



MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 22 July 2013 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Van Kalwala (Chair), Councillor Green (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Arnold, HB Patel, RS Patel and Krupa Sheth

Also present: Councillor Aslam Choudry

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Clues and Harrison

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None declared.

2. Deputations

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 May 2013

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2013 be approved as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Safer Brent Partnership

An update on the Safer Brent Partnership –

David Murray (Interim Policy and Partnership Adviser) provided the Committee with an update on the report. He informed members that the Crime Prevention Strategy group had met in June to discuss the future of the group and its relationship with its partners. They had established the Safer Brent Partnership and they agreed a new vision for Brent 'A strong, safe and just Brent where individuals and communities are safe from harm.' They also developed five key strategic priorities to drive forward the new vision. These priorities were based on a needs assessment, various surveys and feedback from ward working and they attempted to capture what mattered most to people in Brent. Underpinning the Partnership board were action groups who would be responsible for delivering each of the priorities. The leaders of the action groups would meet once a month to ensure the work was delivering against the key priorities. David Murray concluded by stating that the next

Safer Brent Partnership Board meeting would be chaired by the interim Chief Executive and they would discuss what the next steps would be.

The Committee welcomed the new vision for Brent and the key priorities that had been identified and they enquired who would be responsible for ensuring that the vision and strategies were developed. They also wanted to know who the Safer Brent Partnership would report to. The committee were also keen to know how the public had fed into developing the new priorities and how they would continue to be engaged. The members questioned how Smart Water would be used within the Borough, given the current financial hardship the Council faced. A member praised the officers for creating a new structure, however, it was unclear exactly what that structure was and therefore the members asked for a detailed chart of how the community could engage with the process and raise issues. The committee were happy to see that crime was actually falling in the borough but questioned the officers as to why they thought that the public's perception was contrary to this. The chair concluded the questioning by asking why there was currently waste in safeguarding children and how this would be changed in the future.

In response to the questions raised by the committee, David Murray explained that a group of officers, from across the different partners, including those in the voluntary and faith sectors would be dedicated to delivering each key priority. Each strategy would have key indicators against them, rated red, amber and green depending on how they were progressing. The partnership board would jointly own those indicators so there would be shared responsibility for them. The actions plans behind the key strategic priority were still being finalised and were due to be finished in September 2013. The action groups would report the status of each priority to this Committee, CMT and Partners for Brent. It was explained that the public had fed into the new vision and strategies in a number of ways including through the needs assessment, through community officers and through housing partnerships. It was added that the report was a living document and the strategies could be amended depending on community feedback. It was noted that there could have been a significant number of priorities identified. However they had tried to keep the number at an achievable and realistic level.

David Murray agreed to supply the Committee with a detailed structure chart of how members of the public could raise issues. He added that they were working hard with the council's Communications team to disseminate the message. It was reiterated that it needed to be made as safe as possible for anyone to report crime, especially when it was gang related. It was added that trying to change public perception regarding crime levels was very important. It was acknowledged that positive resolutions needed to be broadcast more and the Police were open to ideas on how to do that. It was already advertised on the police website, including social media updates and success stories were circulated to the local press. It was hoped in the future that the Council's communications team would work more closely with partnership communications to reiterate positive stories. Kiran Vagarwal added that when they did secure an ASBO they always asked to be able to name the individual in public.

He then informed the Councillors that the Smart Water service was being trialled in one Ward in the borough and they were hoping to secure more funding either via Ward Working or from the London Mayor's office to roll it out in other parts of borough. David Murray stated that if there was an underspend in the community

safety budget this year than they may be able to use that money to fund this priority as he understood that prevention and detection of burglaries were important to residents. In regards to safeguarding children it was stated that there wasn't huge amounts of waste or duplication however it was recognised, through the Home Officer peer review and the Partnership and Place report, that it could be better.

An update on work by the Council and its partners on ending serious youth violence and gangs –

Kiran Vagarwal (Neighbourhood Crime and Nuisance Manager) informed members that it was recognised that improvements were needed around the way gangs were tackled in the borough. This had been highlighted by a peer review conducted by the Home Office and the report that the partnership and place overview and scrutiny committee had produced on gangs in the borough. One of the major recommendations from these reports had been that Brent needed to establish a multiple agency task group, which had now been done. It was explained that they would also be taking forward the clear definition on gangs that the Partnership and Place report had devised. There was now a clear governance of how to deal with gangs that sat underneath the Safer Brent Partnership.

In regards to the Home Office review it was explained that they had acted as critical friend. They interviewed officers from Brent's partners and as well as officers from the council. They had then provided a good set of recommendations and those coupled with the task group recommendations had provided clear actions to build the strategy upon. It was added that they were in the process of now consulting on the strategy.

In subsequent conversation members sought information as to how many people in Brent were affected by Gangs as it appeared that the number in the report was quite small compared to what it had been before. Members commented that there did not appear to be much information on preventative measures and enquired what preventative measures were available for those vulnerable to joining a gang. Members also wanted to know the level of resources available to tackle gangs. It was questioned how well the different agencies and partners across Brent worked together and if they shared information effectively. Members then asked for a geographical breakdown of gang activity across the borough. The committee also wanted to know they would be informed whether the measures introduced were successful and when this would be reported back to the Committee.

In reply to the issues raised by members, Kiran Vagarwal stated there were currently 243 people identified as being affected by gangs on Brent police's gang matrix. It was recognised that this was the tip of the iceberg as these were just the people directly affected by gangs, and that there were a lot more people indirectly affected by gangs. The police explained that there used to be over 800 on the police gang matrix. This was because the definition of gang activity used to be too broad and therefore anyone involved in a violent offence of a certain age, would be placed on the matrix. This led to the number being too unmanageable and that was why they redefined who should be on the matrix. It was added that 243 was still the second largest number of people involved in gangs in London.

In order to try and prevent the number of those joining gangs from growing the police and officers stated that they were a number of measures to help, including

mentor schemes. These measures were mainly supplied by third parties and not delivered directly the Council. It was explained that there had been a few referrals through trident and these were lottery funded. In regards to how successful these preventative measures were, it was hard to quantify for a number of reasons. Primarily because the providers of the preventative schemes were often short lived or were not big enough to produce that level of analysis. Also it was explained that to know if the measures had really worked it would mean evaluating how long people refrained from criminal activity after completing the courses. However it was hoped that they would be able to provide some preliminary figures towards the end of the year.

In regards to effectively sharing information with schools and other relevant agencies, Kiran Vagarwal stated that there was now a focus on data sharing. For example any school in the borough that found a student with a knife should let the police know straight away. There were also police school officers who worked directly with schools to help tackle violence and gang activity. It was noted that generally the relationship between schools and the police was positive but that it could be improved and more information could be shared. Members were also informed that accident and emergencies in and around the borough also shared information with the police when they received patients with serious gang related injuries. It was noted that partnership work should also encompass the voluntary sector to ensure that work was not being duplicated.

Kiran Vagarwal advised that they had been profiling gang activity in the borough for the past 2 years and that once this was complete they would provide the committee with this information. She also explained that it was hard to exactly detail the amount of resources allocated to tackling gangs. This was because they were waiting to hear on the level of funding that they would receive from MOPAC. It was explained that the funding from MOPAC was not indefinite funding and would be available for between 1 and 4 years. The funding had been due in April but they still had not received it. David Murray explained that there may be an underspend in the community safety team budget that may be able to be allocated for this area of work. It was explained that one of the main limits upon resources was a lack of people to actually do the work.

David Murray concluded by explaining to members that they had begun to work cross borough again and were looking to cement these partnerships. It was hoped that this would be helpful in terms of learning good practice from other boroughs and not duplicating work.

Crime and disorder statistics –

Nick Davies (Brent Police Superintendent) introduced this section of the report that detailed the crime statistics for the borough. There had been a reduction in all crime year on year for the past three years. The exceptions to this were violence against the person, robbery- including robbery of businesses, which was a particular problem for Brent as they were a number of industrial properties within the borough. It was noted that gun crime had reduced in the borough, and this was in line with the work mentioned earlier at tackling gangs. Nick Davies explained that although the number of domestic violence crimes had gone up, he actually found this encouraging as it meant that people were reporting these types of crimes more.

David Murray informed the Committee that there was a significant variation in types and level of crimes committed in different wards throughout the borough.

Members welcomed the report and were happy to note that the crime levels in the borough were reducing and they wanted to know why the police thought crime was reducing. They stated that they would like to receive a breakdown of the crime statistics per ward and to have some relevant commentary on those statistics in order to put them context. It was also explained that it would be helpful to have a comparison of crime statistics with other London Boroughs instead of just the Met total.

Cllr Choudry (Lead Member for Crime Prevention and Public Safety) stated that he believed a lot of positive work was being done at the moment and that Brent were heading in the right direction. He was however, concerned that two key members of staff would be leaving imminently. He was also that the recent economic turmoil could potentially cause crime to rise in the borough.

In regards as to why they believed that crime was actually falling in the borough, Nick Davies stated that it was due to a number of reasons. This included ensuring that intelligence was turned into search warrants that were executed quickly. Also it was because Brent had been able to attract a number of central resources, including Trident which had helped to tackle crime in the borough. Nick Davies also stated that the safer neighbourhood teams were very important in tackling crime and were on the forefront of things. They also stated that the use of stop and search helped to reduce crime in the borough. Brent had one of the highest conversion rates of stop and searches of around 30%. It was explained that Brent officers were also mentored and given tips to ensure that experience was passed on to newer recruits. David Murray agreed to provide the committee with the crime statistics with comparison and to put them in context after they had been presented to the Safer Brent Partnership in September. In regards to 999 calls it was explained that the target for emergency calls was 15 minutes and for non-emergency crimes it was 60 minutes. Currently Brent were responding to emergencies within 15 minutes 89.3% of the time and non-emergencies within 60 minutes 87.2% of the time. The Met targets for both were 90% and therefore Brent was falling slightly short of this.

6. Safer Neighbourhoods Team - Overview of Service

Andy Jones (Chief Inspector Partnership) gave apologies on behalf of Sean Lynch and gave the committee an overview of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Members were updated on how successful the recent 'week of action' in Harlesden had been. It was explained that 'the week of action' was a multi-agency, high impact form of policing in the community and had been used very successfully in other boroughs. If it was deemed to be a success then it would be rolled out to other parts of the Borough.

Members were then given an update on the current use of dispersal orders in the borough. Firstly the police had used dispersal powers very successfully at the Ace Café in Harlesden on Friday and Saturday nights and there had been a number of arrests. They had also been used successfully in Wembley central area to close a couple of brothels and in Chichelle Road to stop street drinking. Members were also advised about the Tri borough dispersal order that was in place between Brent,

Barnet and Camden. It was in operation at the Old Hendon football Club as a tented community had been erected there. Dispersal orders had also been used successfully in and around Wembley stadium on match days to tackle anti-social behaviour and it was hoped this would continue in the new season.

Andy Jones informed members about the recent work that they had been doing with registered landlords and how to deal with problematic tenants. The re-launched crime housing focus group had devised a toolbox of strategies for landlords to use. Members were advised about two potential evictions in Stonebridge, where the Council had been working with Catalyst Housing to evict tenants who were subject to CASBOs.

A member asked how many ASBOs were in operation in Brent at the moment and what was the average age of the people subjected to them. Members also enquired whether most ASBOs were given for drug offences. Members sought further clarification about the new policing model being introduced and what this meant for community safety. They asked the police for more detail on the new model and whether it would mean more officers would be available for each ward compared to the safer neighbourhood teams currently in operation.

In response to the issues raised by members Kiran Vagarwal took the lead on answering about ASBOs. It was explained that a CRASBO was a criminally sought anti-social behaviour order and they were given after someone had been criminally convicted. She stated that Brent had a number of these in operation at the moment but not many ASBOs. She clarified that a high proportion of them were issued for drug offences however they could be given for a number of crimes. There were around 55 ASBOs in force and the age range of those subject to them varied significantly but generally they were between the ages of 16-40.

Nick Davies informed members that Brent was moving to a local policing model in September. Therefore the number of officers in each of the wards would increase quite substantially. For example Wembley would have 47 officers and Kilburn would have 40. There would be a named officer and Sargent, who would remain in each of the wards and they would not be diverted away from that ward. There would also be two PCSO per ward, with one remaining in the ward at all times and one that would be able to be moved if necessary. Members were also informed that there had been a refocus of CID squads so that there would be dedicated CID officers to investigate serious crimes. Also those officers who responded to 999 calls would only respond to those calls and would not be involved in other police matters. The overall number of officers in Brent would rise from 658 to 660. Although this was a minimal rise in officers, due to other changes taking place such as sharing custody facilities and certain units being centralised it would actually mean there would be more officers on the streets.

7. Close circuit television (CCTV) - Overview of service

Alvin Wakeman (CCTV Control Room Manager) informed the committee that the first four CCTV cameras were introduced in Brent during the European Football Championships in 1996. He added that they now had 175 cameras and they used these to help the police both operationally and strategically. For example the police used the cameras extensively to tackle gangs, particularly in South Kilburn and

Alvin Wakeman stated that he attended the cross board meetings to see the results of CCTV work. He stated that the service would continue to face increasing financial demands, such as the up keep of cameras whilst facing a diminishing budget. Due to this they may need to reconsider sharing resources with the West London Alliance (WLA) which had first been investigated in 2009. He also informed members that the Government had issued new guidance in relation to CCTV and that would require a significant amount of work.

Michael Read (Assistant Director of Environment and Protection) advised members that they were currently reviewing the CCTV strategy and what the cameras were actually used for. Currently they were used for detecting and deterring crime as well as traffic management and enforcement. The council had 175 cameras that were used for detecting and deterring crime. Michael Read clarified that 82 of those cameras were authorised to manage and enforce traffic laws and 30 of the cameras could be used by Wembley stadium on event days as Wembley Stadium had provided the funding for those. In addition Brent had access to 23 cameras owned and maintained by TFL. However access was limited to 3 cameras at any one time.

Members thanked Alvin Wakeman and Michael Read for their update and asked both for further clarification regarding what the future was for CCTV given the financial constraints that they faced. Members also enquired whether there were any mobile cameras in operation and if so where they were. They also wanted to know where the camera was that was purchased with Ward Working finances. A member also asked if Brent had any traffic enforcement cars and whether these cars were entitled to park on double yellow line. An enquiry was then made regarding the removal and erection of cameras and what the criterion was for both and whether the public were involved in these decisions.

In reply to the issues raised by the committee, Alvin Wakeman advised that due to financial constraints it was unlikely that they would install any new cameras in the near future. Most of the cameras that were currently in operation in Brent were funded by other partners, for example 8 new cameras had been installed in Harlesden by the parking enforcers. The Council would be able to use those new cameras at night for community safety. In regards to the requirement to place cameras it was explained that a new code practice, that was to be issued soon, would have to be adhered to when placing cameras to ensure they were only used for a specific purpose in pursuit of a legitimate aim. There were no plans to remove any of the cameras at the moment, but Michael Read did inform members that they were costly to maintain and the automatic replacement of existing cameras could not be assumed. If cameras were removed in the future then this would have to be a decision approved by the executive and therefore it would need to be consulted on widely as they would have to balance the right to privacy with the community's needs.

Members were also informed that the Council did not have any vehicles with cameras on them. The police had a CCTV van that the council did not have access to and the parking contractors had vehicles that they used for parking and traffic enforcement. Alvin Wakeman clarified that these vehicles were legally allowed to park on double yellow lines if there was no other place for them to park to detect an offence. He reiterated that they were supposed to do this little as possible as it was recognised that this caused annoyance with drivers. He then explained that although the council did not have moveable cameras they did have seven

temporary, deployable cameras that could be moved around the borough. However there were huge demands as to where to put these cameras so there was a schedule of where these cameras would be placed and Alvin agreed to supply the committee with this schedule. He also agreed to let the members know who much it cost to run the CCTV services. Michael Read informed members that they had lowest level of cameras possible to be able to run a 24 hour service and that they were looking to ensure that the CCTV service would be self-sustaining in the future. They were also considering a possible joint contract with WLA but this was still very much in its infancy and would not happen in the foreseeable future. Alvin Wakeman concluded by stating that he believed that they currently offered a very good service given the small size of team.

8. Work programme

The Chair drew members' attention to the work programme and informed them that the next meeting was due to take place on 3 October. At that meeting they were due to receive an update on ward working, community right to bid and challenge and a progress update of the Partners for Brent work programme. He advised that the update on employment was scheduled to be presented at the meeting in November.

9. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 3 October 2013 at 7.00 pm.

10. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Z VAN KALWALA
Chair