

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CRIME & DISORDER COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3A - Town Hall
17 April 2013 (7.30 - 9.12 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Osman Dervish (Chairman), John Wood (Vice-Chair), Wendy Brice-Thompson (In place of Frederick Osborne), David Durant, Roger Evans, Georgina Galpin, Pat Murray (In place of Denis Breading) and Frederick Thompson (In place of Becky Bennett)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rebecca Bennett, Denis Breading, Frederick Osborne and Linda Van den Hende.

Through the Chairman, announcements were made regarding emergency evacuation arrangements.

26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27 REPORT FROM POLICE ON BURGLARY

The new Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police, Chief Superintendent, Jason Gwillim provided the Committee with an update on burglary within the borough. From the information available to him at the time of the meeting it appeared there had been a 1.3% increase in burglaries, from April 2012 to March 2013, compared to the same period last year. The good news however was that 12.1% were detected. Whilst this was still too low, it represented one of the highest detection rates in the Metropolitan Police area.

The borough suffers incursions from burglars who reside outside the borough and in recent times anecdotal evidence had shown that we had seen an influx of organised burglars from Eastern Europe. However, of those who were apprehended 54% were from Havering or neighbouring boroughs.

Locally the Police were looking for the best way to concentrate their resources to get the most favourable result. Current practice when a property was burgled involves 'cocooning' the surrounding area by calling at all properties to speak to the occupiers. If no one was there a pack was left.

Chief Superintendent Gwillim felt the more could be done to be more proactive and ensure all neighbours were actually spoken to.

With the local burglars these were known to the police and they were visited to dissuade them from re-offending but this need to happen on a more regular basis.

Another problem faced by the Police was the lack of information on burglars being released from prison. When offenders were released the Police were notified of the details only about half the time. If release dates were altered the information was not always passed to the local Police in a timely manner. This was common in many boroughs.

Next month a meeting with other boroughs had been arranged, at a senior level within the Metropolitan Police to tackle the problem of cross borough burglaries and the lack of information from the Police Service on offender release dates.

The Committee were advised that the Police are looking to improve their information on and liaison with 'second hand' markets. A recent visit to a local 'second hand' market resulted in 12 people being arrested for handling stolen goods.

It was likely the Metropolitan Police's target for 2013/14 would be a 6% reduction in burglaries.

The Committee asked about the most common motivations of burglars to commit crime. The Chief Superintendent suggested that some of the problem was drug related and the intervention of organised criminals and organised gangs. Some discussion followed on the biggest motivation which was to fund a regular life style.

Officers from the Community Safety Team would be attending the Burglary Master class being organised by the Metropolitan Police. The three location sub-groups of the Havering Community Safety Partnership ensured all partners work together to tackle the problem of burglary.

The Committee **noted** the report and thanked Chief Superintendent Gwillim for his presentation.

28 **CHRISTMAS CRIME UPDATE**

Chief Superintendent Gwillim provided the Committee with a breakdown of crimes committed during the period 10 December to 31 December 2012. Compared to last year the number of crimes had increased but the numbers remained comparatively small. Knife crime and robberies were, although incidents of rape, racist and religious crime and homophobic crime were down. The Committee asked Chief Superintendent Gwillim for a deeper

analysis of the figures, including a breakdown of what percentage of the crimes occurred in Romford Town Centre.

One of the issues which the Committee asked to be made aware of was the re-location of former gang members into the borough. Havering was now in a similar position to Barking and Dagenham two to three years ago and we need to be working now to ensure the problem, if any does not get out of hand.

The Committee thanked the Chief Superintendent for his presentation.

29 **METROPOLITAN POLICE ESTATES STRATEGY**

The Committee were advised that MOPAC had approved the Police and Crime Plan. Included in the Plan was the Metropolitan Police Estates Strategy. The Chief Superintendent advised the Committee that he was pleased that as a result of the consultation process Hornchurch Station had been saved as a contact point, especially given the emerging Night Time Economy in Hornchurch.

Under the strategy all contact points across London must be open every Wednesday and Thursday evening between 19:00 and 20:00 and every Saturday afternoon between 13:00 and 14:00. The local Borough Commander did have discretion to extend the opening hours if resources were available.

The Committee had concerns that with only Romford being open 24/7 waiting times could increase to an unacceptable level. Chief Superintendent Gwillim acknowledged the problem and stated he was looking at a more flexible way of working to ensure queues did not become unmanageable.

Questions were also asked about the buildings used by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams as deployment bases. The Committee were advised that there was no change at this time as the tenure of each building needed to be resolved. The money from the disposal of any property would go to MOPAC, not be retained locally.

Councillor Evans, who chaired the MOPAC consultation meeting, thanked everyone for their attendance and Chief Superintendent Gwillim thanked Councillor Evans for the way he chaired the meeting which enabled it to be so successful.

The Committee **noted** the report.

30 **LIFE PROJECT**

Chris Drew, Borough Commander, London Fire Brigade provided the Committee with details of the Local Intervention Fire Education (LIFE)

programme. LIFE was an intensive five day course facilitated by Fire and Rescue Services and fire-fighters at operational fire stations. The local courses were run by Havering fire-fighters at Dagenham Fire Station. The programme offered young people between the ages of 13 -17 the opportunity to learn new skills as well as building on existing ones and is aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour.

Last year 69 people took the programme and this year it was hoped 78 people would pass through the programme. Funds were available this year from the Local Area Agreement performance reward grant, but as this was a one-off pot of funding, no further money was available locally for 2014/15 to enhance the LFB's provision. Locally the Fire Brigade were looking to attract match funding to enable the programme to continue. It was especially important for Havering as next year the programme would be run in the borough whilst Dagenham Station was modernised.

This year 16 new fire cadets were being trained in the borough.

Several members of the Committee have attended the programme and all were impressed with the change in the participants from day one to day five. All participants in the programme are kept in touch with by the Central LIFE team.

The Committee thanked Chris for his report and noted what a worthwhile project this was.

31 **UPDATE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TOPIC GROUP**

The Committee received a report on the work of the Domestic Violence Topic Group. The report included a series of recommendations which could be made to the appropriate lead members. Having considered the report the Committee approved its content and

Recommended:

1. The Lead Member with responsibility for Housing and Public Protection review how the Homelessness Team deal with victims of Domestic Violence;
2. The Lead Members for Housing and Public Protection and Children and Learning explore ways of improving the communication between Housing and Pupil Services to ensure victims of Domestic Violence were not disadvantaged by decisions taken in isolation. i.e. Housing should check with Pupil Services whether a suitable school place was available within a reasonable distance before making an offer of accommodation; and

3. The Lead Member for Children and Learning explore with officers the best way to communicate with young people to ensure the message about domestic violence was understood.

32 ROMFORD TOWN CENTRE

On being advised that the new Director of Public Health wished to visit Romford Town Centre to observe the night time economy the Committee indicated that they would also like to take the opportunity to revisit and see what had changed since their last visit.

Chairman