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## Debrief to Overview and Scrutiny

14<sup>th</sup> September 2011

### Public Order Disturbances

#### 1. Background

1.1 On the afternoon of Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August, after a peaceful demonstration outside Tottenham Police Station concerning the police shooting of Mark Duggan, violent disorder directed towards the police erupted and evolved into the looting of shops, with both buildings and cars set alight.

1.2 On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August further more widespread violent disorder occurred in the following Boroughs: Waltham Forest; Brixton; Enfield; and Westminster.

1.3 During the following week, London experienced unprecedented levels of violent disorder and criminality, including widespread looting, arson and disorder. This extended to Hackney, Southwark, Croydon, Wandsworth, Newham, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, Greenwich, and Ealing. The violent disorder continued to spread nationwide, with disorder in Birmingham; Kent; Hampshire; Essex; Thames Valley; Suffolk; Cambridgeshire; Northamptonshire; and the City of London.

1.4 Following communication of intelligence from Havering Police command on the afternoon of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August, the Council mobilised its own services to further ensure the safety of the community in the Borough, working in close partnership with the police, the emergency services and other community stakeholders.

#### 2. Local Borough Priority issues

2.1 During this time, the police and Council priorities were to preserve personal and public safety, prevent theft of and damage and destruction to property and to limit public fear and the disenfranchisement of young people. This debrief details the Council and Police responses.

#### 3. Council Service response

3.1 An emergency meeting of a number of Council services was convened on 9<sup>th</sup> August. Services represented were Street Care, Parks, Libraries, Integrated Youth Services, Community Safety, Emergency Planning, Communications and Media and Licensing. The meeting was chaired by the Community Safety Manager, acting as the single point of contact for the local police Gold command. The meeting was attended by Police and (in part) the Council's Chief Executive.

3.2 It was agreed that services would implement an enhanced staffing provision with immediate effect and the following actions were taken:

**3.2 Media and Communications:** Cheryl's blog and information to staff. Meetings with Council Members. Monitoring of social media. Publication and dissemination of official updates on the situation in the borough to the public - via the website and Twitter and also via traditional media channels.

**3.4 Community Safety:** The Community Safety Manager acted as the single point of contact for all Council Services involved in the development and deployment of the operational

response to address the threat of public disorder in the borough co-ordinating action with the police command during the disturbances and lead on the co-ordination of services.

CCTV Control Room, as part of the Community Safety Service deployed 3 staff on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August with additional staff covering Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> and Friday 12<sup>th</sup> in case of further disorder occurring. During this time, a police officer was also deployed to the control room to assist with the increased communication demands.

An operational co-ordinator was deployed to the CCTV Control Room to ensure effective operational co-ordination of council services and the police and other partners during the actual deployments of staff. A police officer was also deployed to the CCTV control room during this time. All staff were in radio contact, utilising the town centre radio link and the police radio link. The operational co-ordinators during this time included the Park Manager, Street Care and Emergency Planning Officer.

At the request of Property Services four dog handlers were hired and deployed to protect Council property and stalls erected in the Market Place. Initial communication with them was through their own personal mobile phones.

The Council's personal radio system does not work in all parts of the Borough. It is also appropriate to consider having additional spare radios and charged batteries available for similar events or to have the facility for short term hiring of this type of equipment.

**3.5 Emergency Planning:** The Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service operated the Borough Emergency Control Centre in its liaison role with the London Local Authority Gold Network (LLAG) identifying trends and information flows both London wide and Nationally. Information received through the London Local Authority Co-ordination Centre (LLACC) including Government (briefings and intelligence reports), Cabinet Office (Top line Briefs), Police, London Resilience Team (LRT), Greater London Authority (GLA Mayors Office), Essex Resilience Team as well as the monitoring of Press and Media through BBC News 24 and Sky News. This information flow was cascaded throughout the organisation to the appropriate management and staff in order that an up to date, accurate and timely flow of information was available to enhance and increase the operational delivery of services at the frontline. In addition the EP & BC Service co-ordinated the response between the Metropolitan Police and CCTV during the weekend period ensuring that protective and pro-active tasks could be delivered by front line resources so reducing the opportunity for individuals to increase the level of public disorder within the Havering area.

**3.6 Integrated Youth Services:** The principal operational intervention was to deploy a rapid response to increase, refocus and deploy key street based assets. Many young people were engaged and diverted from key flashpoint areas and were also engaged in parks and out of town centre areas in an attempt to ensure youths did not get involved. Youth facilities in key flashpoint areas were open and undertook wide range discussions with young people about the disturbances seeking opinions and views as well as trying to ensure young people did not engage. The Integrated Youth Service deployed a rapid response youth work team using a proactive outreach and prevention approach engaging young people in initial areas including Cottons Skate Park, Brookland Green, Waterloo Estate. Key Youth Service Managers on duty met with the Police's operational lead Inspector in the Town Centre to consult regarding the deployment of the Integrated Youth Service's mobile unit and where best to place it. Further rapid response work commenced throughout the period encompassing Harrow Lodge Park and Lodge Farm Park, Brittons Skate Park, Cottons Skate Park, Central Park and surrounding areas. Staff conducted a general recognisance of the borough, focussing on known areas where young people tend to meet. The outcomes of this recognisance were collated and

reported back to Police and Senior Managers via a non public access Google Map. Most youth centres continued to open unless in key flash point areas. The service liaised with appropriate voluntary sector youth centres where it was deemed useful to close due to being in potential high flashpoint areas. Workers are continuing to engage in discussions. The Youth Council are writing to the Recorder News Paper praising the Police in Havering. Some of the youths involved in the disturbances are known to the Service. The Youth Service is well placed to offer one to one intervention for anyone involved in the disturbances.

**3.7 Licensing:** Licensing liaised widely with all licensed premises in the borough but especially the outer town centres of Hornchurch and Upminster, advising them of the potential risks of public disorder and advising how these risks could be mitigated. Romford town centre was covered by the police. The feedback from the licencees was positive that they were being kept informed. The licensed street traders in Romford town centre were contacted and asked not to trade for a couple of days.

**3.8 Parks Services.** The Parks Protection Team deployed a manager and an average of six regular and reserve patrol officers in a high visibility reassurance patrol role, primarily covering local parks in the vicinity of vulnerable town centres. The team monitored youth gathering areas to ascertain approximate ages, numbers and identify potential suspicious behaviour for forwarding to police. The off-road motor cycle team and heavy duty Land Rover 4X4 acted in a highly mobile, all terrain, cross borough 'eyes and ears' function, ready to gather intelligence (using experienced officers) both inside parks and adjoining town centres. All patrol officers involved, engaged closely with groups of youths found in their parks and with tact and good humour warned them against attending the town centre areas, encouraging them to remain in parks as places of relative safety away from trouble. This additional patrol provision, for 12 hour shifts at a time, continued beyond the first weekend of disorder into the following two week ends. Extended shifts and enhanced staffing, were again utilised to maximise patrol coverage in and around parks and open spaces as a deterrence to disorder in support of police staff, to ensure disruption and related public concerns were kept to a minimum. Parks and Open Spaces Management also deployed a team of 10 ground maintenance officers using five vehicles to swiftly remove any street furniture or litter that may have presented a risk to the community during the highest period of demand.

**3.9 Property Services (Market Place):** A decision was taken not to erect Romford market stalls on the evening of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> ahead of the market on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> but to set up the stalls on the morning of 10<sup>th</sup>. This decision was taken to mitigate the risks of unattended market stalls being broken and used as weaponry. The same tactics were deployed on the following Friday 12<sup>th</sup> when the market was set up on the morning of that day and dismantled in the evening and set up again on the morning of Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August. As the stall set up and removal process takes a considerable amount of time, with framework still being removed by contractors up to 9pm, security staff were deployed to ensure the safety of the market place.

**3.10 Street Care:** Street care staff were deployed to undertake a reconnaissance of the Borough, identifying street furniture and street scene environments, such as builders rubble which could present risks in relation to potential weaponry. Dialogue took place with the owners of private and commercial property to ensure that any objects were quickly removed. Locations Logan Mews, Exchange Street, Market Square.

**3.11 Library Services:** During this time, a decision was taken to close Library Services early to reduce the risk of further disorder in public buildings on one evening. All items located outside of the buildings were removed and staff were vigilant at all times in case of incidents in or around the library. None were reported.

**3.12 Community Type(s) affected:** Whilst no specific community groups were targeted, there have been groups within the Havering community who have suffered significant losses;

- Local businesses have closed early with the consequential losses;
- Romford Market has been operating at an estimated 80% of capacity with the resultant losses of revenue;
- Licensed premises have been shutting early and operating with reduced levels of patronage;
- Some businesses have incurred the expense of boarding up their windows and doors as a preventative measure.

#### **4. Police Response**

4.1 Havering Borough responded with a large scale policing operation, during which time Police officers were working a minimum of 12 hour shifts and all police leave had been cancelled. The cancellation of all police leave is an extremely rare occurrence and is a reflection of the seriousness with which the potential for large scale public disorder was being taken. On the afternoon of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August number of officers were sent from Havering to confront the violence at its height, some of these officers remained on duty for over 24 hours.

4.2 Havering Borough Police have recorded 19 offences occurring that are linked to this violent disorder. These include: Actual Bodily Harm; Robbery; Burglary and Public Order. Havering Borough Police are now working closely with their partners and communities to repair the harm and distress caused.

**4.3 London-Wide Community Impact:** Although at first the violent disorder was directed at Police Officers, with over 100 officers being injured over the three nights, it quickly became focussed on business premises and residential properties within the areas affected. Many commercial premises were either ransacked by looters or set ablaze by arsonists. Many homes were broken into by marauding gangs, intent on burglary. Many vehicles were also stolen and then set alight

4.4 Some of these fires quickly became out of control, spreading to residential properties and flats above business premises, endangering life and leaving many local people homeless. Although no other specific community groups have been targeted in the attacks, members of the public have been injured and tragically an elderly male lost his life in Ealing as result of the disturbances.

#### **5. Summary**

5.1 The Metropolitan Police has responded with a large scale policing operation, including support from other Police forces. There has been assistance provided from other forces before for the recent Student Demonstrations and TUC march. However, it has never been on this scale and for this length of time.

5.2 There have been up to 16,000 officers on the streets of London since Monday 8th August 2011, which is unprecedented in the history of the Metropolitan Police Service. In order to facilitate these numbers there has been a blanket cancellation of all police leave during the period of operations.

5.3 As an example of calls on police demand: from 07.30 on the 8th to 07.30 on the 9th there were 20,800 emergency 999 calls, an increase of 400%. The London Fire Brigade have also received record numbers of calls for their services, with 2,169 emergency calls received between 18.00 on the 8th to 07.30 on the 9th.

5.4 The Council's readiness to respond to a heightened public order disturbance risk persists with Council services remaining on high alert, scaling up staffing deployments and deploying services to mitigate risks of further disorder on each weekend following the initial disturbances. The nature and extent and costs of the impact of the disturbances on services is being assessed and will be discussed at a formal partnership review and debriefing planned in the first two weeks in September.