members. In addition, the maps included in the papers were not legible and, in future, separate larger copies should be provided.
- A Member sought clarification as to the position on the community trigger and was advised that the provisions had not yet been enacted.

- In response to a Member's question, another Member outlined the 'Shut in Lift' policy which had been introduced as lifts were not being adequately maintained. This incurred costs to the Fire Brigade and this policy now meant that if the Fire Brigade was called to the same lift 3 times in a year, the person/organisation responsible for maintenance would be charged.
- In response to a question about prevention of domestic violence, the officer advised that White Ribbon Day had been introduced 2 years' ago and that the website provided advice. There was insufficient capacity to deal with the issue but the officer added the police in Harrow were excellent at dealing with it.
- A Member emphasised the importance of raising awareness of crimes involving sexual violence which were regarded as a taboo subject. The officer advised that considerable work was being done in schools by the Sexual Violence Adviser to raise awareness of the illegality of these hidden crimes. The officer undertook to provide the Member with the Violence Against Women Strategy.

The Chair thanked the Borough Commander, Portfolio Holder and officer for their attendance and responses.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Committee's comments be noted.