

APPENDIX 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

CABINET – 16 JULY 2015

REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JUNE 2015

COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

This Committee considered a report which introduced the draft Community Safety Strategy for 2015 -18 and invited the Committee's comments to Cabinet for consideration before the Strategy was recommended to Council for adoption.

The Head of Policy introduced the report and explained that the Community Safety Strategy was a statutory plan. She then made the following points:

- the Safer Harrow Partnership had made the decision for the Strategy to shift away from high volume crimes. Whilst these were important there was a feeling that there had to be a shift towards focusing on those issues that would be more significant for the community as a whole including: terrorism, radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, gangs and domestic and sexual violence. Underpinning these would be issues such as community cohesion, data sharing and governance;
- the strategy had been divided into a number of thematic groups and for each of these, a sub-group would be comprised which each would have their own action plan.

The Deputy Borough Commander then addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- he reflected on the International Picture in respect of terrorism, the National Picture in terms of Crime and notable incidents, then the local picture in terms of Crime Reduction achievements. There was a need to focus on areas of serious harm and risk that would ultimately threaten community cohesion;
- he also noted that Anti Social Behaviour needed to be considered for inclusion. Notwithstanding reduction in volume and repeat callers, because the borough had experienced a number of serious incidents.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Crime and Community Safety addressed the Committee and commented that he had been to a number of the Safer Harrow meetings where this had been discussed and welcomed comments from Members.

The following questions were made by Members and responded to accordingly:

- Was reference to the Community Safety Strategy the same as reference to the Community Safety Plan? These terms appear to have been used interchangeably.

This was correct.

- Why was there duplication in the content of the cover report presented to the Committee and the Strategy itself?

This would be corrected for future reports.

- Why were acronyms being used in the Strategy? This was confusing for those who did not know what these were. A glossary would be a helpful addition.

This suggestion was helpful and would be considered.

- Was there any concerns regarding the ongoing dispute in Harrow between the mosques?

There were no specific concerns and if any tensions arose these would be dealt with.

- The structure and layout of the Strategy was confusing and there was little information about the methodology in achieving the outcomes set out.

These were helpful comments and more work would be done to sign post the methodology used in achieving the outcomes.

- Could more work be done in schools to educate about preventing Hate Crime?

It was becoming an increasing challenge for the Police to get this subject discussed at schools. Any influence Members were able to exert in their roles as school governors to address this would be welcomed.

- Were there any figures in relation to domestic violence issues in Harrow?

There were approx 500 allegations involving violence. There were approximately 7,000 non-criminal domestic allegations.

- Could the police be more aware that the internet was becoming an increasing tool by perpetrators of Hate Crime, cyber bullying etc? Further action was required.

This was a welcome suggestion and would be looked at in due course.

- There were a large number of unreported crimes taking place at school. This usually related to assaults and thefts.

Schools and underreporting was an issue. Greater dialogue was required and Members were again encouraged, in their roles and school governors, to help address this issue.

- What was the difference between a faith and religious crime?

This was a good question and this would be provided to the Committee as there were technical differences

The Chair thanked the attendees for presenting the report.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet)

That the Committee's comments on the draft Community Safety Strategy be provided to Cabinet.

Background Documents:

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 June 2015

Contact Officer:

Vishal Seegoolam, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 020 8424 1883

Email: vishal.seegoolam@harrow.gov.uk