

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CRIME & DISORDER COMMITTEE
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
15 July 2014 (7.30 - 9.30 pm)**

Present:

Councillors David Durant (Chairman), John Wood (Vice-Chair), John Glanville, Dilip Patel and Linda Van den Hende

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Garry Pain

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 INTRODUCTION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

We were advised that under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 ‘Every local authority shall ensure that it has a committee (the “crime and disorder committee”) with power –

- a) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
- b) To make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.’

“The responsible authorities” means the bodies and persons who are responsible authorities within the meaning given by section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (authorities responsible for the crime and disorder strategies) in relation to the local authority’s area.’

The responsible authorities work together to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safer. They work out how to deal with local issues like antisocial behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and reoffending. They annually assess local crime priorities and consult partners and the local community about how to deal with them.

For the London Borough of Havering the ‘responsible authorities are:

- The Metropolitan Police,
- London Borough of Havering,
- London Fire Brigade,
- London Probation Trust (and its successors), and
- Havering Clinical Commissioning Group.

Uniquely the Crime and Disorder Committee may require members or officers of the authority to attend before it to answer questions. Fortunately with the good working relationships built up in the Community Safety Partnership this power should not need to be used.

We have **noted** the report.

3 **CRIME STATISTICS - STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT**

We received a presentation on the findings from the Strategic Assessment.

In the eleven years ending March 2013 the borough had seen a fall in Notifiable offences from a high of 22,165 in 2003/4 to 16,438 in 2012/13. Long term trends indicated that violence during the night time economy, serious youth violence, weapon enabled crime and robbery, amongst others was declining, whilst burglary from a dwelling, theft from motor vehicles and alcohol related incidents were on the increase.

Worryingly sexual offences, domestic violence and hate crime had all seen increased levels of crime being recorded and reported by police in Havering.

Whilst rates of alcohol related crimes have risen over the past five years, in contrast to the national and regional trend, alcohol related violence associated with the night time economy had fallen.

Over 25% of those committing crime in Havering reside outside the borough.

We expressed concern that since the introduction of the new local policing model they no longer see neighbourhood police on the streets. The Borough Commander informed us that since the introduction of the new policing model crime had reduced by 8.7%. The Safer Neighbourhood Teams were organised in clusters and their hours of operation had been stretched to match the time of crimes. This did tend to mean the teams were less visible but were proving to be more successful in reducing crime.

The Borough Commander advised that since the new policing model had been introduced the fear of crime had risen despite the new system being more effective in reducing crime. The question for the police was how do we tackle the increase in fear of crime, without reducing the effectiveness of the policing. He did inform us that the Metropolitan Police would be reviewing the effectiveness of the new policing model later this year.

In response to questions from the committee the Borough Commander advised that Havering Police were 20% under strength in detectives but 20% over in P.C.'s. The down side was however that many of the P.C.'s were new. There were some areas of concern:

- Criminal damage where there had been a slight increase;
- Theft from person which had increased and there was a need to achieve a significant reduction to meet targets;
- Violence with injury – the police had seen an increase in domestic abuse, but they had also seen an increase in reporting;
- We had seen an increase in third party reporting.

We were advised that having considered the findings of the Strategic Assessment the Havering Community Safety Partnership had adopted the following strategic priorities and cross-cutting themes:

- Strategic Priorities
 - Serious Acquisitive Crime (Burglary Dwelling and Vehicle Crime)
 - Violence against Women & Girls (includes Domestic and Sexual Violence)
 - Town Centres and Public Spaces
- Cross Cutting Themes
 - Community engagement and public confidence
 - Managing Offenders in the community.

We have **noted** the report and thanked officers for the presentation.

4 **UPDATE ON TRANSFORMING REHABILITATION (PROBATION REFORMS)**

We were advised that the services provided by the London Probation Trust had been divided between two new organisations with effect from 1 June, 2014. The National Probation Service would deal with major risks whilst the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) would work closely with all other offenders.

The biggest issue facing the new organisations was IT with a number of glitches still to be sorted.

The National Probation Service unit covering Havering also covered Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge. Initially the team had been allocated 1,500 cases the majority of which would be managed in custody.

The local CRC covered both Havering and Barking and Dagenham. The CRC's would be run by separate companies and three companies had been short listed to run the CRC covering Havering. It was now likely that no decision would be taken until December.

Across the cluster the team would be expected to write up to 200 reports, although they were only resourced to write 100 reports. Similarly the case load for staff in Havering was between 40/50 when ideally they should be expected to cope with no more than 30. Efforts were being made nationally to deal with these issues.

Next year the new CRC's would assume responsibility for Community Payback.

One of the driving issues around the transformation was to ensure that those people serving sentences of less than 12 months would benefit from the service of a probation Officer. It now appeared that this might not be happening.

We thanked Carina Heckroodt for her presentation.

5 REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOLLOWING THE TOPIC GROUP ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

In May, 2012 the Crime & Disorder Committee established a Topic Group to:

- Review the level of services delivered locally in respect of the effects of Domestic Violence on Young People and Children both as victims, witnesses and /or perpetrators;
- Look at what steps the Community Safety Partnership were taking to tackle the problem in the future;
- Identify good practice in other boroughs; and
- Make recommendations to the administration on areas which could be improved, if appropriate.

The outcomes of the Topic Group were reported to Cabinet on 25 September, 2013, with the following recommendations:

- To the Lead Member with responsibility for Housing and Public protection to review, possibly in 12-18 months' time how the new Allocations Scheme was supporting victims of Domestic Violence;
- To the Lead Members for Housing and Public Protection and Children and Learning to ensure that wherever possible school placements were taken into account before an alternative housing offer was made.

Officers advised that under the new allocations scheme there were three key ways in which the Council could help those experiencing Domestic Violence:

- Offer accommodation through the Allocation Scheme;
- Arranging a move out-of-the-borough through a reciprocal rehousing arrangement with another borough or housing association: or
- Providing alternative accommodation in an emergency using the Borough's homelessness duties and powers.

Officers informed the Committee that in their opinion the new allocation scheme was more straight forward and made it easier to assist victims of

domestic violence. Under the scheme those fleeing domestic violence were assumed to have an Emergency Rehousing need and therefore were afforded maximum priority. In these circumstances it was accepted that the need to move was so great that a direct offer would be made without the person needing to bid through the Choice-based Letting System.

To ensure the needs and aspirations of the household were taken into account when making an offer we operated a process of 'assisted offers.' Officers speak to the family and ascertain as much information as possible about their needs and requirements.

The police were involved in the process to ensure that the area(s) offered were safe.

Homes and Housing were a signatory to the East London Reciprocal Protocol. This was aimed to ease the process of moving across borough boundaries where an out-of-borough move was essential for the person's safety. In the last 12 months one person had been rehoused under this protocol.

Vulnerability due to fleeing violence was explicitly listed in the code of guidance accompanying the homelessness provisions of the housing Act 1996. In the year to June 2014 the Council had accepted a duty to rehouse 18 homeless households where DV was the main reason for their homelessness.

In the intermediate term, those homeless do to fleeing DV were housed in refuge accommodation, in or out of the borough, or one of the Council's hostels: placements were based on individual risk assessments.

Longer term accommodation was provided through the council's private sector leased option.

Officers advised that Homes and Housing Services worked closely with Children and Learning when they make 'assisted offers' through:

- The MASH – there was a housing officer placed in the team;
- THE Troubled Families team – there was a housing officer seconded to the team;
- The Children in need and Housing Panel – this was established by Housing and was chaired by Housing;
- The MARAC – Housing was a standing member;
- Day-to-day liaison between teams.

The key issue with regard to taking into account school places was the need to balance:

1. The need for the household to move to a place of safety, most typically away from their current location, with
2. The availability of council stock, most of which is in Harold Hill, Romford/Collier Row and Elm Park.

We have **noted** the report and were pleased to note that the new housing allocations scheme seems to provide more flexibility and a better service to victims of Domestic Violence.

We were also pleased to note that the liaison between Homes and Housing and Children and Learning was working well.

6 PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE FOR 2014/15 MUNICIPAL YEAR

We have **considered** the draft work programme submitted for our consideration and **adopted** the plan as set out below:

18 September, 2014	20 November, 2014	3 February, 2015	19 March, 2015	22 April, 2015
Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update	Work of the Neighbourhood Policing teams and Ward Panels	Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update	Update on progress of MOPAC funded projects	Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update
Review of the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Board	Update on the new ASB powers	Update on Community payback	Update on the impact of the new Licencing Strategy	Annual report
Engagement with young people engaged in criminal behaviour (Topic Group)	Update on progress of MOPAC funded projects	Report on crime over the Christmas and New year period	Potential Topic Group : Burglary	Crime statistics and Metropolitan Police update
		Partnership work to tackle Crime & Disorder.		

7 VISIT TO ROMFORD AND HORNCHURCH TOWN CENTRES

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee indicated that it would be a good idea if the visit to Romford and Hornchurch Town Centres included an invite to the members of the Licencing Committee. Once the school holidays were over we have asked officers to make the necessary arrangements.

8 STREET PASTORS

Officers advised that the Street Pastors now operated in Romford, on Friday and Saturday night and in Hornchurch on Friday nights.

9 CASHLESS BUSES

We have questioned whether the introduction of cashless buses creates a public safety issue. Officers advised that across London less than 1% of fares was paid in cash. The percentage in outer London was slightly higher.

Although it was not advertised there was provision for someone without sufficient credit to speak to the driver or guard to ensure they reached their destination safely. Bus drivers were briefed on how to deal with vulnerable persons.

We could ask the transport providers to monitor the effect and monitor the number of code red situations.

It was agreed to review the situation in six months time.

10 SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

We reiterated our concerns at the decision of the Safer Neighbourhood Board to hold its meetings in private. We believe that all the meetings should be open to the public to ensure transparency.

Officers explained the support structure for the Safer Neighbourhood Board with public involvement available at Ward panel level. The Ward Panel chairs then meet at cluster level and elect a represent to serve and report to the Safer Neighbourhood Board.

Officers further advised that there was a lot less funding available to support the Safer Neighbourhood Board and this had to be taken in to account in organising meetings.

Initial results suggest that under the new structure the police were under greater scrutiny with MOPAC providing the Safer Neighbourhood Board with quarterly data.

The work plan envisaged the Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Board attending our next meeting to provide an update on the work of the Board. We have noted the officers comments.

Chairman

