

**Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 2 November 2017**

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 2 November 2017 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**           **Councillors:**       Greening, Jeapes, Gallagher, Heather, Chowdhury,  
Williamson, Champion, O’Sullivan, O’Halloran, Picknell  
and Smith

**Also Present:**       **Councillor:**           **Hull**  
**Borough Commander: Catherine Roper**

**Councillor Richard Greening in the Chair**

**392       APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Councillors Doolan, Klute, Russell, Debono, Khan and Calouri – Executive Member  
Children, Young People and Families  
Councillors Jeapes and Gallagher for lateness

**393       DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

Councillor Picknell stated that she was substituting for Councillor Doolan

**394       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**

None

**395       TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2017 be confirmed and  
the Chair be authorised to sign them

**396       MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)**

None

**397       PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)**

The Chair outlined the procedures for Public questions and filming and recording of  
meetings

**398**      **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)**

The Chair stated that the Annual Crime and Disorder report that was being considered that evening reflected an increase in crime figures. The Chair added that the Police had had to suffer substantial reductions in funding over the past 7 years and this has had an impact no doubt, on their ability to respond. It was stated that the Council had similarly had a 70% reduction in funding in a similar period.

The Chair added that the implications of Government funding cuts were now beginning to be felt significantly

**399**      **ANNUAL CRIME AND DISORDER REPORT (Item 8)**

Catherine Roper, Borough Commander, was present together with Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member, Finance, Performance and Community Safety. Keith Stanger, Service Director Community Safety and Crime Reduction and Catherine Briody, Head of Youth and Children's Services were also present.

Agenda item C9 – Knife Crime, Mobile Phone theft – 12 month report back was also considered in relation to this item.

During consideration of the report and presentation the following main issues were raised –

- Crime trends in Islington are largely mirroring those seen across London and there had been an increase in overall crime by 19%
- Key areas for the SIP are youth crime, violence against women and girls, Hate Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour and PREVENT
- Youth Crime is a main focus and knife crime remains an area of concern
- Islington largely reflects trends across London except for theft snatch, where Islington is disproportionately high, and knife crime with injury victims under 25 years of age
- Theft snatch offence levels have risen 83% and theft of motor vehicles is linked to this and increased 45% due to stolen mopeds
- There has however been a reduction in first time entrants to youth crime and youth custody rates continue to reduce
- The Youth Offending Service is now operating well and reoffending rates are decreasing despite the needs of the cohort becoming more complex
- Violence against Young Women and Girls – domestic abuse offences increased by 4% in line with London rises, but detection rates fell 13% to 21% against MPS falling 2% to 26%
- The Domestic Violence MARAC is functioning well with good multi agency representation
- Sexual offences continue to increase 33% and there are low numbers of other types of VAWG
- Faith hate crime is increasing and other types of hate crime are decreasing. This is in line with the MPS overall, however detection rates on all forms of Hate Crime in Islington are improving, but remain low
- The Committee noted that the Police were employing new measures to detect perpetrators of moped crime, and a number of significant arrests of individuals has recently been made
- It was noted that Islington is the only borough that had designate safer schools officers in all primary and secondary schools and work is also taking place with

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Universities in the borough. All secondary schools in the borough had a Safer Schools officer and there were 10 in total

- In response to a question it was stated that there is a need for better information to be given to the Public in relation to mobile phone theft it was stated that crime prevention information was given to the Public
- The Borough Commander also referred to the fact that a lot of the crime in Islington is related to inter generation crime and family links. In addition, the 'rat runs' in Islington made it easier for mopeds to escape the Police and measures were being looked at in this regard to make it more difficult for moped crime
- In response to a question it was stated that the Police were working to ensure that criminal assets were frozen, and that those organising the wider criminal network - the 'gangmasters' – were apprehended, However, the Police recognised that improvements were needed
- Councillor Hull referred to the large reduction in Police numbers over the past few years and that Police numbers in Islington had reduced considerably and such reductions have a significant impact on crime reduction. The Police had also to find further significant savings in their budget
- Reference was made to the fact that the Police did use CCTV footage and there is radio communication in CCTV hubs, In addition, the Council had installed barriers in some areas to make it more difficult for mobile thieves to evade escape, however the young people often had their faces covered which made CCTV images difficult to view. It was noted that the Police were trialling a DNA spray that could aid detection in the future
- The Borough Commander stated that officers could pursue mopeds and work is also taking place with the Serious Crime Unit to gather intelligence about the serious criminals organising crime in the borough
- It was noted that relationships had improved between the Police and young people and there needed to be a balance as to how young people in groups were handled, as not all young people congregating together were involved in criminal activity
- In response to a question it was stated that a risk assessment was carried out before a moped thief is pursued and it was stated that the number of prosecutions for moped crime in the past year could be provided to the Committee
- It was stated that the current establishment of officers in Camden and Islington was 1200 officers as resources had now been merged, and that the establishment figures had reduced by 250 officers since 2010
- The Borough Commander referred to the fact that the Borough were fortunate in that the Council had funded a good offer of youth facilities and that this needed to be more widely publicised in her view
- The Borough Commander stated that most youth crime is committed by 13-18 year old boys, and there are often safeguarding issues involved. There is also a problem of young girls being used for criminality
- The Committee were informed that a great deal of work is being carried out by the Youth Offending Service with prolific offenders, although the numbers are lower than previous years. Measures other than custodial sentences were explored and this approach has led to a reduction in re-offending
- In relation to the recommendations in the 12 month report back on knife and mobile phone crime it was stated that a great deal of work had been carried out with the Courts, and that the integrated gangs team had been a success, and it is hoped to extend this model to engage more young people at an earlier stage
- The Committee were pleased to note that there had been significant improvements in the Youth Offending service, and targets were all being met
- In addition, a toolkit for schools had been developed around understanding of gangs and it is hoped that this will shortly be available

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- Knife sweeps are being undertaken on a regular basis, in addition to stop and search, where the numbers of stop and search had reduced, however the positive outcomes had increased. It was felt that stop and search is being used more appropriately
- The Committee noted that more support is being provided for victims of crime and that and young people who are involved in crime that are also victims. Victim support staff also went into schools and did work with them
- Reference was made to the introduction of safe havens and it was stated that the Committee should be provided with information as to how many were proposed and those that will be open after 6.00p.m.
- It was stated that violence against young women and girls had increased and that this if felt to be due to increased reporting. More officers had been assigned to work in this area
- Reference was made to the increase in faith hate crimes and it was felt that there is also underreporting. There were reports of Muslim women being abused in the street and that often Muslim women did not report this and that ways of encouraging them to report such incidents should be looked at, The Borough Commander indicated that the Police did hold a surgery at the Mosque and were trying to build positive relationships
- The Committee were of the view that prosecutions for hate crime should be better publicised and that this would encourage more reporting
- Members were informed that a training package had been purchased in relation to hate crime and what residents could do when they were victims of hate crime
- In response to a question it was stated that the SIP has tried to raise awareness of the need to report and a one stop shop would shortly be set up which will hopefully assist

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and the Borough Commander be requested to inform Members of the details of the number of safe havens proposed and those that would be open after 6.00pm

The Committee thanked the Borough Commander, Catherine Briody, Keith Stanger and Councillor Hull for attending

### **400 KNIFE CRIME/MOBILE PHONE THEFT SCRUTINY REVIEW - 12 MONTH REPORT BACK (Item 9)**

This item was dealt with in conjunction with minute 399 above

### **401 FINANCIAL MONITORING UPDATE (Item 10)**

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- It was noted that there was an overspend at month 4 but it was hoped that by year end this could be covered by contingency reserves
- The situation for the Council is however extremely challenging as the Council had had a 70% reduction in Government spending since 2010

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted

The Committee thanked Councillor Hull for attending

**402 WELFARE REFORMS UPDATE (Item 11)**

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present and was accompanied by Robbie Rainbird Head of Processing, Housing Benefits

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- Islington is due to move to a full Universal Credit service by March 2018 and feedback from pilot areas had highlighted a number of significant issues for claimants and Local Authorities
- These included an increase in rent arrears that is likely to lead to a loss in income stream to landlords and the Council and more demand for Council services and support teams
- Members expressed concern at the implications for claimants and landlords of the changes and that they would support a Council motion to request the Government to look again at implementation and assess the results of the trial in the pilot areas and the problems encountered before a full rollout of Universal Credit takes place
- Discussion took place as to the length of time that it took for claimants to receive payment of Universal Credit, in some cases up to 9 weeks and the problems of sanctions being imposed
- In addition, claims for Universal Credit needed to be made on line and some residents would have difficulty with this
- In response to a question as to whether there had been any financial modelling on Islington residents on the results of the introduction of Universal Credit, it was stated that 22000 residents would be on Universal Credit, and of these 48.6% of claimants would be worse off and 29.3% better off
- It was stated that the level of rent arrears could increase significantly as a result of the introduction on Universal Credit
- The Committee noted, that unlike most other Local Authorities, they had protected voluntary sector funding, and had the best funded Law Centre to assist residents

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and the Committee support a motion to Council calling for the introduction of Universal Credit to be halted, in order to assess the problems encountered in the pilot areas, as outlined above

The Committee thanked Councillor Hull and Robbie Rainbird for attending

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm

**CHAIR**