

Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Wednesday 11 November 2020

NOTE: This meeting was held remotely. A recording of the meeting can be found at:
<https://youtu.be/ijWAEcCpHag>

PRESENT

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

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

Officers: Sharon Lea (Strategic Director of Environment), Matthew Hooper (Chief Officer - Safer Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services) Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street), Bram Kainth (Chief Officer - Public Realm), Neil Thurlow (Head of Community Safety), Ian Hawthorn (Assistant Director Environment Special Projects and Highways)

Guest: David Crawley (H&F Consultant)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair carried out a roll call to confirm attendance. There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 were approved.

The Chair asked for a brief update to be provided on Hammersmith Bridge. In response Bram Kainth (Chief Officer- Public Realm) noted that he sympathised with many people who continued to face challenges as a result of the closure of the Bridge and public safety remained a key priority to the Council. Transport for London (TfL) had received £4m from the Government for urgent stabilisation and repair works. This funding would cover the period up until the end of the financial year. The Council was still waiting for the full funding of £141m to be agreed for a detailed programme of the full stabilisation and strengthening works for the Bridge. Plans for a temporary ferry service to transport school children and residents across the river had been approved. TfL were leading on the procurement process for the ferry service and this should be in place by Spring 2021. Furthermore, a temperature control system would be implemented and would be ready for testing by the end of the month. The Council was also working closely with neighbouring boroughs to ensure that the alternative walking and cycling routes were well lit and as safe as possible for the use of public.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked how much the Council had contributed towards restoring the Bridge. Bram Kainth (Chief Officer- Public Realm) explained that the Council was spending approx. £2.7m per annum on a number of measures to keep the Bridge safe. Sharon Lea (Strategic Director of Environment) explained that this expenditure was vital to ensure that the Bridge was kept in a safe condition so that repair works could be carried out.

Councillor David Morton said that he welcomed the plans for a ferry service and asked for further details to be provided on who would be operating this service. Bram Kainth (Chief Officer- Public Realm) said that TfL were leading on the procurement process and different options were currently being explored.

Councillor Ann Rosenberg asked when details of an accurate timing and the official announcement of the ferry service would be available. Bram Kainth (Chief Officer- Public Realm) noted that the Department for Transport (DfT) taskforce would take this on as an action and release further details when it was available.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked for an update to be provided on the temporary road bridge proposals. In response Bram Kainth (Chief Officer- Public Realm) noted that the DfT taskforce was exploring alternative options for the Bridge and the Council was working with them to ensure that this took place as soon as possible.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No questions were received from the public.

5. THE FORMATION OF THE GANGS VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION UNIT

Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street), gave a presentation on the work of the Gangs Violence and Exploitation Unit (GVEU). He showed slides

that provided an overview of the Council's progress with resourcing the team, the developing operating model and the work officers intended to undertake within the wider Council and strategic partnerships to reduce the harm caused to young people, who were at risk from gangs, violence and other forms of exploitation. It was noted that the Leader of the Council was instrumental in developing this ground-breaking agreement between the Council and the Metropolitan Police. This new dedicated unit would consist of 11 Council employed officers and 6 Metropolitan Police Officers. The total annual cost of the unit was £983,000. The performance measures which included key performance indicators and qualitative measures were also outlined and explained.

Councillor David Morton, referring to Appendix 1 of the report said that the figures for children and young people sentenced to custody and who were reoffending appeared higher in comparison to last year and asked for further clarification to be provided on these figures. Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street) explained that having discussed these figures with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) these figures were based on a small cohort of individuals who were consistent offenders and had been resistant to the interventions put in by the YOT. Therefore, the GVEU was put into place to provide additional support and divert those young people away from crime.

Councillor David Morton asked if officers were working closely with the Prevent Team. Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street) said that most of the crime was not counter terrorism related, however the GVEU had close links with the Prevent team to spread the message of the support and interventions that were available through the community group network.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked for further clarification to be provided on the funding arrangements for the formation of the GVEU. Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street) noted that the finance had been secured through section 106 funding for the team.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank- Fowler noted that the Metropolitan Police had ran a similar scheme in Camden Council which was very successful. The funding was provided by the Mayor's Violence Unit in April 2019. She asked if this funding was also available to the Council based on the high numbers for crime related activities in the Borough.

Councillor Sue Fennimore (Deputy Leader) explained that this was an entirely bespoke programme set up in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police. In addition, the Police were making a significant investment towards the scheme. It was noted that the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) also released £50,000 towards the programme which was allocated to the Council on a criteria basis.

Mathew Hooper (Chief Officer - Safer Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services) said that the funding released by the VRU was not sufficient to form the GVEU, given the scale of the initiative launched in the Borough. Therefore, the Council financed the programme through section 106 funding.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank- Fowler asked what funding was available to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council. In response, Matt Hooper (Chief Officer - Safer Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services) confirmed that both these Boroughs received upper tier funding, due to the way in which the VRU's resource allocation formula was calculated.

Matt Hooper (Chief Officer - Safer Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services) said that he was pleased with speed of which the Council was able to form the GVEU including the recruitment of Council and Police staff to work directly with vulnerable young people. He felt confident that this was an effective initiative and results demonstrating the work of the GVEU could be achieved within a year.

The Chair asked if the Council was working in collaboration with schools and educational establishments to help identify vulnerable young people. Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street), said that officers were co-ordinating with Children's Services, Housing and Mental Health Services. The Council was also keen to work with all organisations (statutory or non-statutory) to help support in proving referrals. Furthermore, the Council was engaging with local communities to ascertain how they could be supported to improve the lives of young people.

The Chair enquired how the approach taken by the Council for the GVEU, differed to other initiatives launched in the past. Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street), explained that this was a non-statutory service provided by the Council to support young people based specifically on their individual needs to reduce the number of crimes committed in the Borough.

The Chair asked for further clarification to be provided on what early intervention measures had been identified by the Council to divert young people from getting involved in crime related activities. Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street), said that officers would start early intervention work with young people starting from the age of 10 onwards and the siblings of those who were already involved in crime. By intervening with these children at an early stage, the GVEU would be able to work with them and third sector providers to divert them away from risky behaviour. It was envisaged that the team would operate alongside the Youth Offending Team and Family Assist to identify vulnerable young people who do not yet reach the threshold for statutory intervention but were nevertheless at risk from gangs, violence or exploitation.

Councillor Iain Cassidy thanked Gideon Springer and his team for the work that had been carried out to form the new GVEU. He asked if the lockdown had an impact on the nature of challenges faced by young people and how the work of the team was executed during this period. Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street), provided an overview of how the work of the GVEU was delivered during lockdown. The Council had adjusted the way in which it worked with young people and utilised different modes to deliver services throughout lockdown. He noted that during the first lockdown in March 2020, there was a sharp decrease in the number of crime related activities across London. However, the numbers increased shortly after,

following a behavioural shift in the way vulnerable young people were being victimised and exploited to engage in crime.

The Chair asked what measures were in place for worried parents, guardians or teachers to contact the GVEU directly to share their concerns around young people at risk. In response Gideon Springer (Strategic Lead Safer Street), said that the GVEU was regularly engaging with schools and community groups to ensure any intelligence was passed onto the team. The team was currently drafting a newsletter and designing a webpage on the Council's website for direct referrals. A contact number and an email address for the team would be available on these platforms. The team was also working alongside external comms to put together a comprehensive launch detailing the work of the GVEU.

Summing up the discussions, the Chair thanked officers for their contributions, and efforts that had gone into developing the GVEU.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted and commented on the report.

6. UPDATE ON COUNCIL'S USE OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (RIPA AND IPA)

Matt Hooper (Chief Officer - Safer Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services) provided an overview and noted that the Council must conduct directed surveillance, and use covert human intelligence sources, in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) and the Council policy. The Council's use of covert surveillance was inspected by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) in April 2020. The outcome of this inspection was positive, and the report detailed the actions the Council would take in response. The inspector made five key recommendations in the report. The Council had created an action plan to address each of these recommendations.

An update was provided on the three separate policies that had been developed since the last inspection and based on the Councils' previous RIPA policy which covered:

- Policy for use of directed surveillance and covert human intelligence Sources.
- Policy for use of direct surveillance (without Judicial Approval/"Non-RIPA")
- Policy for accessing communications data

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank- Fowler praised the positive work of the team for the inspection. She was pleased to note that direct surveillance was permitted to an authorising officer for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime and disorder and fell under the Licensing Act 2003 (sale of alcohol to children and allowing the sale of alcohol and tobacco to children). She felt that this was key in running licensed premises legally in the Borough.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank- Fowler asked for further clarification to be provided on how the Council was complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) data retention. Sharon Lea (Strategic Director of Environment) said that data protection and compliance with GDPR was a priority to the Council. GDPR training was provided to all staff through out the Council on a regular basis and attendance was vigorously monitored to ensure this was being completed.

The Chair asked if any members of the public had contacted the Council with regards to any privacy issues. In response Matt Hooper (Chief Officer - Safer Neighbourhood) noted that since his employment at the Council he was only aware of two concerns from members of the public. However, no complaints had been upheld against the Council. If any issues came to light the Council would work with residents to resolve these.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted and commented on the report.

Meeting started: 6:30pm

Meeting ended: 7:50pm

Chair

Contact officer: Amrita Gill
Committee Co-ordinator
Governance and Scrutiny
☎: 07776672845
E-mail: amrita.gill@lbhf.gov.uk