



MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 7 February 2013 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Van Kalwala (Chair), and Councillors Harrison, Hopkins (substituting for Clues), Lorber (substituting for Green), Naheerathan, HB Patel, RS Patel and Krupa Sheth,

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Clues and Green

1. Declarations of interests

None declared.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 December 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2012 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

3. Matters arising

The Policy and Performance Officer informed the committee that the crime update would not be available; however at the May committee meeting a crime priority update will be submitted alongside the new Community Care Partnership strategy.

4. Brent Police, borough update

Gideon Springer, Superintendent of Operations gave a MOPAC presentation detailing the consultation proposals for the future of policing across London. He highlighted the mission statement and aims which included; greatest and safest big city on earth; most effective, efficient, loved and respected force in the UK; and public services and communities tackling crime together. To achieve these, a 20% reduction in seven priority crimes, 20% boost in public confidence and a 20% cut in spending equating to approximately £600m needed to be achieved. MOPAC additionally had three criminal justice goals to ensure punishments were effective and to reduce reoffending. The Superintendent of Operations drew the Committees attention to the future structure of the force which would achieve approximately £30m savings. It was queried how officers on higher tiers would be 'disposed' and whether the flatter structure would deter prospective recruits due to reduce promotion prospects. It was explained that under regulation A19, the force had the option to retire persons who had served for 30 years and noted that although the flatter structure may deter some, the requirement to work for 35 years rather than 30 would mean promotion could be achieved. It was explained that savings would also be achieved through the reduction of the asset base with the sale of approximately 200 buildings, reduced building size and reduced running costs. Other saving methods included increasing efficiencies through the upgrading of IT

equipment and reduction of back office staff. It was queried how back office staff would be identified for redundancy. It was explained that this was a complex process due to the uncertainty surrounding the impact of these losses but would partially be linked to the IT efficiencies resulting in less officers required for data entry and to carry out administrative functions. It was explained that a further 1200 officers would be placed across London with an overall increase of 2600 SNT, with one named officer for each of the three areas in Brent with the ability to mobilise a team of approximately 30 officers. Members expressed concern over local knowledge being lost with specific officers and PCSOs no longer being assigned to individual wards. It was explained that officers would still be assigned to specific wards but also be able to cover a larger area if required. It was noted that Brent currently had a shortage of officers which would not be filled until August however, under the new proposals, two officers would be added to the number Brent should have. Members queried how public confidence could be increased with less named officers and a lack of consultation. It was explained that the proposals were from MOPAC and the consultation continued until March and Councillors should feed in any concerns regarding the proposals. It was agreed that a response to the MOPAC consultation would be submitted highlighting the concerns of the Committee. It was further explained that a 24 hour front desk would be available in Wembley with Harlesden and Willesden centres being closed once an alternative 'surgery' space was located to enable the public to discuss minor concerns. Four drop in sites would be accessible in Brent and it was clarified that due to fewer people reporting crimes to police stations, closing the front desk centres would allow more police to be on the streets. An agreement in principle had been arranged with Harlesden Library with ongoing discussions taking place to secure all four drop in locations. It was queried whether discussion with the local authority and the police sharing facilities had been progressed. Phil Newby, Director Policy and Performance explained that although local services may benefit from sharing capital assets, many of the police assets were owned centrally and it was not possible to form an arrangement at a local level. Superintendent Gideon Springer explained that all decisions were currently being made centrally by MOPAC who were currently adjusting and having to reform the police service in line with government spending cuts. It was noted that other areas of the country did not have such complex issues as Brent and had been able to implement changes to address the reduction in funding due to London delaying for the Olympics.

Members expressed concern over the restructuring plans by MOPAC. It was explained that there was a large, three year plan to make savings which included a reduction in officer posts as well as the creation of efficiencies including an improved, comprehensive IT system. The police had been consulted on which buildings they felt could be closed but it was noted that overall; the decisions would be made by MOPAC. Members noted that other forces were further along in the reshaping process and whether any lessons could be learnt. It was explained that the system that was being proposed had been successful in other areas although the force had never faced this level of cuts before.

During discussion, members queried how the mission statement success would be measured. It was reiterated that this was a MOPAC presentation and it was unsure how they would measure the success. It was noted that the force currently used statistical data of the number of crimes and compared it to similar boroughs. Following a query it was clarified that the outcomes were hoped to be achieved by 2015.

Members expressed concern regarding police officers being placed in public spaces such as libraries and the confidentiality of the public wishing to report serious crimes. It was clarified that the Police would not expect a serious crime to be reported at a library and that they would visit the victim within 12 minutes of receiving a call. It was felt that the drop in sessions may not have high visitor numbers and it was explained that less than 10% of victims currently reported a crime at a station and that people could not be forced to engage.

Superintendent Gideon Springer drew the members attention to the scorecard circulated and explained that Brent was currently performing greater than the key performance indicators for the current financial year. Following queries it was clarified that not all arrests resulted in a prosecution in the form of a prison sentence, with alternative sanctions being sought to try and reduce repeat offending.

Members queried whether providing officers with transportation would help reduce crime rates. It was felt that officers being on foot allowed them to focus on their surroundings which would not be possible if they were driving. Following discussions surrounding individual's crime experiences, Superintendent Gideon Springer agreed to take up members concerns and discuss individual details out of the meeting. Satisfaction surveys were taken at various stages of the process from the victim, however what qualified as being satisfied would vary greatly depending on the nature of the crime experienced and the outcome. Members felt that the data was complex and requested that crime numbers be included as well as percentages. The Director of Policy and Performance explained that they were currently working alongside the Police to make data more accessible, with the intention of being able to track data against baseline figures and making it easier to digest.

Members queried whether work was being carried out with families to address problems, particularly when offenders are released from jail. Phil Newby explained that as of July a multi agency services hub will be placed within the civic centre and allow for multiple issues to be captured and addressed across various agencies to help the family as a whole. The integrated offender management programme was also taking place to prevent reoffending however it was noted that due to the high level of deprivation within the borough, despite reductions in crime, it was likely that Brent would always have a higher crime rate than more affluent boroughs. Superintendent Gideon Springer concluded that crime rates had dropped due to targeting known gang members and highlighted that the cut in budgets would impact on whether the successes could be continued.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that members noted the presentation#
- (ii) that a response to the consultation be submitted, addressing the concerns raised

5. Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme

RESOLVED:-

members noted the work programme

6. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take place on 21 March 2013.

7. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Z VAN KALWALA
Chair