

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Tuesday 21 March 2023

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Nikos Souslous (Chair), Omid Miri, Sally Taylor and Andrew Dinsmore

Guests:

Superintendent Craig Knight (Metropolitan Police)
Marnie Freeman (Director, Neighbourly Lab)
Grainne O'Dwyer (Senior Programme Manager, Neighbourly Lab)

Officers:

Neil Thurlow (Assistant Director, Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV)
Mohammed Basith (Law Enforcement Team Manager)
Matthew Hooper (Chief Officer, Safer Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services)
Clancy Connolly (Policy Officer)

Other Attendees:

Tony Boys (Chair, Fulham Reach Ward, Safer Neighbourhood Team Ward Panel)
Sharon Tomlin (Chair, Lillie Ward, Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) and Trey Campbell-Simon.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore clarified that he had requested a breakdown of the Law Enforcement Team's (LET's) salary scale – and the criteria that justifies the salaries of the LET officers so they could be compared with the salaries and job criteria of a Police Officer. Neil Thurlow said he would provide the information outside of the meeting.

ACTION: Neil Thurlow

RESOLVED

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TEAM

Neil Thurlow (Assistant Director, Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV) introduced partners from Neighbourly Lab, who were present to talk about community engagement and the work done in collaboration with H&F.

Neil Thurlow offered updates on the two Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) regarding dogs in public spaces, and cyclist activity on river paths. Since the previous meeting, consultations on both issues had closed with healthy public engagement in both issues. This provided a solid basis to understand local views on both issues. Analysis was ongoing, and recommendations would be made shortly.

Neil Thurlow thanked members and all those involved for their assistance in circulating surveys across community groups in these consultations, confirming that the PSPOs would be introduced in a phased approach of engagement and education, with enforcement in cases of repeat offences.

Sharon Tomlin asked if Housing Associations could initiate requests for patrols on their sites. Mohammed Basith (Law Enforcement Team Manager) confirmed they could, and the LET would respond in accordance with the severity of the issue being reported.

Grainne O'Dwyer (Senior Programme Manager, Neighbourly Lab) presented the work of Neighbourly Lab, a not-for-profit community organisation focused on improving social connection and strengthening communities. Grainne O'Dwyer explained that Neighbourly Lab had engaged with, and shadowed, the LET in H&F, to better understand their role and offer an evaluation of the service as a critical friend. She praised the LET as offering an invaluable asset and role in the community that many other local authorities didn't offer.

Neighbourly Lab identified a co-produced approach with H&F LET Officers to design further training to improve the service in the realms of both community engagement and enforcement. Alongside Officer training, Neighbourly Lab also ran community engagement events in parks and places of worship across the borough. Following the engagements, Neighbourly Lab found both improved morale and a greater sense of wellbeing amongst LET Officers, whilst residents reported an improved understanding of, and belief in, the role of the LET.

Tony Boys asked if Neighbourly Lab could extend their remit to working with Resident Associations to broaden the messaging about the LET service and Officers. Neighbourly Lab confirmed that this would be a consideration in future.

The Chair asked if the LET could broaden its reach by engaging in community walkabouts to enhance community engagement and presence. Mohammed Basith confirmed that the LET engaged with residents via ward-based email addresses, which allowed the public to contact Officers who could meet with residents at their convenience. Mohammed Basith also noted that the LET team attended ward panel meetings and held surgeries in local libraries three times a month.

Neil Thurlow said the LET was operational 24/7 and members of the public were welcome to join patrols at any time. Neil Thurlow also welcomed any invitation Tony Boys extended on behalf of ward panels and residents associations across the borough. Tony Boys and Sharon Tomlin commended the LET for their engagement in their local wards of Fulham Reach and Lillie.

Members requested the following:

- Regular progress updates and notification when the PSPOs were approved.
- Details on the timing of the implementation and engagement plans.
- A list of the priority patrols for the LET.

ACTIONS: Neil Thurlow

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted and commented on the report.

5. POLICE INPUT BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Superintendent Craig Knight (Metropolitan Police) introduced himself to the Committee and noted that he would shortly be starting in the role of Neighbourhood Superintendent for the borough. The post involved leading neighbourhood teams and acting as a senior leader representative for partnership meetings, engaging in effective problem-solving and local engagement, and acting as a local strategic lead for neighbourhood policing.

Superintendent Craig Knight gave an overview of the briefing item covering January 2022 to January 2023. He noted there had been a slight uptick of offences recorded in H&F following the end of the pandemic. He stressed that H&F was a safe borough when compared to others across London and that it should be remembered that H&F is especially vibrant, with a very high footfall. He noted that there had been around 4,000 stop and search incidents in H&F, with the majority related to drug offences. Around 30% of searches rendered a positive outcome. He also discussed the Met's Turnaround Plan – a platform for Londoners to provide feedback, to help inform and guide the Police Commissioner and Neighbourhood Superintendents. The aim was to improve community responses and relations, be proactive and evidence-based, strengthen public protection, and raise standards.

Superintendent Craig Knight emphasised the importance of ward panels and working with local authorities. He commended H&F in its performance over the previous year, particularly the reduction in crime in an around Shepherd's Bush Green.

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore asked for clarification on detection rates in H&F as set against national standards, how detection rates could be improved, and for detail in the role of vehicles (e.g. moped and electric scooters) utilised in robberies. Superintendent Craig Knight confirmed that detection rates in H&F were broadly in line with those of the rest of London, adding that rates were generally low and needed to be improved. He also confirmed that moped-enabled crime had fallen in the past two years and that e-scooters were not currently being used prolifically in criminal activity. Superintendent Craig Knight emphasised the importance of preventative tools such as stop and search and CCTV in appropriate areas.

Superintendent Craig Knight illustrated the preventative value of stop and search procedures, particularly in the context of drugs offences, which accounted for around 68% of all offences in the borough. Superintendent Craig Knight also confirmed that 97% of stop and searches were recorded on Officer body-worn video cameras. Stop and search processes also include the recording of demographics, where that information could be obtained from the person being stopped. Police Officers were legally obliged to identify themselves during the process of recording and must inform the person being stopped that they had a right to request a copy of the video recording. He noted that less than one in every thousand stop and search event resulted in a complaint against the Police in H&F. Stop and search footage was regularly reviewed and was subject to checks and balances, with particular sensitivity around adversely approaching or affecting specific communities.

The Chair asked for details of the demographic representation in the Met Police Force and how that reflected the diversity of the local area served. Superintendent Craig Knight confirmed that approximately 30% of the Met were currently women and 20-25% of Officers recruited were from diverse communities.

Tony Boys asked, in light of the recent report by Baroness Casey, which public body held the Police to account. Superintendent Craig knight confirmed that the Met Police were held to account by local authorities as well as the College of Policing, and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. The Home Secretary and the Independent Office for Police Conduct also acted as checks and balances to the Met Police.

In answer to a question by Tony Boys, Superintendent Craig Knight said that a formal request has been made by the Met Police to the Home Secretary for additional funding. Tony Boys suggested the Committee should support this request. The Chair said that the Committee supports the request and agrees that the police should be properly funded, especially in the aftermath of a decade of cuts to services. Nevertheless, the Chair noted that funding was only part of the solution. Councillor Dinsmore asked for the minutes to show that there was not unanimous agreement from the Committee in support of this request.

Superintendent Craig Knight indicated that incoming tangible changes, following the report, will include increased PCSO and Sergeant numbers across London. He also

hoped that increased numbers of special constables, cadets, and volunteers would also help support progress.

Sharon Tomlin noted that the Community Monitoring Group that she was a part of had produced a report based on findings that young black men were disproportionately stopped and searched by the Met Police in Lillie ward. However, she confirmed that the Group's reviews of Police Officer body-cam videos had been largely positive in terms of assessing Police Officer standards. She welcomed Craig Knight as the incoming Superintendent and offered her support in assisting him in with the forthcoming recruitment of local volunteers to the Met.

Councillor Omid Miri asked how stringent the vetting and training procedures were for volunteers in the Met Police. Superintendent Craig Knight said all existing Officers in the Force were currently going through a process of re-vetting and a review of recruitment and training was due to be undertaken in light of the Baroness Casey review.

Councillor Omid Miri asked Superintendent Craig Knight what powers he had to expel Officers when necessary. Craig Knight confirmed he had powers to act against Officers, however he noted that hearings adjudicated by independent persons were often required to oversee the expulsion of Officers.

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore asked if the Met Police Force could learn from the example of the transition in Northern Ireland, where the Royal Ulster Constabulary transitioned to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Superintendent Craig Knight confirmed that transitions in Police Forces, and other non-Policing organisations, were being observed from around the world to gauge examples of transition that might be learned from.

Councillor Omid Miri raised the issue of crime reduction in the Shepherds Bush Green area and asked if it was because criminal activity had genuinely been reduced or if it had transferred elsewhere. Superintendent Craig Knight stressed that crime should be addressed wherever it occurs, and that it was difficult to say for certain if crime occurred in new areas as a direct result of displacement from a previous area.

Councillor Omid Miri asked Superintendent Craig Knight if he felt sufficiently supported by the Council and the local NHS and if his officers had the necessary training to deal with mental health issues. Superintendent Craig Knight said they have a good working relationship with these partners but Met Police Officers were principally trained in law enforcement and were not trained mental health professionals, although Officers did receive some limited training in this issue. He added that while other frontline and social services were better placed to deal with such issues, cuts to their funding over more than a decade had hindered that work and meant that the police have had to step in instead.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee noted and commented on the item.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were noted.

Meeting started: 7.05 pm
Meeting ended: 9.15 pm

Chair

Contact Officer: Clancy Connolly
Policy and PMO
Email: Clancy.Connolly@lbhf.gov.uk