

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY
ORGANISATIONS
9 DECEMBER 2015

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Edith Macauley (in the Chair),
Councillor Fidelis Gadzama, Councillor Abdul Latif,
Councillor Marsie Skeete and Councillor Charlie Chirico

Rev Mrs H Neale, Mr Sheikh, Mr Rizvi, Mr Savage, Mr Anwar,
Mr Huq, Mr Islam, Mr Rahman, Evereth Willis, Paul Bailey, Chief
Inspector Mark Lawrence

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

None.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Sheikh and Mrs Ahmed.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed.

4 MERTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (MSCB) - PAUL BAILEY,
MSCB MANAGER (Agenda Item 4)

Paul Bailey the MSCB Manager gave an overview of the work of the board. A strategic priority of the board is to engage with Faith and Belief and the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

The objective of the MSCB are:

1. To coordinate the work of organisations around safeguarding the welfare of children
2. Providing quality assurance

The board also provides:

1. Free online training for voluntary organisations
2. Policy development – offer of advice and support to ensure that organisations and groups have policies in place that are fully compliant with relevant legislation regarding safeguarding.

There is a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) available to support organisations.

Paul informed the meeting that the MSCB wants to develop an effective partnership approach and encourage more involvement from voluntary and community groups. This will help the board to better understand the needs and concerns that communities have.

The Children's Act defines children as being aged 0-18 years. Distinctions are made between 0-11 years and 12-18 years.

5 CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX - HAYLEY JAMES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MERTON AND LAMBETH CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX (Agenda Item 5)

Ms James was unable to attend and the item was deferred to a future meeting.

6 POLICE UPDATE - CHIEF INSPECTOR MARK LAWRENCE (Agenda Item
6)

Chief Inspector Mark Lawrence presented the crime update, a key issue for the Police at present is counter terrorism and Prevent. He informed the media that the MPS remains at a threat level of 'severe'. There is no intelligence to suggest that the threat is increased locally but the police remain on high alert after the Paris attacks.

CI Lawrence gave an overview of Prevent and gave examples of possible ways that people may become radicalised, eg:

1. through being encouraged
2. Being directed
3. Inspired through various forms of media

He said that the Police look to communities to pay attention and be aware of individuals. Schools are getting WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training. He added that there is no community tension in Merton at the moment.

CI Lawrence updated the meeting on the murder that occurred on 23 November in Mitcham. There was a violent attack involving rival Tamil gangs. The investigations are on-going and an arrest has been made.

The Metropolitan Police received good news from the Comprehensive Spending Review because funding will not be reduced. However, £200 million still has to be found.

Crime overall is up compared to the previous twelve months. There are plans to counter burglaries – there are 40 less this year than last year. There is concern for theft of motor vehicle – mopeds and domestic violence is on the increase.

The MOPAC 7 target for reducing key crime types by 20% by 31 March 2016 is well on track and currently the reduction is sitting at 22.3% against the 2011/2012 baseline.

In terms of confidence, 76% of people are happy with policing. People in Merton feel less informed about what the police is doing. A communications plan is being developed.

Knife crime has increased across London and there is a targeted approach to Stop and Search.

A representative informed the meeting that he has recently been racially abused. CI Lawrence replied that over the last 12 months there has been 20 reports of Islamophobic crimes. The crimes included; Islamophobic graffiti, scarf pulling and Inter Faith.

CI Lawrence was asked whether improvements to the MOPAC 7 crimes were being achieved at the expense of other crime types? He replied that the MOPAC 7 was a priority but other crime types also have to be investigated.

Question – Public confidence is higher in other areas – what are they doing differently to us? CI Lawrence replied that the average is 67% for London, Kensington and Chelsea is 80% (they have poorer performance). None of the boroughs are doing really well. Haringey and Croydon have low confidence levels. Question – How can we educate people to prevent them being radicalised? CI Lawrence replied that schools and professionals use a programme called Channel) to support vulnerable people. It is important to work with faith communities, we need to encourage people to educate themselves.

There was a reference to the fire at the Baitul Futuh mosque and the point was made that the Police should be quick to inform the public that it was not Islamophobic. CI Lawrence replied that the Police tried to put out information into the media. The challenge is reaching the wider community. The investigation is on-going so no further comment can be made, other than it is not a hate crime.

Question – Will the PCSOs be visible? CI Lawrence replied that there are still cuts to be made and it is not yet know how much funds are available locally.

There was a question about why the confidence levels are higher for white respondents compared to black respondents. CI Lawrence replied that satisfaction in user satisfaction is being looked at further to identify the reason for the differentials.

Domestic Violence – there has been 50 crimes, the victims and perpetrators are all white. Black and Mixed recorded equal figures and Asian the lowest. The perpetrators are from a White British or Eastern European background. There is possible DV in the Asian community but it is under reported.

7 VICTIM SUPPORT - ANTON MORGAN-THORNE (Agenda Item 7)

Unfortunately Anton Morgan-Thorne was unable to attend. Evereth gave an overview of the work of Victim Support which is no longer based in Merton. She encourages people to volunteer for VS.

8 FEED BACK FROM THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD - ABAYEH SAVAGE (Agenda Item 8)

Abayeh Savage gave an update on the Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB), he said that it felt safer than a few years ago, especially in Mitcham. He encouraged people to report crime that they see.

Councillor Macauley assured the meeting that DV cases are getting through at court.

There was a question about how many DV cases result in successful conviction? Cllr Macauley replied that cases are heard regardless of whether the victims are at court or want the case withdrawn. The case is heard in their absence.

CI Lawrence said it is difficult to keep people engaged and victims that change their minds need the support not to drop the case.

9 BAME VOICE UPDATE - EVERETH WILLIS, INTERIM HEAD OF POLICY, STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS (Agenda Item 9)

Evereth updated the meeting by announcing that Hannah Neale is the Chair of BAME Voice and Slawek Szczepanski is the Vice-Chair. The organisation will be launched on 4 February 2016 at Vestry Hall.

JCC representatives were encouraged to bring their communities with them to the event. Hannah was applauded for her commitment to BAME Voice and Evereth was commended for supporting the development of BAME Voice.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item)

None.