



MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 October 2011 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Van Kalwala (Chair), Councillor Clues (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Harrison, Hirani, Mistry and HB Patel

Also Present: Councillors Cheese, S Choudhary, Hashmi and John

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Deputations

There were no deputations.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 July 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 July 2011 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment to minute 4, 'matters arising': -

- that the words 'working programme' referred to in the first sentence of the item, be replaced with 'work programme'.

4. Matters arising

With reference to the item 'Registered Social Landlord Performance', an update was sought with regard to the council's Tenancy Strategy. The committee was advised that work on the strategy was on going but a draft was not yet ready for distribution.

A member of the committee noted that it had previously been agreed that meeting dates would be scheduled to avoid clashes with Area Consultative Forum (ACF) meetings; however, there was a clash with the current meeting and the Wembley ACF. It was agreed that officers would address this issue.

5. Anti Social Behaviour in Brent

Genny Renard (Head of Integrated Community Safety and Development) presented a report to the committee setting out the current work being delivered by the Community Safety Team and their partners to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). Commonly, ASB complaints related to issues such as noise or drinking on the streets; however, ASB encompassed a wide range of issues and it was emphasised that people's understanding of what constituted ASB could vary. Consequently, the

local authority was contributing to work being conducted by the police to clearly define what could be deemed ASB for purposes of police enforcement.

Local Joint Action Groups (LJAGs), which brought together community safety partners to provide a more localised, operational response to tackling ASB, had been established in May 2011. Membership included the police, ward working, Brent CRI, Brent Youth Service, Adaction and a growing number of registered social landlords (RSLs); in addition, other agencies and partners such as victim support and Brent Mental Health could be invited to help resolve particular ASB issues. There were three Brent LJAGs, one for each police safer neighbourhood cluster. Recently, changes had been made to the way in which problems were brought to the LJAGs to ensure that the relevant partner agencies were in attendance as necessary. There were a number of resources available to the LJAGs including considerable police input in the form of five local authority funded police officers, comprising two constables and three police community support officers (PCSOs), as well as three detectives. Other resources included access to shared data, allowing an in depth look at families, particularly in relation to issues of domestic violence and violence against women and girls; demographic data which was being used to map poverty and unemployment in each cluster, and; limited funding from the Mayor of London. Genny Renard noted that the sharing of data had been very valuable, particularly the demographic data which had helped to create a better profile of each area. Funding from the Mayor of London had been used for a number of discrete projects. One of these projects, termed 'autumn nights', sought to address the peak in street robberies which occurred around events such as Halloween and Diwali. Another piece of work had been conducted around repeat callers and victims, which it had been found absorbed circa forty per cent of police time. A sample taken in the Kilburn locality had demonstrated that a vast majority of these cases required input from services other than the police, such as mental health services.

The three Brent LJAGs reported to the Brent Joint Action Board, which in turn reported to the Crime Prevention Strategy Groups. This structure had been seen to be successful and a number of other boroughs and the Mayor of London were interested in exploring the project set up further. However, the council was currently waiting before actively engaging with other interested parties, to test that the structure worked effectively.

Genny Renard drew the committee's attention to paragraph 3.14 of the report which set out information relating to dispersals. Dispersals were used to actively support interventions tackling ASB by a group of individuals in a particular area. Dispersals could be implemented for up to six months and required police and partnership evidence to support an application for consideration by the Police Superintendent. Under dispersal orders the police had the power to disperse individuals displaying ASB in the area covered by the order. Genny Renard advised that ideally dispersals would only be used once in an area and highlighted that the success of these depended upon police presence in that area.

Genny Renard concluded her report to the committee by noting that at appendix 1 and 2, additional information had been provided regarding the legislation that could be used to address anti-social behaviour.

During the subsequent discussion, members raised a number of issues and queries. Councillor Mistry, referring to Appendix 2 of the report, queried if the closure orders contained within the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, could be used to close down a 'Khat house'. Genny Renard clarified that it could be used for that purpose. This piece of legislation would be used to close down up to 51 premises in Brent over the next few months; however the process required that the occupiers be written to twice, with a second letter being delivered by a police officer before the premises could be closed down. The council would deliver training around the use of these closure orders. Genny Renard further noted that these orders could be applied with regard to premises used for prostitution and people trafficking. A rise in these crimes was expected due to the forthcoming 2012 Olympic Games in London as previous host cities had experienced a rise of up to two hundred per cent in the levels of prostitution. Phil Newby (Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement) added that post-Olympic Games, the levels of prostitution in the host cities had remained high. Genny Renard explained that such issues were not expected to greatly affect the immediate area around the Olympic Village as these would be too highly policed; however it was expected that transport hubs such as Wembley would experience an increase in such activity.

Councillor HB Patel queried if an analysis of ASB by area had been carried out. Sergeant Barron advised that a database of ASB was maintained which allowed the police to carry out a range of follow up activities. All victims of ASB were assessed for the risk of repeat occurrences using a risk assessment matrix. Those deemed to be at high risk were asked to complete a victim questionnaire through which officers would identify a range of factors, including whether the ASB incidents were targeted towards an individual or if several residents were suffering the same experience. Sergeant Barron explained that the police were in the process of improving the database to allow a greater range of statistics to be drawn from it. This would be completed by December. Genny Renard noted that every case brought to an LJAG was risk assessed and there was a victim support officer who was contracted for eighteen hours per week and who attended all LJAG meetings. The Victim Support Officer also trained volunteers to enable them to support victims of ASB until a resolution had been reached or the individual/s felt confident that the problem could be overcome.

Councillor HB Patel queried how long it typically took to resolve issues of noise nuisance. Genny Renard advised that it was dependant on the circumstances of the case. Eighty to eighty-five per cent of cases could be resolved by an officer visiting the person responsible. Information was periodically circulated encouraging residents to simply talk to their neighbours about any minor issues that they had. Genny Renard added that the response of the council was determined by a risk assessment of the issue. Councillor HB Patel further queried whether, if there was a noisy party in progress, passing police officers would stop and address the issue. Sergeant Barron advised that police officers would only investigate in such circumstances if there had been a complaint received or if an individual complained to them at the scene of the event.

In response to several members' queries, Sergeant Barron explained that LJAG meetings took place every three weeks. All the associated partners were just getting to grips with what could be achieved through LJAGs. Genny Renard noted that the complexity of a case determined whether it would be brought to LJAGs. Only those cases where two or more agencies were required to address the issues

would be escalated to a meeting of LJAG. This would avoid duplication of work and allowed a greater level of creativity in responding to such issues. Sergeant Barron added that the efficiency of LJAGs would increase as everyone became more familiar with the processes involved.

Councillor Cheese sought assurance that the significant number of repeat callers to the police was not a reflection of issues being inadequately dealt with at the time of the first call. Genny Renard advised that calls to the police could often relate to complex problems which might require input from more than one agency. Consequently, LJAGs would look at this aspect of the repeat calls and would provide a good medium through which various partner agencies could hold each other to account. Twenty per cent of the repeat calls had been found to reflect a legitimate need. Councillor Harrison queried whether a link could be made between the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) meetings and LJAG meetings. Genny Renard confirmed that such links could be made and this action would be followed up after the meeting.

The Chair queried what types of ASB were most common and if there were any areas that were frequently affected by ASB. Genny Renard confirmed that ASB was not specific to particular areas in the same way as other types of crime. Often ASB was sparked by certain events such as Halloween or Bonfire night. The Chair commented that ASB should be mapped to evidence trends and to identify which areas were most affected. Genny Renard explained that further work around this issue was required but that work was in progress to achieve a joint database with the police by December 2011 which would contribute to achieving this aim.

The Chair sought an update regarding the government initiative which had been launched the previous year regarding instant preventative measures. Genny Renard confirmed that this initiative had been halted. Lots of information and training had been provided by the government on this initiative and a proposal had been circulated for consultation. However, whilst the council had submitted a response to this consultation, no further information or any feedback had been received

RESOLVED: -

That the report be noted.

6. Crime Indicators (verbal report)

It was noted that the committee had previously considered several updates from the Community Safety Team and that it had been agreed that the committee should select key areas for data monitoring. Genny Renard tabled two supporting documents for the committee's consideration. The first of these, a key performance indicator report for 2011-12 for the Brent area, had been supplied by the police. The second document set out the suggested data areas for the committee to monitor and possible targets for these areas.

Genny Renard outlined some of the key trends evident from the police performance indicator report. Members were advised that the figures set out in the police performance indicator report were not representative of the number of incidences or victims, as one crime could be counted a number of times if it crossed several

classifications. For example, a robbery could be both a property crime and a violent crime. The committee was further informed that gun or knife crime included all incidents in which someone had reported seeing a gun or knife, as well as actual violence committed with such weapons.

Genny Renard then drew members attention to those areas proposed for further monitoring, setting out the reasons for their selection. It was suggested that members monitor the violence portfolio with particular emphasis on serious youth violence and violence with injury, the number of sanction detections for Rape and the property portfolio. The latter of these contained most of the significant property crimes including robbery, motor vehicle crime, burglary and shoplifting. Suggested targets for these selected areas included a reduction by eight per cent in the numbers recorded for violence with injury and a reduction in the rise of Serious Youth Violence by twenty per cent in 2011/12, fifteen per cent in 2012/13 and ten per cent in 2013/14. It was intended that the sanction and detection rate for rape would be increased by ten per cent by the end of 2013/14. For property portfolio offences a reduction of three per cent was proposed for 2013/14 alongside a target of fifteen per cent increase in the sanction and detection rates by 2013/14.

During member's discussion a number of queries were raised and members sought clarification with regard to several issues. With reference to the target of an eight per cent reduction in violence with injury, the Chair sought further details regarding how the targets had been set. Genny Renard explained that the targets reflected informed estimations of what could be achieved. For instance, targets for youth violence related to a reduction in the increase of youth violence rather than an overall reduction in these crimes. The Chair further queried whether benchmarking data relating to other similar local authorities was available. Genny Renard noted that Hackney had experienced a rise in youth violence by twenty-six per cent and Lambeth by thirty two per cent over the same period. It was agreed that benchmarking information would be circulated to members before the next meeting of the committee.

Clarification was sought by councillor Hirani on the age range encompassed within the youth crime category. Genny Renard advised that this category included crimes committed in Brent by any young people up to the date of their eighteenth birthday. Councillor Cheese sought further information regarding the number of crimes committed within Brent by people who resided outside the borough of Brent. Genny Renard advised that the next report on this subject could include details of those people arrested within a sample area who did not have a home postcode within Brent. HB Patel queried from where the legal definition of ASB was drawn. Genny Renard advised that ASB was defined within legislation; however, the metropolitan police was working in consultation with the council to clarify the definition of ASB and to ensure that it was not subjective.

Councillor Hashmi queried whether a breakdown of the crime data by ward was still available as he no longer received this information for his ward. Sergeant Barron advised that this information was provided at each Ward Panel meeting. Crime mapping was also available on the internet. Councillor Hashmi advised that it was important that councillors received this information for their wards as it aided their decisions with regard to ward funding and neighbourhood working. Genny Renard confirmed that crime information by ward could be distributed to all councillors for their respective wards.

Councillor Mistry queried whether the data relating rape included those cases where a rape had been reported but the allegation was later withdrawn. Sergeant Barron advised that the report stayed on the database and was included within the data provided to the committee by the police; however, such cases would not be counted by the home office. It was noted that there was no information regarding racial hate crime provided within the crime data. Genny Renard explained that information regarding racial hate crime was not included on the performance indicator report but was provided to the council separately. Genny Renard explained that she had recently assumed responsibility for the Prevent agenda in Brent and so information on racial hate crime could be made available to the committee at its next meeting. It was also intended that further information would be made available regarding domestic violence. The Chair highlighted that information on racial hate crime should be one of the areas that the committee monitored.

Councillor Harrison queried what actions were taken around firework night to mitigate any potential ASB. The committee was informed by Genny Renard that the law around fireworks dated back to 1886 and related largely to the storage of fireworks. Significant work had been carried out with trading standards to ensure that shops were appropriately storing fireworks and were asking for proof of age for those who appeared too young to purchase fireworks. Test purchasers had been employed for this purpose Letters were also being written to the parents of young people who had been found misusing fireworks previously to advise of the significance of the offence should they be found doing so again. Councillor Mistry queried whether checks were made to ensure that fireworks on sale in shops should be on sale to the general public. Genny Renard confirmed that checks were made that the fireworks were suitable for the European market. In response to a further query, Genny Renard confirmed that fireworks could be used on any night of the year but not beyond 11.00 pm.

The Chair queried how the suggested targets linked in with the council's performance framework. Genny Renard confirmed that the crime indicator targets were linked to the council's performance framework and that when the targets were set, they were done so with consideration of the work that the council and its partners was carrying out across a range of issues.

RESOLVED: -

That data be provided to the committee on a quarterly basis with regard to the following categories: -

- Violence portfolio
- Property portfolio
- Rape - Sanction and Detection rate
- Racial hate crime.

7. Update on emerging local and national policing issues (verbal report)

Sergeant Barron (Metropolitan Police – Brent) provided a brief update to the committee on policing issues in Brent. The committee was advised that borough tasking meetings took place every two weeks and resources to tackle issues of specific concern were allocated as needed. Such resources might include decoy

cars to address issues of car theft or vandalism. Current priorities for the borough related to tackling burglary, robbery and gang related crime. Figures were not available per Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) but across the borough for the previous month there had been eighty-four arrests and one hundred and fifty six searches carried out. Twenty to twenty-five per cent of arrests had arisen from people being stopped and searched. Eleven fixed penalty notices had been issued; these fixed penalty notices could be issued for offences such as drinking in public areas, littering and dog fouling. Sergeant Barron added that a sex offender had been active in Gladstone Park but that an individual had now been arrested and charged with nine offences which ranged from indecent talking to attempted rape. In response to a query, Sergeant Barron agreed that graphs indicating the types and levels of crime for each ward could be provided to the committee.

Sergeant Barron informed the Panel that she had recently taken over responsibility for the SNTs for Brondesbury Park ward and Mapebury ward. The SNTs in Brent had recently been rearranged so that there would be five dual wards. Whilst separate SNTs would be maintained for each ward within the dual-ward areas, the teams would be overseen by only one Sergeant. Each SNT would still have the same number of Police Constables (PCs) and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Genny Renard noted that the dual-ward areas would be monitored closely and added that the resource funded by the council of five additional police officers could be allocated to help meet specific needs as they arose.

During members' discussion, Councillor Hashmi raised a concern regarding communication with SNTs, noting that he had left messages previously and no one had responded. Sergeant Barron advised that this situation would be explored further.

Councillor Hirani asserted that the information sharing between SNTs did not work as it should do and noted to the committee that the advice given to residents regarding the use of Gladstone park during the period where a sex offender had been known to be active had differed between neighbouring wards. Sergeant Barron acknowledged that communication should be better. A communications strategy was currently being formulated and would be circulated shortly. Sergeant Barron confirmed that communication between SNTs would improve.

Councillor Hirani further queried what arrangements were in place to ensure that sufficient cover was provided for those SNTs where an officer was on maternity leave or long term leave due to illness. Sergeant Barron advised that in some circumstances individuals may be placed on recuperative duties if they were unable to carry out their normal duties due to illness or injury. In such circumstances, these officers were still able to contribute to the SNTs. Where team members would be absent from work for an extended period of time, supervisors would be required to manage these issues as appropriate. If possible, interim cover for these posts would be arranged. It was noted that the sickness absence level for Brent police was at its lowest in four years.

Councillor S Choudhary commended the work completed with regard to Gladstone Park and noted that issues relating to drinking in public had been effectively tackled. Councillor Harrison commented that she had also received positive feedback from residents concerning the SNTs; however, residents had also highlighted that they had failed to receive a response to voice messages which they

had left. Sergeant Barron advised that the voicemail system was currently being monitored and this issue would be investigated. Genny Renard added that the quality of the telephone equipment currently in use by the SNTs represented a real problem and this issue was being explored; unfortunately there were limited resources available to resolve this issue. At present, work was being conducted via the LJAGs to arrange for one central number to be established for SNTs.

Councillor Mistry noted that volunteers for data entry had been asked for at a previous SNT meeting and sought an update on this. Sergeant Barron advised that this had related to the neighbourhood link which was a system approved by the metropolitan police. This system allowed messages to be sent to subscribers of the system alerting people to issues or incidents of which they should be aware. Currently there were only one hundred and seventy people registered to receive these updates in Brent.

The Chair raised a query regarding crime priorities for the borough. Sergeant Barron advised that the Borough Crime Tasking Group (BCTG) co-ordinated priorities, resources and budgets for the borough. Currently robbery was highlighted as a significant issue. Robberies were driven by a diverse range of factors. Genny Renard added that mobile phone robberies might peak around the time that a new model was released. Jewellery motivated robbery also coincided with religious festivals where jewellery was more widely worn. Robberies also tended to increase around Christmas time as people were buying new products. Genny Renard added that eight prolific burglars who previously resided in Brent were all due to be released after long periods in prison. Councillor Mistry sought an update regarding the 'cops on dots' scheme. Sergeant Barron advised that this scheme had been very effective but was also very resource intensive.

Following a query from the Chair, Genny Renard advised that a new draft crime strategy would be submitted to the Crime Prevention Strategy Group (CPSG) in November 2011 and following officer review would then be shared with the committee. Joint working would be a key element of this, particularly in the context of the limited availability of resources. One project which had arisen out of the previous strategy was the Safer Transport Project which targeted ASB on public transport by school children occurring outside the Arc Academy. This project was funded via monies obtained from the Mayor for London.

The Chair requested an update on the work carried out on the Kilburn and Mozart Estates.

Genny Renard noted that there had been significant problems in the past due to ongoing tensions between young people from the two neighbouring estates. A joint project between Brent Council and Westminster Council had been established to tackle this issue and encompassed several different schemes. A project delivered by Catalyst Housing involved the police identifying young people from both estates who were vulnerable to being drawn into the tensions. Work was then carried out with twenty of these individuals (ten from each estate) to help form amiable relations. Further projects included a community mentoring programme delivered by Adaction and additional work by the police around gang issues in the area, for which £10k had been allocated. In response to a further query, Genny Renard clarified that funds had been obtained via successful joint bids between the council

and Westminster council and this had allowed for a more creative approach to the issue.

8. **Work Programme**

The Chair briefly outlined the items due to be brought to the next meeting of the committee and noted that an update on the crime strategy would be brought to the meeting scheduled for March 2012.

The committee was advised by Genny Renard that the local authority was now required to hold a review following any domestic homicides. Sadly there had recently been two domestic homicides in Brent. The findings of the subsequent reviews would be brought to a future meeting of the committee. The reviews would involve establishing a timeline of interactions between the victim and various public agencies and services. It was intended that the findings of the reviews would improve practice. Genny Renard added that there was no additional funding provided by the government to conduct these reviews and it was expected that they could be very costly. The similar process of conducting a serious case review could cost approximately £70k. Brent had agreed, along with other London authorities to chair the domestic homicide reviews of other local authorities. It was hoped that the reviews would be completed within six months.

Genny Renard further advised the committee that following an extremely severe attack on a woman recently, a special single issue meeting of the multiagency case review panel would be held. The findings of this meeting would also be brought to the committee.

9. **Date of next meeting**

The committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 13 December 2011.

10. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.28 pm

VAN KALWALA
Chair