

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Social Inclusion and Community Safety Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes



Wednesday 18 June 2025

NOTE: This was held as an informal meeting

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Stala Antoniadou (Chair), Lucy Richardson and Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler (attended remotely)

Other Councillors: Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety)

Officers

Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm)

Neil Thurlow (Assistant Director of Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV)

Mo Basith (Law Enforcement Manager)

Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Omid Miri.

The new Chair took the opportunity to welcome Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler who had newly joined the Committee and was attending remotely.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2025 were agreed as accurate record.

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TEAM

Mo Basith (Law Enforcement Manager) highlighted the performance of the Law Enforcement Team (LET) in the last quarter of 2024/25, including:

- Local ward councillors had been invited to the joint operations conducted throughout the borough to have a first-hand observation of the vast array of LET's work and to meet with ward officers on local affairs.
- The LET had worked closely with the homelessness and rough sleeping teams especially during the extreme cold weather at the turn of the year to help remove the service clients from any harm and bed them down in temporary accommodation/hostels. The team also worked with outreach workers from Turning Point to support anyone across the borough on substance misuse.
- To ensure women and girls in the borough felt safe regardless it was 2 am or during the days, the LET had undertaken engagement work and conducted additional women's safety patrols in town centres and transport hubs throughout March to coincide with Women's History Month. Opportunities had also been taken to promote the borough's Street Harassment Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).
- With effect from 01 April 2025, a new App had been in use by the LET officers to enable them to log all LET inspections and manage cases whilst onsite, including ensuring service requests received were responded to and investigated more effectively without the need to accessing them from the office laptops.

On Councillor Lucy Richardson's question about the LET's key areas of concerns, Mo Basith highlighted the team's three priorities, i.e. safety, cleanliness and safety of women and girls. All LET officers had been trained to handle all kinds of complaints and to follow individual suspects whose anti-social behaviour had caused nuisances to the residents. All teams, including community safety, CCTV, anti-social behaviour and gangs, worked together to analyse the outcomes of incidents with a view to resolving them or moving on in collaboration with internal and/or external partners. For persistent cases happening in the same location for 2 to 3 months, these unresolved cases would be referred to the Police.

As regards the details of referral to the Met Police, Neil Thurlow (Assistant Director of Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV) noted that to maximise the benefits of H&F's residents, the LET and the Police provided mutual support for each other on a day-to-day practical level. For LET officers out on the ground requiring support, they would radio over to the CCTV control room officers who would then rotate the CCTV

camera to observe what was going on, assess the risks and if deemed necessary, connect the ground officers to the Police for direct conversation through the police radio.

Taking the example depicted by Councillor Richardson that a resident, noting a drug dealer outside their house and having been held in a queue on a call to the Police, contacted the LET instead, Neil Thurlow explained what would happen next. The LET officer in the area would request the CCTV team to help record the incident while having direct conversation with the Police. Noting the Police's dispatch, the CCTV team would follow the suspect through H&F camera network and direct the Police officers to the hiding place to make the arrest. He added that the rate of successful arrest was around 90%.

Neil Thurlow highlighted the Police's compliment on the quality of CCTV and LET officers and their statements, and the quality of the footages seized, downloaded and shared through the most extensive CCTV network across the country. The CCTV operators had helped in the last two years identify crimes and deliver close to 15,500 arrests by the Police. He suggested organising a visit to the CCTV control room for Committee members to see it in action.

ACTION: Neil Thurlow

Neil Thurlow also referred to the multi-layered approach in enhancing community safety in H&F. There was a strategic meeting between the Met's superintendent and Neil to look at high levels of crime, shared opportunities and risks. The monthly tactical operational meeting where the middle management of LET and Met would look at all intelligence information from both teams and review shared areas of concerns.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank Fowler asked about recruitment of LET officers in each ward as she observed that a vacancy in Fulham Town was not filled for most of the last year. She was also concerned about the quality of some LET officers who lived outside the borough.

Mo Basith responded that since inception of the LET service, each ward, including Fulham Town, had a named officer in situ. Apart from the dedicated officer, departure of any officer in the same ward would be replaced and during the interim would be covered by officers in another ward. As regards quality of LET officers, efforts had been made to bring on board officers that had experience and legal knowledge in this field with the graded score increasing gradually over the years to uplift the standard.

Councillor Rebecca Harvey (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety) remarked that all LET officers were accredited by the Community Safety Accreditation Services for the professional training received on how to use their powers. The Council was proud of the quality of the LET officers whose services were much valued by residents.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler asked about LET's attendance to the quarterly Ward Panel meetings as they used to be attending along with housing officers in Fulham Town. She considered that if the LET was meant to be helping the Police, their attendance to Ward Panel meetings would be very useful for the ward community. Through these regular meetings, residents would understand more the lines of responsibility of the LET and Met.

Councillor Harvey remarked that one of the aims of the Ward Panel meetings, which were held between residents and the Met Police on issues around crimes in the borough, was to hold the Police to account. Hence, it was not appropriate for the LET to attend for their work to be scrutinised which could take place at another forum with the residents.

Councillor Brocklebank-Fowler noted that she and other councillors were receiving more complaints from residents who felt it was a mistake for the LET to issue them fixed penalty notice (FPN). Some of them had just taken their waste out slightly too early. As some residents had received refund for the fines they had paid, she asked for the percentage of FPNs being cancelled over the last year.

Mo Basith briefed members on the types of FPN that were issued by the LET. He said that environmental offences were criminal offences, and large-scale fly tipping might affect other residents and cost the Council a lot in clearing them up. He noted that only a very small percentage of people who had taken their waste bins outside the advised hours had been issued FPNs. Mo undertook to provide the data after the meeting.

ACTION: Mo Basith

Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm) remarked that the LET officers, instead of issuing FPN, would firstly try to educate the residents and help them understand how they should be presenting their waste and comply with the rules. Notwithstanding this, the Council also needed to balance the inconvenience and disruption caused by those who did not comply with those rules. For those residents who failed to respond to the LET's emails or other ways of contact for an extended period of time, the LET had to issue FPN as a last resort. He added that some residents did provide valid reason explaining why they had a problem resulting in their FPN being cancelled.

In response to Councillor Richardson's enquiry about capturing customer satisfaction by the new App, Mo Basith noted that the LET management was considering deploying in near future a small survey at the end of each contact to reflect residents' level of satisfaction with the service provided. This would enable the management to obtain residents' feedback for service improvements and to provide training and development for individual officers. However, as Mo clarified, this was not done through the new App which was used solely by LET officers for work.

On the possibility for residents to contact the LET through a resident App as raised by the Chair, Mo Basith highlighted the LET's 24/7 email contact service which was the most preferable way of communication with residents who might also phone the service during daytime. An officer would be assigned to monitor the inbox and send

the service request to the right team through the new App. In addition, LET officers stationed at all H&F libraries on a fixed Monday of every month, and attended the monthly surgeries and the Tenancy/Residents' Association meetings regularly.

The Chair considered it necessary to step up communications in a wider way. Councillor Rebecca Harvey echoed her view and agreed to review what more could be done to further enhance the communications with residents. Neil Thurlow referred to the feature articles on community safety and the LET on the Council's summer and winter magazines delivered to every household. He also recalled the campaign when the LET was first launched four years ago making use of telephone kiosks' digital screens to advertise its contacts and the QR code linking to the website. Mo highlighted that LET officers met a lot of residents during their daily patrols, which might be good opportunities to promote the contact points of the service.

ACTION: Mo Basith

Councillor Richardson referred to Appendix 1 on statistical information on service performance. She considered it helpful to list next to the monthly statistics the total number of patrols, service requests, referrals/interventions etc for the year and provide a note under the charts analysing the trend and projecting the future targets. She was also concerned about the decline in the number of housing patrols this year as this was much valued by the residents.

In response, Mo Basith referred to last year's persistent issue at certain sites on housing lands across the borough. He said that some people had gained access to the housing estates. They slept in the communal areas due to adverse weather and caused nuisance to the residents. To tackle these persistent issues, the LET had worked closely with the housing repairs team to strengthen the targeted area with stronger doors and locks, and earlier completion of the repairs work. Mo said those issues did not come up again this year and the successful intervention had brought down the number of housing patrols. He agreed to provide the requested data and an explanatory note below the charts in future reports to illustrate the situations more clearly.

ACTION: Mo Basith

As regards LET's performance between April and June this year, Mo Basith noted that since the use of the new App in April, there was an increase in the number of logged patrols. Some of the previous loggings were lost due to the unavailability of Wi-Fi but the new App stored the data in a cache and uploaded them to the network when there was a connection. Because the LET officers out on the ground could now respond to service requests without the need to go back to the office, there was also an increase in the number of service requests being handled.

The Chair asked about LET's role in identifying drug dens and helping the Police with the removal of drugs therein. Neil Thurlow outlined the issues involved in this national problem of drug misuse from modern slavery and exploitation of vulnerable people to detrimental impacts on residents. Based on residents' reports, the ward officers who knew the area and its people well might notice a change in vulnerable people's approach in drug using. If the report involved increased number of visitors

to a property, it might suggest cuckooing that the vulnerable people's property had been taken over as a drug den. The Community Safety unit would work with partners on the intelligence information gathered from the Council's internal teams and work with the Police to present CCTV evidence and build up a case for a premises closure order granted by the court. Neil highlighted that there were now roughly one to two closures being carried out each week across both the Council and the Police. He said that the figure was rising because the LET and the Police were taking action more robustly against these properties that perpetrated the crimes. Neil undertook to provide year-on-year data on premises closure related to drug misuse in recent years.

ACTION: Neil Thurlow

On tackling the drug problem in the borough, Councillor Harvey mentioned about a recent seizure of huge amount of cannabis by LET officers at a fighting scene in a pub near a park. She stressed that while drug was a matter for the Police, the LET officers were dedicated to ensuring H&F streets were safe.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 18 November 2025.

Meeting started: 7.02 pm

Meeting ended: 8.03 pm

Chair

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