

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CRIME & DISORDER SUB- COMMITTEE  
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
5 October 2021 (7.00 - 9.05 pm)**

**Present:**

Councillors John Tyler, Tele Lawal, Sally Miller (Chairman), Michael Deon Burton, John Crowder and Jan Sargent

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matt Sutton

**7 MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 July and 5 August 2021 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

**8 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The report before Members provided information on performance against the indicators previously requested by the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee during Quarter 1 (April to June 2021).

Members were notified that there had been a reduction in the response time to i grade calls from 82.9% to 68%.

The police advised that a number of newer officers were awaiting driving courses and that there had been no push to arrive in 15 minutes and instead ensure that officers got to the scene and did a really thorough initial investigation and provide victim care whilst they were at the scene.

With regards to crime there had been an increase in 2021/22 from the lockdown period 2020/21 but there had been a decrease of over 800 offences reported from the pre-pandemic year of 2019/20.

It was noted that there had been a decrease in residential burglaries during the lockdown and this had continued into 2021/22. Much of the decrease had come about due to the Council funded police officers taking part in Operation Gambler which was aimed at disrupting burglars and car-jackers across Essex and Havering.

Domestic abuse incidents offences had remained similar to the previous year.

There had been some increases of non-domestic violence with injury particularly relating to Romford town centre not just with the night time economy but also from youths congregating in the town centre during the

daytime period and after school time the Council was working with its partners to monitor the situation closely.

There had been no gun crime in the quarter and there had also been a reduction in knife crimes across the borough.

In response to a question relating to the section 92 officers Members were advised that the officers formed part of the Metropolitan Police. Monthly meetings took place between council officers and all its partners where intelligence was shared.

In relation to ASB there had been a large increase in complaints in 2020/21 mainly in part due to people reporting issues of non-compliance of lockdown restrictions. The figures had reduced this year but still remained higher than the pre-pandemic year of 2019/20.

In response to a question as to how Havering compared with other boroughs in relation to crime and disorder, Officers advised that Havering compared most favourably of the three boroughs in the tri borough unit.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

## 9 **DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021**

The report before Members detailed the Domestic Abuse Act which had received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021.

The report detailed the new definition of domestic violence and gave more clarity as to what relationships were covered by the Act.

It was noted that both parties had to be over the age of 16 anyone under that age would be covered under separate safeguarding legislation.

Both parties had to be personally connected to each other be that by marriage, in a civil partnership, had agreed to marry one another, had entered into a civil partnership agreement or had been in an intimate personal relationship or were relatives.

The Act also introduced the role of an independent Domestic Abuse Commissioner whose role was to who was responsible for representing victims, educating the public with regards to domestic abuse and monitoring the responses of local authorities and other statutory agencies.

The Sub-Committee noted that in September 2019 Nicole Jacobs had been appointed as the Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

The Act also prohibited offenders from cross-examining their victims in person in the family courts.

The Act also introduced Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN) A DAPN could be put in place immediately after an incident. After 48 hours a victim could apply to the courts to apply for a Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) which had replaced the former Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPN).

The DAPN could prevent the accused party of contact with the victim or come within a specified distance of any premises and evict, exclude, prohibit from entering or require the accused leaving the victim to leave a premises if both parties lived at the same premises.

In quarter 1 there had been 71 DAPNs issued across the borough Command Unit (BCU) of which 57 had been escalated to DAPOs. Havering had accounted for 23 of the DAPOs.

The Act also put “Claire’s Law” on a firmer footing, this allowed a third party or individual to ask the police to check whether a current or former partner had a violent or abusive past. Any disclosure had to be reasonable, proportionate and based on a credible risk of harm. The police could also be proactive in providing this information to a possible victim if it was flagged up in a previous incident.

Members noted that the Act introduced special measures in criminal courts such as victims being able to give evidence in private, via a video link or from behind a screen.

The Act also required that local authorities to grant a new lifetime tenancy to a tenant or a member of their household when re-housing a previous lifetime social tenant.

In response to a question relating to gender perception of domestic violence officers confirmed that all reports of domestic violence whether from a male or a female were treated equally.

In response to a question relating to domestic abuse strategies officers confirmed the Act placed a duty on local authorities to produce domestic abuse strategies. MOPAC had produced a strategy on violence against women and girls domestic abuse which would in turn feed into Havering’s strategy.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

## 10 **CCTV UPDATE REPORT**

The report before Members gave an update on the delay to the roll out of the CCTV refresh programme, proposed new timescale and review of the technical and premises requirements for the new CCTV control room.

Officers advised that there had been a delay to the programme as the previous lead officer had left the Council in June leading to the recruitment of a permanent Head of Enforcement and Safety.

Officers advised that additional works had taken place to review whether any possible additional medium or long term savings could be found.

Members noted that the most significant costs were for the groundworks required for fibre optic cabling.

Officers were currently investigating whether groundworks could be undertaken as part of other planned highways works if this could be done then there was an opportunity for significant savings from the CCTV capital allocation.

Members noted that once investigations had been carried out the CCTV refresh rollout would commence in November

A CCTV Project Management Group had been set up and would be working on a range of immediate CCTV improvements and interventions, to upgrade elements of the system where these could be built in to the wider refresh.

Officers explained that the CCTV control room had to be moved from Mercury House and officers were still in discussions regarding an alternative site.

The proposed CCTV control room had a number of pre-requisites including security, secure building and secure access to users and secure storage of data.

The location of the building accommodating the Control Room also needed to be appropriate to receive the images from the cameras. It was additionally preferable, that the height of the building allowed for the transmission to be received in close proximity to the Control Room.

Retention of the Control Room within Havering presented opportunities to co-locate other 24 hour and operational services, such as Careline Wardens, Environmental and Tactical Enforcement Officers, Officers responsible for Parking/MTCs and Public Protection and Licensing staff.

Members noted that following analysis of potential options for re-location, it was suggested that the new central equipment and CCTV Control Centre was accommodated in the borough, within a Council owned premises and preferably close to Romford Town Centre. This would allow relocation costs were kept to a minimum and also ensure limited system downtime.

In response to a question relating to the delay in works taking place officers responded by stating that discussions had taken place with contractors, Housing officers and the Digital Infrastructure team. The delay had come about due to the re-location of the communications equipment that was currently located on the roof of Mercury House.

Officers also advised that it was important that the new infrastructure was located in the correct areas that would lead to a more efficient use of the new system.

In response to a question relating to the timescales relating to the completion of the works, officers confirmed that the completion date would probably be approximately 18 months away.

Updates would be taken before Cabinet and it was suggested that the Sub-Committee be updated as the works progressed.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

## 11 **E-SCOOTER UPDATE**

The report before Members provided a comprehensive summary of Escooter legislation, the impact of continued illegal use including the adoption of the devices by various criminal groups and the road danger concerns.

Legal history stated that because Escooters were powered by motors they were considered by the Department of Transport (DFT) and MPS to be mechanically propelled vehicles; therefore, for the purposes of the Road Traffic Act a driving license and insurance were both required and any offences that applied to motor vehicles (i.e. riding on pavements) also applied to Escooters.

In terms of local context, statistics were not readily available but the concern around crime was a focal point currently centred on education and enforcement. Officers thought that the requirement of a licence and insurance had thus far served as a deterrent.

Councillors queried Council Officers on whether sellers of Escooters were required to clarify and relay the rule and regulations for the use of Escooters to customers and whether any of the regulations were being relayed to young people via the education system.

Officers confirmed that there were disclaimers on the packaging but as far as they knew it was not a legal requirement for businesses to ensure customers were aware and trading standards colleagues could be of more help in this area if required. In terms of police action, a possible PSPO was being considered and the Road and Safety and Transport team were visiting schools and distributing leaflets in conjunction with the Autumn Nights operations program.

Questions around Identifiers or statutory registration of Escooters were also raised and Officers indicated that there was little information available around that.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

**12 UPDATE ON THE ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY STRUCTURE REVIEW 2020**

The report before Members provided a brief update on work undertaken in relation to the Enforcement & Community Safety Review as presented at the last meeting. It also clarified the position regarding the apparent £86k disparity in the service budget from 2020 to 2021.

The report detailed the following:

- A permanent Head of Service has been appointed, who has been working with the Assistant Director of Civil Protection to review the findings of the report and to consider the efficiency and effectiveness of the new structure that was implemented in 2020.
- The work was ongoing, but it has been identified that modifications to the structure are required, to improve the ability of the service to meet the increasing response demands for environmental and other crime across the Borough, which have escalated since the Step 4 of the Government's Roadmap out of Lockdown on 19 July.
- A new training regime to upskill staff in Environmental Enforcement who were transferred into the service in 2020 from Housing, where they previously undertook roles as Community Wardens was implemented.
- Training aimed to increase confidence in identifying and managing environmental crimes and included both a structured programme of technical training, plus peer mentoring and coaching with more experienced colleagues.
- The Assistant Director was working closely with the three Heads of Service from Civil Protection to identify where collaboration is possible and relevant across the services.
- The Head of Service and Managers built solid working relationships with new colleagues in Metropolitan Police to identify new opportunities to work collaboratively to tackle local crimes. This has led to a series of joint operations across a range of initiatives in Havering and planning for multi-agency Days of Action in hotspots in the Borough.
- Members had raised a question on the £86k disparity between the two reports at the last meeting. This query was investigated and the difference in budget is due to staff vacancies being held. This was to reduce pressure on budgets to end of year 2020/21. It is however intended to re-appoint to these posts as soon as the revisions to the new structure are agreed.

Officers confirmed there were 10 community environment officers but would double check the numbers after a question was raised regarding this. There was a database collated on HRA and activities around that were being carried out.

KPIs revealed in what area staff were required and it was determined that staff in permanent posts were required as opposed to temporary cover support. Staff targets for fixed penalty notices were currently under review as currently there were not specific targets for individual Officers.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

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**Chairman**