

CRIME & DISORDER OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Derek Sharp (Chairman), Hashim Bhatti, Clive Bullock, Hari Sharma, John Story and Simon Werner

Also in attendance: Councillor David Hilton

Officers: Andy Jeffs, David Scott and Andy Carswell

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Grey and Quick, and from Parish Cllr Margaret Lenton. Cllr Bullock was attending as a substitute.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on October 5th 2017 were unanimously agreed as an accurate record, save for the minute on Cllr Da Costa's question at the Annual Presentation by the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner being amended to:

Councillor Da Costa thanked Thames Valley Police on behalf of residents of Windsor and especially Dedworth for the great work in the last few months. He asked, given the increased level of anxiety amongst Windsorians about the recent spate of serious crimes in Windsor including two dreadful rapes and a murder, what steps are being taken by TVP to reduce the chance of such crime occurring again? Cllr Da Costa also asked whether TVP had any suggestions for RBWM to help reduce crime and to help solve crime more quickly, and whether there were any plans to update TVP's "Thames Valley Alert App" or supplement it to allow citizens to report crime?

The wording had been circulated to Members via email prior to the meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman proposed Cllr Sharma as Vice Chairman. The motion was seconded by Cllr Story and unanimously agreed by Members.

MODERN SLAVERY

Superintendent Bhupinder Rai introduced the item and reminded Members that she had given a presentation on trafficking and slavery to the Panel a year ago. She explained that her latest presentation included a case study example of an operation that had been carried out within the Royal Borough. Supt Rai explained that modern slavery can take many forms, including human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual and criminal exploitation. Victims could become enslaved due to blackmail, debt bondage and cultural and belief differences, in addition to not being allowed to leave a property.

Supt Rai informed the Panel that since November 1 it had been a legal obligation for all public authorities – which included the police and councils – to inform the Home Office when they had encountered a potential victim of modern slavery. It was Thames Valley Police policy to

inform partner agencies when a referral had been made. Supt Rai informed the Panel that great steps had been taken in combatting modern slavery over the last year, and that problem solving was now seen as the policing golden thread as crime investigations had become more complicated over time.

Supt Rai explained one of the major issues affecting the Thames Valley Police area was that of 'county lines', where organised crime gangs would set up their criminal businesses in places where they were not known and where organised gangs did not previously exist. Many of these gangs came from the London area. Supt Rai explained that the county lines gangs were usually large scale drug dealers, and once they had set up their businesses associated crimes such as theft and burglary would usually follow. She explained that the county lines gangs would then look to exploit people during the running of their businesses, such as using children to carry drugs as they were less likely to be stopped by the police.

Supt Rai stated that drug gangs had not traditionally been a major problem in the Thames Valley, and new ways to combat drug problems had been needed. She explained, for example, that while a traditional Section 23 search warrant of a property would often lead to an arrest of an individual, it did little to combat the organised crime element associated with drugs. Supt Rai explained that Partial Closure Orders, which prevented anybody other than the occupier from entering the property, were being used to great effect. She explained county lines gangs would often take over a property as part of a drug operation, and use of Partial Closure Orders had led to the arrests of many gang members for being in breach of the Order. A Full Closure Order would not be sought unless the occupier was criminally involved, as the properties involved usually belonged to local authorities and/or housing associations and closing them would place an additional burden on the demand for such housing. Supt Rai stated that HMIC had said Thames Valley Police used Closure Orders to great effect. Over the past year nine Partial Closure Orders and one Full Closure Order had been implemented.

In terms of partnerships, police had established links with the DAAT team at the Council and the Rehab charity. Victims would also be referred to the National Referral Mechanism; however Supt Rai explained that this would only be successful if the victim chose to engage. She also stated that the NRM did not apply to child victims, who would be referred instead to their local authority. In the past year three victims had been referred to the NRM and three organised crime gangs had been disrupted. Supt Rai stated that the Royal Borough was the only policing borough in the Thames Valley Police area that had seen a reduction in burglary, which she attributed to the work that had gone in to tackling organised crime gangs. Supt Rai stated that Councillors and members of the press had been invited to attend the servings of warrants in order to raise publicity and help residents to understand what was happening in terms of policing in the Royal Borough.

The Chairman asked if there were particular signs members of the public should look for if they were suspicious that somebody was the victim of modern slavery, or anything that would alert police to the possibility it was occurring. Supt Rai said unusual crime patterns – such as an increase in offences of violence – would be something that police officers would notice. She said that anything out of the ordinary, such as a sudden unexplained increase in the number of people visiting a certain property, should be reported to the police. The Chairman asked if there was a national hotline that instances of modern slavery could be reported to. Supt Rai said there was not, but that suspicions could be reported to Crimestoppers.

Responding to a question from Cllr Werner, Supt Rai stated that it was a difficult balancing act dealing with low level drug users who had possibly been exploited while investigating an organised gang, as they had committed criminal offences in using and/or possessing drugs whilst being victims of the gangs. Supt Rai said that disrupting the organised gangs was the police's priority.

Parish Cllr MacDonald asked if there were any examples of modern slavery and exploitation through cults and/or travellers. Supt Rai said there were no examples of this within the Royal

Borough, but there had been in parts of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. She added that modern slavery was not restricted to certain groups.

The Vice Chairman asked if there were any examples of how police would engage with different local communities. Supt Rai stated that one to one engagement with residents was seen as the most effective way of ensuring engagements with communities.

The Chairman and the Panel Members thanked Supt Rai for her presentation, which the Panel had found very helpful and informative on the issue of modern slavery in our Borough.

PREVENT

The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships informed Members that he would be attending a meeting of the national Channel Panel Chairs the following day and would be in a position to provide a fuller update after this briefing. It was therefore agreed to defer the item to the next Panel.

BUDGET PREPARATION 2018/19

The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships introduced the item and explained that the Budget Preparation paper was being brought to Overview and Scrutiny two months earlier than usual in order to set a budget in challenging financial circumstances; however, more details on the budget would be available in the new year. He explained that this was the first time that a Budget Preparation paper had been brought to the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships explained that an overall efficiency saving of £4.1million had been identified; of most relevance to the Panel was the saving of £202,000 which had come from the optimisation of the expected upgrade of CCTV. The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships informed Members that £1.3million had been brought forward from the Capital Programme in order to fund the CCTV network upgrade, and that this figure had already been through the Cabinet cycle and agreed. Members were informed that a basic Council Tax increase had been proposed, as had a three per cent increase on the Adult Social Care levy.

The Vice Chairman asked about funding of the permanent Hostile Mitigation Factors in Windsor, noting that the current mitigation was temporary. He also noted that a budget of £1.8million had been agreed in principle for this project, of which half would be paid for by Thames Valley Police. The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships reminded Members that the National Barrier Asset had been deployed as a temporary measure in response to the Westminster terrorist attack in March. Since then the Council had, along with Thames Valley Police, looked into what integrated mitigation factors were needed, especially when the historic setting and conservation issues were taken into consideration. The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships said the permanent structures were being developed with the specialists who had installed the temporary Hostile Mitigation Factors, and this was being managed by a project group. A proposed scheme had recently been submitted; however Members were reminded that before it could be fully implemented it would need to be considered for possible planning consent and conservation approvals. Members were informed that other factors, such as when they would be implemented and where, and the impact on the flow of traffic through Windsor when they were deployed, were also being taken into consideration. It was hoped that identifying strategic locations for the mitigation factors would minimise disruption to traffic and residents.

The Chairman asked if the specification for the upgraded CCTV system had been agreed in writing with Thames Valley Police, in order for funding to be obtained. The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships informed Members that Craig Miller had previously written to TVP to confirm that the Council was developing specifications that would allow TVP to use the system in line with their own arrangements. These would be discussed

again at a meeting on December 7th. The Chairman asked to be kept updated on any developments regarding the specifications as he intended to raise it at the next PCC Panel in the New Year if no progress had been made.

Parish Cllr MacDonald queried the £1.8million being set aside for spending on the mitigation factors in Windsor, noting that it was higher than the proposed budget for the installation of the new CCTV system for the whole of the Royal Borough. The Head of Communities, Enforcement and Partnerships reminded Members that the Council would have to pay half of the net cost, with contributions being made by other bodies. Initial assessments had identified the proposed budget was the right amount to spend on the required security mitigation factors with funding from partners.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

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

- Wednesday 7th February 2018
- Monday 16th April 2018

The Chairman invited Members to raise any other issues that had not already been covered in the meeting. Cllr Werner stated that he was concerned that there was no evidence of the doubling of the number of Community Wardens by April 2019, and asked for a report on the progress on this matter at the next Panel. The Chairman stated he would look into having an agenda item on this issue at the next meeting.

Cllr Hilton suggested that the minutes of the Community Safety Partnership, which he was Chairman of, could be considered at a future Panel meeting. He also suggested that the latest CSP Action Plan could be considered by the Panel. Cllr Hilton informed Members that the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Fire Service and Health team all attended the meetings. Cllr Hilton informed Members that the previous grant funding system for the CSP had recently changed, with ten per cent of the figure being taken by the Police and Crime Commissioner and groups wishing to apply for a share of the funding needed to submit full proposals that included costings and outcomes. There was £22,000 remaining for groups to apply for in the remaining year.

The Chairman agreed for the CSP Action Plan to be circulated amongst Members via email.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.23 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....