

## **CABINET – 11 JULY 2019**

### **REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 JUNE 2019**

#### **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.

## **FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Background Documents:**

Agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4 June 2019 – Relevant Report

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