



## **MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 19 October 2010 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Van Kalwala (Chair), Councillor Clues (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Mrs Bacchus, Hirani, Ogunro and Al-Ebadi (alternate for Councillor Naheerathan)

Apologies were received from: Councillors Naheerathan and HB Patel

### **1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None declared.

### **2. Terms of reference**

Members noted the terms of reference for the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee as agreed by Full Council on 13 September 2010.

### **3. The priorities of the Crime Prevention Strategy Group**

Genny Renard (Head of Integrated Community Safety, Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement) presented this item and advised that the Crime Prevention Strategy Group (CPSG) was a statutory partnership currently under review. Councillors were to be consulted about the review in the next few weeks. The CPSG met on a bi monthly basis and was chaired by the Chief Executive and the Borough Commander and focused on achieving strong outcomes. Genny Renard advised that the CPSG had already received spending cuts in the region of £110,000 and it was anticipated that there would be further reductions as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement. With regard to crime trends, Genny Renard explained that there had been a sharp rise in the number of reported burglaries across London towards the end of the year and nationally there was a big drive to tackle robberies, including street robberies, and burglaries as it was perceived that home owners were becoming less vigilant. Members heard that locally, the rise in robberies could be attributed to the recent release from prison of four known prolific burglars. There was a need to look at the various trends across the borough and take a holistic approach. It was noted that 80% of crime was committed by re-offenders and to address this, a Prolific Offender Programme had been set up and the police were being consulted upon as to how to make this programme run more effectively.

Genny Renard explained that because of the economic circumstances, better use of limited resources would be needed and the review would identify priorities. She stated that although reports of domestic violence had risen, this may be indicative that victims were now more willing to report such incidences to the police.

However, it was noted that there had been a £71,000 cut to the domestic violence service budget this year and although the service would continue it would nevertheless be impacted upon and other additional police work was also being cut.

Inspector Claire Smart (Brent Police) added that there had been extensive work on addressing anti-social behaviour and there had been a significant reduction in violent crime in the borough, especially in gun crime. As a result of this, the borough was now borderline in maintaining its trident status, however losing the status whilst reflecting a reduction in violent crime would also mean a reduction in funding.

During Members' discussion, Councillor Al-Ebadi sought further clarification with regard to the reduction in gun crime in Brent. As Chair of the Voluntary Sector, he expressed an interest in a workshop being set up for voluntary organisations with the police and Genny Renard agreed to discuss this further with him. Councillor Clues enquired whether trident borough status was entirely determined by statistical criteria and he suggested that such a status helped maintain lower crime figures because of the focus and resources available to achieve this. Councillor Ogunro enquired whether gun crime had specifically reduced in South Kilburn. Councillor Hirani asked whether front line staff had been reduced in respect of the domestic violence service or whether they were now burdened with additional administrative tasks.

The Chair enquired whether London councils were lobbying against changes made in respect of the method used to count incidences of gun crime. He asked what the likely impact of reduced funding on CPSG and on community engagement activities would be.

In reply, Genny Renard advised that there had been approximately a 35% reduction in reported gun crime in Brent, which represented about 14 cases in a year, however the method of counting had been revised to include where it was perceived that a gun was involved. The council, along with other London councils, was lobbying for the revised counting method to be reconsidered. Members noted that trident borough status was completely statistics driven, however the work of the Youth Offenders Team had been important in reducing crime of this type. Front line staff numbers for the Domestic Violence Team remained the same, however the loss of a data officer had impacted upon the ability to analyse data and Genny Renard stated that there had been reductions in staff in her team and with the police too. This would inevitably mean more administrative tasks would be taken on by front line staff. It was expected that the CPSG would face spending cuts of approximately 30% over the next three years and it would mean that attention would need to be focused on the most problematic families or specific areas. The level of community engagement would also be affected and working with voluntary sector groups was an option that would be pursued, with voluntary organisations being encouraged to bid for charitable funds such as the national lottery and the Tudor Fund.

#### **4. Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in Brent**

Genny Renard gave a presentation to Members on this item and confirmed that the Government was reviewing the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) Act which covered areas such as when covert intelligence could be used, including use

of CCTV and following suspects. There were also plans to reform anti-social behaviour legislation, although this was currently on hold. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were introduced in 1999 and Members noted that adult re-offences fell by 13% in 2005-2006 against a target of 10%, whilst the proportion of juvenile re-offenders fell by 0.2% between 2000-2006 against a target of 5%. Genny Renard advised that the ASBO re-offending rate had increased from 20% in 2005 to 50% in 2010, however this did not necessarily reflect that ASBOs were not working as it could be attributable to the police identifying re-offenders more easily. The committee noted proposals to introduce Instant Preventative Measure, where if the same individual is reported to have committed three transgressions in twelve months, a subsequent breach of the third warning would be an offence. However, clarity was needed in such situations where three separate people had reported the same incident. Members noted that the British Transport Police had a similar warning system in place.

Genny Renard advised that primary legislation was needed for action to be taken in the event of breaches, whilst there was also a need for more panel work. Publicity was another issue that needed to be considered, such as whether offenders under 18 years should be publicised. Genny Renard confirmed that 17 post conviction ASBOs had been granted in 2009-2010 and such action could restrict the individual concerned from being in a certain area and most ASBOs were issued in the south of the Borough.

Councillor Clues expressed doubt that the Instant Preventative Measure scheme would be effective in areas such as Brent, feeling that the system could be open to abuse and allow opportunity for individuals to be slurred. Councillor Hirani sought details as to what kind of panel work would be undertaken and he asked whether sending letters to parents of those committing anti-social behaviour was being considered, as was presently being done by Brent Transport Police.

The Chair asked what impact the changes were likely to have on issuing ASBOs and sought clarification with regard to consultation arrangements. He also sought the police's view on the proposal and whether reforming ASBOs would be a more beneficial approach to take.

In reply, Genny Renard commented that because all reporting would need to be logged on to a database there would still be the same level of bureaucracy involved, although less administrative staff available to process it. Members heard that multi-agency panel work already took place under BAGPUS, which discussed ASBOs. Genny Renard felt that it was unlikely that sending letters to parents of those committing anti-social behaviour would be considered. She felt that the proposals were likely to mean less ASBOs in future and more legal challenges in the courts as evidence was more likely to be questioned and doubts over whether the same incident had been reported by more than one person. However, the proposals were at the consultation stage and the Government was looking for local authorities to run pilot schemes. Genny Renard felt that it would be more prudent to review the ASBOs by streamlining the processes involved and through more effective partnership working.

Phil Newby added that details as to how the Instant Preventative Measure would work were not yet finalised and these could be reported on at future meetings.

Claire Smart commented that the police sometimes worked in partnership with housing associations which had proven to be effective in tackling anti-social behaviour. She stated that ASBOs were initially small in number when they were first introduced because of the large number of regulations that were coming into force, however they had since been used more effectively. Claire Smart added that the proposals' objective to reduce paperwork may be nullified because it would be more difficult to ensure that the appropriate evidence had been provided.

The Chair added that there would be an update on anti-social behaviour in Brent at future meetings.

## **5. Government proposals relating to the police and crime - verbal update**

Genny Renard gave a presentation on this item to inform Members of Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) under the new Government. Amongst the main themes were decentralising power to local areas, directly elected police and crime commissioners, promoting the 'Big Society' and conducting a spending review to reduce the deficit. Members heard that CPSs would need to be more action-oriented, with bureaucracy and the number of processes involved reduced. Multi-agency working to achieve greater value for money and improving delivery of services would also be needed. There would also be an active role for the voluntary sector. Genny Renard advised that the Big Society rested on three principles, these being:-

- Capability – enabling people to participate
- Co-production – empowerment to influence and act
- Commissioning – empowerment to control own environment. This would involve deciding what outcome is wanted and then choose a preferred bidder.

In terms of the design of service, Genny Renard advised that the CSP was currently at the professional service but user and the community involved level, however the objective was to achieve commissioning full co-production. There would also be a move towards place-based budgeting and the implications for policing would include effective prevention and response to crime, enhanced intelligence sharing, closer partnership working with key local outcomes and using a joined up approach with other agencies to address the cycle of re-offending.

During Members' discussion, Councillor Clues sought further information on the CSP structure under the devolution proposals and what impact this would have on the ward panels. He also enquired how voluntary sector organisations would be managed and how would it be ensured that they were fit for purpose. Councillor Clues commented that it was important to reassure the community that there were appropriate measures in place to tackle crime. Councillor Al-Ebadi stated that although CCTV was needed in town centres, he questioned its need in other locations and felt that sometimes it was misused. He felt that the purposes of using CCTV could be more fully explored.

With regard to commissioning, the Chair enquired whether there were any plans to seek arrangements with other local authorities and would there be a review of what could be commissioned. He also asked how contracts would be monitored. The Chair enquired if there was any indication with regard to what savings would be

required and when an announcement would be made on this. He asked to what extent CCTV provided a good evidence base and was the quality of CCTV in Brent high.

In reply, Genny Renard advised that the Government was considering three models as to how the CSP would function and it was possible that Brent could be split into three sectors. She stated that ward panels played an important role in bringing views together and Neighbourhood Working also assisted this. It was noted that the nature of Brent meant there were distinct neighbourhoods in the Borough. Commissioning would be the solution to ensure that voluntary sector organisations were fit for purpose and these organisations would receive assistance to develop their services and receive training, whilst a robust monitoring process would need to be in place. Members noted that the council was meeting with Barnet and Harrow on 22 October to discuss domestic violence services and such arrangements were being considered for other areas too. There would be an informal review of what could be commissioned and whilst the police informed the council of how many referrals were made, progress needed to be made in finding appropriate partners. CCTV quality was comparable with other boroughs and although there was no evidence to suggest CCTV helped reduce crime, it assisted in detection.

Claire Smart added that CCTV was useful providing that it was in an appropriate location and had the right view of the incident. She stated that although the Police Authority was being replaced, the change would not impact upon the strategy.

Phil Newby (Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement) commented that reducing police civilian workers would require police officers to spend more time on administrative tasks. As there was a need to make savings, a number of areas needed to be looked at, such as whether CCTV represented good value for money and he suggested that a task group could be set up to consider this. He advised that future funding for CSG would be confirmed by the Local Authorities Settlement on 6 December.

## **6. Work programme**

The Chair referred to the work programme which included topics suggested at previous meetings. Members then agreed to a suggestion from Councillor Clues to include consideration of a community re-assurance strategy, which would include issues such as use of CCTV. The Chair added that this will also include information on what groups the council was engaging with.

Members also agreed that a task group be set up to consider developing diversionary and exit strategies for young people involved or likely to be involved in gangs in Brent. Councillor Ogunro agreed to be a member of the task group and Jacqueline Casson (Senior Policy Officer, Strategy Partnerships and Improvement) would liaise with Group Offices over the appointment of other members.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 14 December 2010 at 7.30 pm.

8. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Z VAN KALWALA  
Chair