

CRIME & DISORDER OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2015

PRESENT: Councillors David Hilton (Chairman), John Story (Vice-Chairman), Malcolm Alexander (sub for John Bowden), Hashim Bhatti, Hari Sharma and Simon Werner.

Also in attendance: Parish Councillor Spike Humphrey (Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council), Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton (Wraysbury Parish Council), Parish Councillor Pat McDonald (White Waltham Parish Council) and Superintendent Rai (Thames Valley Police).

Officers: Tanya Leftwich, Craig Miller and Simon Fletcher

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed the new Thames Valley Police Superintendent (Bhupinder Rai) to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bowden and Lisa Targowska. It was noted that Councillor Malcolm Alexander was kindly subbing.

It was announced by the Chairman that the meeting was being recorded and that the audio would be published to the RBWM website.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

The Part I minutes of the meeting held on the 27 October 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chairman requested the actions in the minutes be chased up as Members had to date not received the information promised by officers during the last meeting.

NIGHT TIME ECONOMY ENFORCEMENT PILOT REVIEW

The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement Services, Craig Miller, informed Members that the report on pages 15-26 of the agenda was a mid point review of the Night Time Economy (NTE) enforcement pilot approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 26 February 2015. Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to update Cabinet on the pilot. The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement Services explained that it was recommended that the Pilot continued until its scheduled conclusion in December 2015.

Members were informed that the report summarised the progress of the pilot to date and covered five main areas which were:

- background
- performance
- patterns of enforcement
- pilot outcomes
- future options

The Head of Community Protection & Enforcement Services explained that initial findings from the first phase of the pilot suggested a night time economy function was a positive addition to the council's enforcement services. It was noted that to date, more than 100 hours of foot patrols and just over 180 hours of vehicle patrols had been undertaken as part of the pilot resulting in over 300 licensing checks being completed and 135 environmental protection investigations undertaken. Members were informed that anti social behaviour complaints associated with the NTE in the period between July to September 2015 had decreased by 27% compared to the same period in 2014. It was noted that whilst this could not solely be attributed to the NTE pilot it was likely to have been a contributory factor.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- That Cabinet would decide if they wanted to continue the NTE service provision beyond the pilot period utilising permanent Community Wardens resources bolstered by supplementary resource from a wider pool on a voluntary arrangement in February 2016.
- That if continuing with a permanent service was decided then continuity of service was needed.
- That the Mantra and Liquid (now Atik) nightclubs had been closed for a number of weeks during the initial phase of the pilot which may have contributed to the reduction in the number of NTE complaints made to the Council.
- Concerns were raised that there was a risk that an enforced working pattern might affect officer goodwill and morale and could result in some officers discontinuing their employment with the Council. Members stated that whilst they felt the scheme itself resulted in a better quality service which was benefitting residents they did not want the Council to lose valuable members of staff if a contractual change to contracts was made.
- That the pilot had highlighted that the operation of a NTE service drew 28 hours from the normal daytime Community Warden service. It was noted that this represented 4% of the total daytime service hours for the warden service (based on 18 FTE working 37 hours a week) and that this draw could reduce the flexibility and resilience that the daytime service had compared to operation without NTE. Members were informed that this had meant that some requests for warden service could not be fulfilled. It was noted that the operation of a NTE service also meant that service coverage was slightly reduced in the daytime when an area officer was deployed to night time shifts and meant unplanned or more reactive tasks could sometimes stretch resources. However Members were informed that this was managed across the resource that serves the Borough as a whole rather than being concentrated solely from one area.
- That the NTE service was currently resourced by Community Wardens through voluntary agreement.
- Superintendent Rai (Thames Valley Police) stated that the last three weeks since Atik had opened up had been challenging for the Thames Valley Police.
- That Atik had booths and waitress service in the nightclub which might encourage customers to drink more than they realised.
- Superintendent Rai stated that since Liquid nightclub had been rebranded the Thames Valley Police had noticed groups of people coming into Windsor in minibuses to celebrate stag parties, etc.
- That Members felt the report gave the impression that after midnight there was not much for the community wardens to do although there was a peak time later on in the evening. It was requested that this be made clearer in the report.
- That one of the Manifesto commitments was to increase the 18 FTE community wardens to 36.
- It was felt that once the Council had 36 community wardens their portfolio could become broader which would allow them to be more flexible and to be able to address issues where needed.
- That seven hour shifts for the community wardens would be preferred.

- That the powers of community wardens included issuing fixed penalty notices, and parking notices. It was noted that community wardens also brought visibility / a presence to areas and could gather evidence and report back to specific teams.
- That the Head of Community Protection & Enforcement Services attended a debrief on a Tuesday with the Thames Valley Police.
- That the results of the staff consultation be brought to a future Planning & Housing O&S Panel meeting.
- That street angels and taxi marshalls worked with community wardens.
- That a Thames Valley Police 'Section 27' had since changed to a 'Section 35'. It was felt that a 'Section 35' was a powerful tool to get people to move on.
- Superintendent Rai informed Members that the Thames Valley Police planned to work with the businesses community to ensure there were enough businesses in place (e.g. kebab establishments to help keep queues to a minimum).

The Panel endorsed the paper and stated that they looked forward to the end of the pilot to see what had changed between now and then. It was also stated that the Panel looked forward to a review of the working hours with a view / aspiration to reducing them.

It was requested that the 27% reduction figure be broken down for Cabinet Members and the positive outcomes of the service being in place be highlighted. It was requested that Appendix 1 be amended to state 'Eton Wick and Eton'.

UNANIMOUSLY AGREED; The Crime & Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Panel unanimously agreed to recommend to Cabinet the following:

- i. Approves the continuation of the Night Time Economy service until the conclusion of the pilot period in December 2015;**
- ii. Requests that a further report be presented to Cabinet in February 2016 to determine whether the Night Time Economy service is continued as a permanent arrangement including confirmation of the final service configuration if it is to continue;**
- iii. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Operations in conjunction with the Lead Member for Environmental Services and the Head of Service for Community Protection and Enforcement to continue to operate a service if it is deemed a success at the end of the Pilot until Cabinet finalises the service configuration in February 2016.**
- iv. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Operations in conjunction with the Lead Member for Environmental Services to prepare a media statement for release to communicate and promote the permanent Night Time Economy service.**

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

The Strategic Director of Operations, Simon Fletcher, explained that the report proposed a new four-year strategic plan for the Royal Borough. It was noted that the plan set out the Council's vision to make the Royal Borough a great place to live, work, play and do business. Members were informed that the four strategic priorities underpinning the vision were carried through from the Council's previous strategic plan because they remained relevant. The Strategic Director of Operations explained that the four strategic priorities, which staff delivered against daily, were: Residents First, Value for Money, Delivering Together and Equipping Ourselves for the Future.

The Strategic Director of Operations explained that the paper recommended that Cabinet approved the draft plan, attached at Appendix A, and send it to full Council for their consideration on 15 December 2015.

In the ensuing discussion the following points / comments were noted:

- That the Council Strategic Plan was a very important document that allowed the Council to effectively allocate resources and set expectations.
- That the Strategic Director of Operations would welcome Members views on how close the report was to meeting their aspirations.
- Superintendent Rai stated that this was probably the simplest and most straight forward strategic plan she had seen to date.
- Page 2 of the Plan – it was queried whether the Council could deliver ‘Residents will enjoy healthy lifestyles and be supported into old age.’
- Page 2 of the Plan – it was requested that ‘Residents will enjoy vibrant town centres benefitting from Crossrail and other major infrastructure investments while retaining the unique character of our towns, villages and green belt countryside’ be reworked.
- Page 6 of the Plan – that business community resilience be included along with the part the businesses play (r.e. safer communities and improving business economies).
- That an A5 version of the Plan be sent out with the Council Tax document in April.
- Page 6 of the Plan – It was queried what indicated success with regard to ‘Number of families supported by the Intensive Family Support Programme’.
- Page 2 of the Plan – that ‘More residents will have the opportunity to own their own home’ be moved somewhere more appropriate in the document.
- Page 6 of the Plan – be amended to read ‘We will *work* to safeguard our residents’.
- Page 8 of the Plan – that ‘CIL review once increased numbers of residents helped on to the housing ladder’ be reworded.
- Page 9 of the Plan – that a link be added to the transformation programme / Corporate Project tracker.
- Page 6 of the Plan – that the Police be included.
- That ‘partnerships’ were not really mentioned in the document.
- Page 7 of the Plan – The ‘Amount of external funding drawn down’ be reworded.

UNANIMOUSLEY AGREED; The Crime & Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Panel unanimously agreed to recommend to Cabinet the following:

- i. Approve the draft Council Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and recommends it proceed to Council for their consideration on 15 December 2015.**
- ii. Delegate authority to the Managing Director and Leader of the Council in consultation with the Principal Member for Policy to make alterations to the proposed plan ahead of its submission to Council.**

THAMES VALLEY POLICE UPDATE

Superintendent Rai gave Members an update on the Thames Valley Police.

With regard to Priority Based Budgeting it was noted that there would be financial constraints for the next five years or longer which would no doubt result in less resources being available. The Thames Valley Police had looked at what they do, how they do it and how they would fund it. Superintendent Rai explained that it was about risk assessing offences and ensuring they were properly resourced. It was noted that it was about listing down prioritised things that the TVP needed to ensure they had the right resources for and deciding how best to allocate them. Members were informed that people based crime and cyber crime had changed / were emerging. It was noted that the Thames Valley Police had looked at what the demand profile would look like over the next few years.

It was noted that the Thames Valley Police currently dealt with local crime (including serious assaults) at force level. It was noted that Superintendent Rai had volunteered her services to help with work streams in order to ensure they were appropriate for Windsor and Maidenhead and worked for local residents.

Superintendent Rai explained that the changes to the structure aimed to be fairly seamless with no reduction in service externally so that priorities could be made and resources could be moved around as necessary.

Members were informed that the major crime unit would be retained which would allow Superintendent Rai to have the flexibility to concentrate resources on high stress areas.

It was noted that the strapline around finances meant the Thames Valley Police were trying to protect their workforce so they were able to commit to doing the job in hand. Superintendent Rai explained that if a choice had to be made between spending money on a building or keeping the number of frontline staff in place she would always protect her staff.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- Superintendent Rai explained that she would still have a local budget to do partnership work with but that it would probably be smaller than in past years.
- That the local budget could be spent on what Superintendent Rai felt appropriate.
- That residents seemed to currently be bothered by fraud (people phoning or knocking on doors). Superintendent Rai explained that the way the police dealt with fraud had changed over the years and was now done via a filtering process called Action Fraud. It was noted that the Thames Valley Police communicated to residents that the Thames Valley Police were addressing the issue by educating people and by looking at preventative measures / work.
- The Chairman explained that there had also been a spate of identity thefts in areas of the Royal Borough, by stealing post. Superintendent Rai explained that it was about ensuring messages were appropriate and timely to local residents via the alert system. It was noted that the Thames Valley Police needed to look at problem solving in order to reduce repeat offences.
- Superintendent Rai explained that she envisaged having neighbourhood teams that were multi-skilled e.g. having a mental health nurse available if the Police needed a mental health assessment quickly which would avoid unnecessary duplication.
- Superintendent Rai explained that there were no plans to disband PCSO's although she could not promise the same numbers in the future. It was noted that the Council paid for four PCSO's and would continue to do so.
- Superintendent Rai explained that new technology allowed officers to file reports whilst out on duty. It was noted that the Thames Valley Police were always looking for the right technology for the right role that works.
- Superintendent Rai explained that whilst she couldn't say whether there had been a rise in social media crimes she did believe that harassment via social media was an area that needed investment.
- Parish Councillor Mrs Lenton stated that she was glad to hear that the Thames Valley Police were not going to eliminate soft issues because a PCSO speaking to Age Concern helped reduce the chance of the elderly becoming victims of crime. Superintendent Rai stated that vulnerability of the elderly was definitely a key area that needed to be addressed.
- Superintendent Rai explained that she was trying to get the national media on board so that negative messages were not reported in the way that they had been in the past which were felt to have been misleading.

The Chairman requested that Superintendent Rai send the Clerk the latest crime figures so they could be sent out with the minutes.

DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman informed Members that the dates of the next meetings were as follows:

- Monday 18 January 2016.
- Tuesday 12 April 2016.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 8.05 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....