

Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Wednesday 27 March 2019

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Bora Kwon (Chair), Iain Cassidy, David Morton, and Ann Rosenberg

Other Councillors: Councillors Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for the Environment) & Sue Fennimore (Deputy Leader)

Officers: Claire Rai (Head of Community Safety), Ullash Karia Head of Leisure, Transport and Technical Services, Ian Ross (Leisure Services Manager), Thomas Baylis (Waste Action Development Manager), Sharon Lea (Director of Resident Services)

External Guests: Inspector Jim Cook (Metropolitan Police)

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE TO CRIME - DISCUSSION ITEM

Claire Rai, Head of Community Safety introduced the item and provided a brief background of the Council's strategy for youth violence within the borough. She showed slides that provided an overview of The Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE) strategy which also included the Council's partnership response to EGVE. This delivered an effective, coordinated response, that focused around six key strategic priorities. In addition, this was reviewed annually to monitor progress.

The serious youth violence & knife crime action plan (2018-19) was achieved through a partnership approach and was available on the Council's website. The Council was also working closely with the police to support the prevention of knife crime. The Police Specialist Gang Units for Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham had merged to one Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU). Three Police Constables worked within the Youth Offending Team and engaged with young people at the risk of, or already within, the criminal justice system.

It was noted that funding had been secured for the recruitment of a Serious Youth Violence Coordinator. This role would be responsible for coordinating and monitoring delivery of the Council's Knife Crime Action Plan. Furthermore, a Gangs Co-ordinator and Parenting Worker would also be appointed to work with families to build emotional resilience and support family members.

The Council provided funding to St Giles Trust to deliver outreach work across the borough. Preventative work was carried out with young people at risk of gang involvement. The Council also funded Street Doctors to deliver first aid training and to carry out knife crime awareness work with young people in schools and colleges across the borough.

Claire Rai commented that a 'One Life, No Knife' Community Event would be organised in Summer 2019. The event would be aimed at identifying ways the community could collectively tackle knife crime.

Inspector Jim Cook, Metropolitan Police explained that two fatal stabbings took place on Lanfrey Place and Gowan Avenue in March 2019. A male was identified via the Council's CCTV network and was charged with murder in relation to one of these incidents. Inspector Jim Cook praised the Council's CCTV network, adding that this had played a vital role in identifying the perpetrator.

Councillor David Morton said that he had received feedback from residents, relating to a suspected increase in drug related activities within groups of young males in Avonmore and Brook Green Ward. He asked how the three funded police officers were allocated and whether they were ward specific. In response Claire Rai explained that they worked in partnership with the Youth Offending Team to identify and engage with young people most at risk within the borough. In addition, the Council was planning to recruit specialist officers to improve its engagement process with the community and support the development of the knife crime action plan. Upon receiving intelligence, a

locality action plan was put together and partnership working with the police was carried out to ensure that this was delivered.

Councillor David Morton commented that it had also been brought to his attention that anti-social behaviour, involving young people was taking place at a local Tesco.

Inspector Jim Cook commented that that the police relied on intelligence to respond to crime along with a strong partnership approach and thanked Councillor David Morton for the information shared. He requested that these details be forwarded to the Community Safety Team to ensure this was picked up by relevant officers.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked how Officers measured success across the borough. In response Inspector Jim Cook explained that raw data was collated by the Police and these figures could be provided to the Committee. In addition, Claire Rai commented that data was often reviewed to establish how many times young people re-offended. In addition, Officers regularly monitored what measures were in place to ensure young people were kept out of prison. A wide range of services were involved in supporting youth violence, therefore success was managed in many ways across the borough.

Inspector Jim Cook explained that police officers were placed in schools within the borough to help support young people with issues relating to crime and youth violence. The police worked in collaboration with council officers to determine ways to engage with young people and support them in sharing important information with professionals. Furthermore, it was noted that the police also had a duty to safeguard any young person that provided intelligence to a professional.

Councillor Sue Fennimore, Deputy Leader commented that she had volunteered with the Youth Offending Services for several years and expressed great passion for this area. She noted that knife crime was a persistent and worrying concern and felt that the nature around knife carrying had drastically changed amongst young people. However, the safety of young people remained a priority to the Council and the aim was to deliver this through a partnership working approach. Furthermore, the Council was reviewing the work that was being carried out in this area to mitigate risks and ensure that early prevention strategies were in place. This was a complex area to tackle; therefore, a Police Commission was launched to explore the root causes of crime and ant-social behaviour alongside residents. The recommendations provided by the commission would be taken into consideration during the review process.

Furthermore, Councillor Sue Fennimore noted that the Council's CCTV network was a key factor in bringing victims to justice adding that it also played a critical role in preventing crime.

The Chair asked whether there were any trends or patterns around knife related crime, particularly amongst younger people. In response Inspector Jim Cook said that there was a cohort that carried weapons in the borough,

however the last stabbing involved a 27-year-old individual. Weapon carrying was a huge concern across the board.

Inspector Jim Cook explained that Operation Sceptre was launched in 2015 with the aim of reducing knife crime and the number of families affected by knife crime across London. Operation Sceptre targeted not only those who carried and used knives, but also the supply, access, and importation of weapons.

A knife search was also carried out in West London College. Metropolitan Police had also introduced patrols and targeted stop and searches took place in areas that were most affected with knife crime. Tackling knife crime was a priority for the Metropolitan Police and appropriate measures were being put into place to tackle this issue.

The Chair asked how knives were accessed by young people. Inspector Jim Cook said most of the knives that were recovered were kitchen knives. Zombie knives could also be purchased online.

Councillor David Morton said that over the last 10 years there had been a greater turnover in staff within the safer neighbourhood's team. He felt that the lack of continuity had an influence on local knowledge and asked whether there were any plans to monitor this going forward. Inspector Jim Cook acknowledged the concerns raised and explained that most people moved on for development purposes, however were replaced by experienced Officers who had extensive knowledge around crime.

Councillor Sue Fennimore said that going forward it would be good practice to review the hand over process, suggesting that it would prove useful to introduce new officers to Ward Councillors to ensure that a better outcome was achieved.

Councillor Iain Cassidy asked how clustered was knife crime in London. Inspector Jim Cook explained that the victim or suspects were often known to the police and the Council, therefore this wasn't always a surprise. There was a small cohort in the borough who were likely to be either the victim or the perpetrator

The Chair commented that she was pleased to hear about the work that was being carried out in partnership with schools and asked how improvements could be made around community engagement in the borough. Claire Rai noted an event around knife crime would take place to encourage community engagement. In addition, Councillor Sue Fennimore said that she was in discussions with Councillor Larry Culhane, Cabinet for Children and Education to complete a piece of work exploring the link between young people's involvement in crime after exclusion.

The Chair asked what strategies were currently in place to connect with parents of young people. In response Claire Rai explained that the Council had secured funding for two new posts to work directly with families and offer support and guidance.

Inspector Jim Cook praised the Council for the great work that was being achieved via a partnership approach to tackle knife crime in the borough.

The Chair thanked everyone for the contributions made at the meeting and was pleased to hear about all the work that was being carried out by Council Officers in partnership with the Police. She asked that this be revisited at a later stage, noting that a longer-term approach needed to be determined to prevent crime going forward.

RESOLVED

THAT, the Committee noted and commented on the update

5. PARKS AND OPEN SPACES OVERVIEW

Ullash Karia, Head of Leisure, Transport provided a presentation of parks and open spaces. He showed slides that highlighted the key points and achievements of this service. The Council directly managed 54 parks and open spaces, including 4 cemeteries across the borough. Income from parks and open spaces was generated from a variety of sources, not all of which were managed by the parks team – these included events and funfairs, outdoor sports bookings, etc. In addition, grounds and landscape maintenance including sports bookings were carried out by Idverde.

It was noted that the Council currently held 15 Green Flag Awards for the parks within the borough and a further two had been entered this year. A Green Flag Award was judged against 8 different criteria's and was a national benchmark for quality and management of parks and open spaces. A total of 7,882 volunteer hours had been spent in parks and open spaces and major projects had been completed in 2018.

Ullash Karia highlighted the challenges faced by the Council, noting that the current parks strategy expired at the end of 2018 and officers would shortly commence work on a new one. The strategy would identify areas of open spaces deficiency with the borough but also set policy for the management of parks and open spaces both from a practical and strategical management basis, including a planning perspective. Furthermore, it was noted that much of the infrastructure within parks and open spaces was now aging, therefore an asset management strategy would also need to be developed as part of the new parks and open spaces strategy. Examples were provided of some of the work that had been recently completed by the Council.

Councillor David Morton thanked officers for the work that was completed at St Pauls Gardens and asked how the team was currently structured. In response Ullash Karia said that he had a dedicated team that was split between RBKC and H&F. The parks team in the Council was made up of 3 full time equivalent (FTE) officers covering the whole parks service.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg said that she had received some feedback, concerning residents feeling unwelcome in certain parks by the park friend's groups and asked what measures were in place to monitor the work carried by these types of groups. Ullash Karia said that park friend's groups were

established as an independent voluntary local group to promote effective and beneficial usage of the park to the wider community. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was being updated and reviewed by officers to reaffirm the Councils expectations as part of an ongoing piece of work.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg said that a sports provider at a local park was notified by email that his/her contract had been terminated. She queried who was responsible for regulating the handling of the sports booking contracts. In response Ian Ross explained that Ideverde held an annual licence with tennis coaches. He said that details regarding this matter could not be provided at the meeting, however would follow this up with the Committee separately.

Councillor Iain Cassidy asked whether the Council had noticed an increase in parks usage because of outdoor sports bookings. Officers explained that there definitely had been an increase. A piece of work was being carried out to establish and record better parks usage and the details of the usage. In addition, schools were also using parks as a space for day activities. Therefore, the Council was currently exploring how an increase in usage could be managed better. Also, the Council was also working on introducing a charge to certain group bookings.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for the Environment provided a brief overview of the Councils expectations and noted that a resident led Parks Commission would be set up to review the current parks strategy, including sports bookings. In addition, there had been an increase in the number of schools that also expressed an interest in using parks in the borough due to the lack of green space available onsite.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg felt that there seemed to be an increasing pressure on parks across the borough, particularly South Park. Councillor Wesley Harcourt agreed, and explained that it was challenging to get the balance right, ensuring everyone's needs were being met. However, a small fee would be charged for organised group sports going forward. Furthermore, the next steps would be for the Parks Commission to agree a plan and establish which areas needed to be addressed going forward.

The Chair asked who would feed into the park's strategy. Ullash Karia said that the parks commission would consult with residents. Key priorities would be set-in line with the Council's manifesto. Friends groups would also feed into the strategy. The Chair requested that regular park users and organised groups also had an opportunity to feed into the work of the parks commission. She asked that this initiative be advertised in local parks to capture community engagement, ensuring issues were being heard as part of the park's strategy.

RESOLVED

THAT, the Committee reviewed and commented on the contents of the report.

6. RECYCLING & WASTE MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for the Environment commented that at the last meeting the Committee requested clarification around who carried out the street cleanliness inspections relating to the Council's performance figures. It was noted that street assessments were carried out independently from Serco on random days.

Thomas Baylis, Waste Action Development Manager introduced the report and provided an overview of waste minimisation and recycling in the borough. The Council currently had a household recycling rate of 23.7%. When ranked alongside other London boroughs the Council ranked 29th of 33 for 2016/17. The Council had a relatively low recycling rate in comparison to other boroughs. However, this was the same for all inner-city London boroughs as they faced similar challenges.

An overview of the challenges faced by the Council was provided. The Council was the 6th most densely populated borough in the country and had a large proportion of high-rise flats which made it difficult to collect waste and recycling. In addition, the lack of space also made it very challenging to store and collect waste which contributed to recycling.

As part of the Mayor's Environmental strategy to increase the municipal recycling rate, the Council would consider measures on how recycling could be improved and what levels they could achieve, including any actions would be taken. One way to increase the recycling rate would be to collect garden waste separately. A successful separate garden waste would boost the municipal recycle rate. Furthermore, collecting food waste separately and disposing of it as recycling would also boost the recycling rate. To complete this piece of work the Council had requested support from Resource London, who worked with the Mayor's office to model different waste collection systems. The outcome would be presented to members who would have the opportunity to feed into the new waste contract.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked whether the Council offered instruction guidelines to residents on how to use their composters. Thomas Baylis explained that residents were encouraged to use their composters to help minimise kitchen waste. An event would take place in the summer to install a large composter in the Sand End Adventure Playground (SEAPIA). The community were keen to get this set up as they didn't already have composting in place. On the day of installation children and staff at the centre would be encouraged to engage and learn about food waste and composting.

The Chair asked for further information to be provided around the challenges faced for food recycling. Councillor Wesley Harcourt Cabinet Member for the Environment explained that these would be determined as part of the work carried out by the Council for the Mayor's environmental strategy. Some of the issues faced by the Council, included the costs involved and developing peoples understanding and behaviours around food waste. The aim would be to set out a pilot with priorities situated in North and South of the borough.

The Chair asked what measures were in place to help with the education of textile waste. In response Thomas Baylis noted that the Council had many

charity shops in the borough where there was an opportunity to hand in clothes. In addition, an organisation called TRAIID held a waste transfer licence and offered a free home collection service, which also applied to small electrical items. A more detailed summary of the textile-based plans would be circulated to the Committee members.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked whether local businesses would look at setting up their own shared anaerobic digestion facilities. In response Thomas Baylis explained that this may take some time to develop due to the technical and logistical requirements, however the feedback would be forwarded to the Council's waste team for consideration.

RESOLVED

THAT, the Committee reviewed and commented on the contents of the report.

7. WORK PROGRAMME AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The work programme was noted.

Meeting started: 7:00pm

Meeting ended: 9:00pm

Chairman

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