



Crime & Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report 2021/2022

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

This has been a particularly difficult year again for all of us and we have all had to get used to a new normal.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the Council Officers that have worked so hard in working through the various changes in legislation. To the Community Safety Teams for their exceptional work in responding to breaches of COVID and supporting local businesses through the various lockdown rules.

This report is the annual report of the Sub-Committee, summarising our activities during its year of operation ending May 2022. This report will stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable members and others to have a record of the Committee's activities and performance.

Councillor Sally Miller BCAC
Chair Crime and Disorder Committee

REMIT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Crime & Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee exercises the functions conferred by the Police & Justice Act. The Committee scrutinises the Council's joint working with the Police and other public agencies that deal with crime and disorder. The Members on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee during the year were:

Councillor Sally Miller BCAC (Chairman)
Councillor Matt Sutton (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Tele Lawal
Councillor John Tyler
Councillor Michael Deon-Burton
Councillor John Crowder
Councillor Jan Sargent

Review of Activity

During the year under review, the Sub-Committee formally met on 3 occasions and dealt with the following issues:

CCTV TOPIC GROUP UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a brief on the current situation regarding the Council's CCTV provision. The pandemic had a significant impact on the CCTV review.

Evidence was being gathered on the future siting of cameras and for a new control room as the current control room was being decanted from Mercury House. Visits were being undertaken at other London boroughs to look at their control rooms and how they operated their systems.

A global shortage of microchips due to the pandemic meant officers were having to work closely with consultants to explore alternative options for CCTV cameras.

The council's current cameras were analogue and the new set up would employ digital cameras which needed microchips.

The current system would continue to be in use whilst the procurement was taking place to enable seamless coverage of the borough and the Sub-Committee would be notified once new options became available.

A large proportion of the £5 million budget set aside for the CCTV upgrade would be used for converting from analogue to a digital system and would include infrastructure, camera costs, new control centre and consultancy fees. It was noted that there were not an abundance of companies that offered a complete service and the Council had secured a company that would provide a service from start to finish. Furthermore, the new digital cameras would be able to provide very high quality images.

The Council currently had 350 cameras at various sites, some were fixed and others were re-deployable cameras used to target specific sites that may be used for things like fly-tipping hotspots.

A draft strategy would be presented to Cabinet in the future.

A further update in October 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.

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

It was currently being investigated 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.

The CCTV refresh rollout would commence in November and 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.

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

DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021

The Sub-Committee received an update on 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.

The Act 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.

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.

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 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.

E-SCOOTER UPDATE

The Sub-Committee were provided with a comprehensive summary of E-scooter 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 E-scooters 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 E-scooters.

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.

UPDATE ON THE ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY STRUCTURE REVIEW 2020

The Sub-Committee was updated on the 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.

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.

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.

VIOLENCE REDUCTION ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Sub-Committee was provided information on the Policing and Crime (MOPAC) as required by each local authority to produce a Violence Reduction Action Plan. The plan was refreshed annually and performance was reported quarterly to the Havering Community Safety Partnership and the 7 themes around the Partnership (Governance, Analysis and Enforcement, Reducing Access to Weapons, Safeguarding and Educating Young People, Working with Communities and Neighbourhoods to Reduce Violence, Supporting Victims of Violence and Vulnerability, Positive Diversion from Violence)

PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF THE COUNCIL FUNDED POLICE TEAM - HAVERING JOINT TASK FORCE (HJTF)

The Sub-Committee was provided with a review of the performance of the Council Funded Police Team (HJTF).

The Havering Joint Task Force was one of the most productive operational units in East Area, especially given that it was made up of only 5 uniformed police officers.

There would be a review of the task force on an annual rolling basis, with promotion around the work that they do and it was to also be noted that the funding was received through the TTCG.

UPDATE ON PROBATION UNIFICATION

The Sub-Committee was updated on:

- An update on the unification of the probation service.
- An opportunity to discuss how changes might impact the organisations, delivery and outcomes for people on probation.
- Clarification of current status in Barking, Dagenham and Havering.

Resources were being added to deal with specific group with complex needs (i.e. LGBTQ and veteran groups). The difficulty arises when outsourcing and around drug issues whereby people fall through the gaps as criminal justice cases don't fit into a specific mould.

Challenges existed around the changing landscapes of criminality. The core service was back up and running but challenges around retaining staff remained. The service could be fully functioning within 5 years if staff can be trained and retained. The core reasons for staff leaving was down to fiscal and workload reasons. Criminality was more complex and more violent than ever before.

WOMEN'S SAFETY

The Sub-Committee was provided with an overview of the work that had been done by East Area BCU on women's safety and provided information on violence against women and girls (VAWG offences excluding domestic abuse), domestic abuse and the work being done around Street Safe and Walk and Talk schemes.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Throughout the year, the Sub-Committee had received reports on the outcome of performance against the indicators which fell within the Sub-Committees remit.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Legal implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Equalities implications and risks:

While the work of the Sub-Committee can impact on all members of the community, there are no implications arising from this specific report which is a narrative of the Sub-Committee's work over the past year.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.