

Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Wednesday 5 December 2018

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Bora Kwon (Chair), Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, Iain Cassidy and Ann Rosenberg

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

Officers: Claire Rai (Head of Community Safety), Ann Ramage (Bi-Borough Head of Environmental Health), Bev Sharpe (Assistant Director of Family Services), Fawad Bhatti (Social Inclusion & Policy Manager), Russell Butt (Communications Officer), Andy Stocker (Street Czar), Peter Smith (Head of Policy & Strategy)

Guests: Detective Sergeant Yasser Awad (Hammersmith Police Station) and Adam Matan (Chair of the Resident-Led Policing and Crime Commission)

1. MINUTES

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler requested that actions relating to items 4 & 5 be followed up by the relevant officers.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Morton.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. RESIDENT LED CRIME COMMISSION - DISCUSSION ITEM

Adam Matan, Chair of the Resident-Led Policing and Crime Commission introduced himself and noted that the Commission had begun its work looking at the root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour. A press release was published on the Council's website on 5 December 2018 updating residents of the current arrangements and providing an opportunity for residents to submit written evidence to the Commission. In addition, the terms of reference had also been approved following the Commission's first meeting held on 27 November 2018. The Commission agreed three main priority areas which look at how communities and key partners would work together to tackle concerns around crime. It would also focus on how to build better community resilience and ensure residents could voice their concerns with the Police and the Council. Furthermore, the partnership structure would also be reviewed going forward.

Peter Smith, Head of Policy & Strategy, explained that a breakdown updating residents of the timescales for reporting on all three key areas would be available within the next 6 months, once evidence and views had been gathered and analysed.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler felt that some residents felt disappointed by the introduction of the new arrangements and asked how the members of the Commission were selected. Peter Smith explained that the Council provided residents with the opportunity to submit an expression of interest to sit on the Commission and, once these were received, the Chair and Vice Chair were asked to appoint the members based on four specific selection criteria.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler raised concerns about the transparency and the independence of the selection process for the Commission. Adam Matan offered reassurances and explained that the Council Officers were not involved in the appointment of members. He worked in collaboration with the Vice Chair to appoint members based on the selection criteria. Furthermore, he noted that he was aware of the historical issues, however reiterated that this was an independent selection process.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked for clarification around the involvement of the Police going forward. Peter Smith noted that Superintendent Helen Harper, of the Metropolitan Police, was acting as an ex-officio advisor to the Commission and would be invited to all future meetings.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Sue Fennimore explained that the Council had successfully launched nine Resident-Led Commissions to help develop policies for the borough and each Commission was developed independently. The administration appointed the Chair and Vice Chair; however, it was then their responsibility to separately select and appoint members of the Commission. In addition, she highlighted that the quality of applicants was outstanding and the aim of the Commission was to achieve good outcomes on crime within the borough.

The Chair asked what stakeholders would the Council engage with to ensure the success of this Commission. Peter Smith noted that the Vice Chair would like to work in collaboration with the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel Chairs and the Metropolitan Police - stop and search services. The Chair requested that young people within the borough were also provided with the opportunity to engage with the Commission.

Councillor Iain Cassidy asked what sort of work would be carried out to engage with local businesses across the borough. Adam Matan said that the Commission was at its very early stages of set up therefore a plan had not yet been finalised. However, the priority was to engage with existing partners to develop a strategy during the recommendation stage. Working in collaboration with local businesses and partners such as professional football clubs, Charring Cross Hospital and Westfield London would prove useful to tackle crime within the borough. In addition, residents were also able to submit written evidence to the Commission via the Council's website - this had been communicated to residents as part of the press release.

The Leader, Councillor Stephen Cowan, said that crime within the borough had increased, this therefore had placed a huge pressure on the community. He noted that he was grateful to the administration and everyone involved in the setting up of the Commission for their hard work and contributions made, to achieve successful outcomes, whilst pioneering ways to work with residents. Furthermore, the Council had appointed residents across the board with expert knowledge to step in and lead this Commission and help minimise issues relating to crime and antisocial behaviour within the borough. Community action panels would be set up to efficiently tackle some of the areas that were outside of the Police's remit.

A resident asked for further clarification around why the Council had made the decision to close the Safer Neighbourhood Board and develop a new crime and policing Commission. Councillor Stephen Cowan explained that after consultation with the Police, the Council had made a decision to move forward and refresh the board. Furthermore, he explained that documentation was circulated, which clearly outlined the reasons why the Council had made this decision as well as clarifying the next steps.

The Chair thanked Peter Smith and Adam Matan for their efforts and said that she was looking forward to receiving a more detailed update around the future progress of the Commission.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted and commented on the update

5. OPERATION PUGLIA

Detective Sergeant Yasser Awad provided a presentation outlining the role and key outcomes of Operation Puglia. This was set up in October 2017, in response to an increase in violent crime. This included a rise in the use of knives and firearms. Operation Puglia came to fruition in July 2018 as 78 individuals from across Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F), Kensington &

Chelsea (K&C) and Westminster City Council (WCC) were arrested during the enforcement phase of the operation. In addition, 15 juveniles from the Council were arrested and 71 individuals were charged with a total of 344 offences as part of the operation. Safeguarding was regarded as a key factor for consideration as work had progressed by incorporating a safeguarding custody and public protection hub as part of the arrest phase. This included a reception centre for children at risk.

Working in collaboration with multi-agencies was essential to tackling the exploitation of children and the intimidation of local communities of these criminal gangs. The Youth Offending Service convened multi-agency meetings after the enforcement phase to consider whether any of the young people arrested were victims of modern slavery. Furthermore, tenancy action was taken and as result 16 Council tenancies were identified as being directly involved in the drug activity.

A resident asked whether any of the individuals that were convicted of drug dealing were drug addicts. DS Yasser Awad explained that majority of the people that were arrested were drug dealers and not addicts, however outreach workers were working with these individuals to identify any drug use ensuring that appropriate support was in place if this was the case.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked out of the individuals that were arrested, how many were sent to prison and whether the Police were satisfied with the sentences issued. DS Yasser Awad explained that some of the individuals that pleaded early, depending on their age were issued with fines and criminal behaviour orders, however the exact figures could be provided after the meeting. In addition, the courts issued set levels of sentencing based on the crime that was committed i.e. drug runners could be sentenced to a maximum of three years. He added that sentencing didn't always act as a deterrent but certainly took the criminals off the streets for a period to prevent further crime related activities.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler noted that majority of the arrests made were from the borough, compared to the other two boroughs and asked if the Police expected this to be the case. DS Yasser Awad said that he had been working in this borough for many years and from his experience this wasn't unexpected. The Police found there to be higher number of drug dealers, operating in this area, compared to the other two boroughs. However, was impressed at the number of arrests made and the decrease in the drug activity as a result of Operation Puglia.

A resident asked what was the scope for operation Puglia and whether this was a rolling operation. Furthermore, he asked for clarification around what actions were taken in relation to the juveniles that were arrested to prevent further crime within the borough. DS Yasser Awad explained that this was an unprecedented move and was a direct response to a rise in violent crime linked to gang activity and drug supply across the three boroughs at the time. In addition, all 15 juveniles were charged on the day of arrest and remanded to go to court the next day. The Police would look at working with the Youth

Offending Services to enforce conditions on these individuals as part of the longer-term strategy, however this was still a working progress.

Bev Sharpe, Assistant Director of Family Services explained that the Council was working with the juveniles and would continue to offer them support services and engage them in positive activities to ensure that they were not being exploited. In addition, most remained engaged with the Youth Offending Services through a bespoke intervention plan devised to address the issue leading to their involvement in crime.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked how crime was monitored within the borough. In response DS Yasser Awad explained that ward officers, uniformed Police officers and the Council's CCTV unit worked in collaboration to gather intelligence and ascertain the suitable strategies to tackle crime across the borough.

Councillor Iain Cassidy asked how many Council properties were directly affected by cuckooing and what measures were put into place to protect tenants that were at risk going forward. In response DS Yasser explained that 4 Council addresses were impacted as a result. Criminal behaviour orders were put into place against the perpetrators. Welfare checks were also conducted by the Police in relation to the victims. Furthermore, Claire Rai, Head of Community Safety explained that injunctions would be put into place by the Council to provide additional protection for the victims as soon as any vulnerabilities were identified. The Council would try to maintain the tenancy of the individual at risk and therefore a less enforcement-based approach was considered to be more effective.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed and commented on the report.

6. THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGY FOR THE CCTV NETWORK

Andy Stocker, Street Czar gave a presentation and provided an overview of the Council's strategy for its CCTV network and its plans to expand CCTV coverage, particularly on housing estates. The Council was also expanding its general street level coverage east on Hammersmith Road and Lillie Road, and south into the Imperial Road regeneration area. Over the last financial year (2017/18) the Council installed 8 new public space CCTV cameras, 160 new housing estate cameras and 30 new deployable cameras. He showed slides that outlined the future expansion plans for 2018/19. There were plans to install CCTV in 6 new housing estates, 2 housing estate digital upgrades and 10 new deployable cameras.

Partnership working with the Metropolitan Police was essential to the number of arrests made in 2017/2018. 508 people were arrested in the borough that would have not been without the CCTV operators working jointly with the Police. Local Police teams at Hammersmith Police station had full access to live and recorded CCTV images – this allowed the Police to investigate crimes on the borough more swiftly. Furthermore, the Council was exploring

opportunities for different types of technologies that would speed up response times and overall increase the number of arrests made.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked for clarification around the implementation date for the digital upgrade at Fulham Court. In response, Andy Stocker said this would take place in 2019 (Q1).

Councillor Victoria Brockbank-Fowler said that she was impressed by the work that was being carried out by officers and the Police around the Council's CCTV network and asked if residents had approached the Council directly for CCTV to be installed in public streets. Andy Stocker noted that a street map, highlighting all the CCTV installations within the borough was available upon request. He explained that the Council had little CCTV on residential streets as it was challenging to justify the implementation of camera's down side streets due to practicality and legal reasons. In addition, it was noted that the legislation relating to private land and public streets was different.

A resident asked if he could install a CCTV at the front of his house due to some ongoing issues he was experiencing on his street. Andy Stocker noted that there was a tool kit available online that could be installed. Furthermore, he needed to adhere to certain principles and would require the permission of his landlord to proceed with the implementation. Councillor Sue Fennimore asked that the resident discussed this further with Andy Stocker and Claire Rai outside of the meeting to resolve this matter.

Councillor Iain Cassidy, referring to page 17 of the agenda pack asked for clarification around who the third part links were. Andy Stocker explained that they were partners such as Westfield London, Professional Football Clubs, Housing Associations, and Charring Cross Hospital. He explained that their CCTV network would feed into the Council's operator, working in collaboration to improve response times and tackle crime.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked how many people were present in the control room at one time. Andy Stocker said that there were two operators watching the screens in the control room each day. The control room was often used as a base for running Police operations. Police officers co-located with the Council team, combing their knowledge with the CCTV operator's camera skills to target offenders. Furthermore, the Council was exploring ways to implement artificial intelligence methods to improve efficiency going forward.

The Chair asked whether the Council's CCTV network was robust. Andy Stocker confirmed that the Council owned the entire network and was fully managed and controlled by the Council – therefore it was very safe and not susceptible to interference.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed and commented on the report

7. REVIEW OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA)

Claire Rai, Head of Community Safety introduced the report and outlined the role of RIPA. This provided a statutory framework for Police and public authorities to use surveillance and communications data where necessary and proportionate for preventing or detecting crime or preventing disorder. She showed slides that explained how the cameras had been used and what issues were tackled last year. Since November 2012 a Council could only authorise directed surveillance to prevent or detect criminal offences that were either punishable by at least 6 months imprisonment or were related to the underage sale of various prohibited items. From September 2017 to October 2018 the Council had used these powers twice to identify perpetrators and Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and drug dealing. Officers were currently working on a sovereign policy for the Council and would be seeking cabinet approval to end the agreement with Kensington and Chelsea (K&C).

The Chair asked whether officers had received any complaints regarding the use of these powers due to the intrusiveness of this act. In response Claire Rai explained to use surveillance the Council must consider whether this was 'necessary and 'proportionate' compared to the crime that had been committed. An authorising officer who was not connected with the operation would review the application. If satisfied that the requirements of the Act and the Council's policy were met, would authorise the application - this would then be considered by the magistrate's court for approval.

Ann Ramage, Bi-Borough Head of Environmental Health added that this was a well-established service. This was also considered a useful tool to the Council in solving high risk crime activities. Furthermore, this legislation was used in other services across the Council to prevent and tackle any ongoing issues. The whole process was also overseen by an Audit Commission and the Council had not received any complaints. The Commission would usually provide a list of recommendation which were taken into consideration and actioned accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed and commented on the report.

8. WORK PROGRAMME AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The PAC's work programme was noted. The next meeting would be held on 29 January 2019.

Meeting started: 7pm

Meeting ended: 9pm

Chair

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