

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 11 September 2019

Subject: Crime and policing in Merton

Lead officer: Chief Superintendent Sally Benatar, BCU Commander

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission

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Recommendations:

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discuss and comment on the responses to its questions (see Appendix A) and the crime data provided by the Borough Commander (see Appendix B) and ask other questions as appropriate.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commander, Chief Superintendent Sally Benatar, has been invited to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting to give a brief overview of any changes since she attended previously in April 2019 and to address the questions identified by Commission members in section 2 below. Her responses are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.2. She was also requested to provide crime data in the same format as that provided previously. This is set out in Appendix B.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The BCU Commander has been asked to provide an overview of any changes since the last meeting and anything she wished to draw to the Commission's attention.
- 2.2. Commission members also identified a number of questions they would like to discuss with the BCU Commander. These were emailed in advance of the meeting so that the BCU Commander could prepare her answers. The questions and answers are set out in full in Appendix A. The questions are:
1. Please provide an update on the planned reorganisation of the real estate under your command; and
 - a) detail the process used in deciding the above
 - b) provide the evidence used in detailing the above
 - c) state what impact you think the reorganisation will have on response times in Merton
 - d) describe the rationale and evidence used in concluding the above.

2. What communication has the BCU Commander had with the Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime (or any other member of MOPAC) in connection with future plans for Wimbledon and/or Mitcham police stations?
3. Will the government's planned increase in Police numbers lead to a change in the estate management strategy and could this mean that Wimbledon Police station will remain open?
4. If the government does provide 20 000 more police officers, what numbers would the BC hope to have for our area and how would she deploy them?
5. How do the response times to both reports made through 999 and 101 in Merton compare to the other boroughs within the BCU?
6. How do you measure the effectiveness of neighbourhood police teams? And if they are falling below those standards, what action is taken to make improvements?
7. What can be done to tackle anti-social behaviour before it escalates?
8. What do you think your officers in Merton should be focusing on and what are the goals you have set them?
9. What is the Borough Commander doing with her force to deal with low level ASB which is causing local residents concern and making them feel unsafe? (such as motor bike taking and driving, graffiti in local parks and groups of youngsters gathering riding bikes on road in residential areas).
10. Please provide figures on the number and nature of crimes reported that can be attributed to the Eastern Electrics festival on 3rd & 4th August this year, and the number of arrests made and charges brought. Please provide comparable figures for last year's Eastern Electrics festival.
11. What could the police have done better to avoid the stabbings at the EE festival in Morden Park?
12. What is the ongoing strategy for knife prevention locally and are there Gang influences starting to take hold in the Borough?
13. Post the Wimbledon Burglar (WB) what are the Police doing to do raise awareness that just because the WB has been caught residents should not become complacent in case of new targeting?

2.3. The BCU Commander's responses to these questions are set out in Appendix A.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Commission members may choose to ask questions about other aspects of policing in Merton.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. Not applicable.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. Not applicable.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no property or resource implications at this time.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix A – BCU Commander’s response to questions posed by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Appendix B – crime data for Merton and surrounding boroughs

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

Appendix A Questions and answers from the BCU Commander

1. Please provide an update on the planned reorganisation of the real estate under your command; and
 - a) detail the process used in deciding the above
 - b) provide the evidence used in detailing the above
 - c) state what impact you think the reorganisation will have on response times in Merton
 - d) describe the rationale and evidence used in concluding the above.

Answer – see response to Question 3 below

2. What communication has the BCU Commander had with the Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime (or any other member of MOPAC) in connection with future plans for Wimbledon and/or Mitcham police stations?

Answer - I have regular contact with Andrew Davis from MOPAC with regard to the estates strategy.

3. Will the government's planned increase in Police numbers lead to a change in the estate management strategy and could this mean that Wimbledon Police station will remain open?

Answer - Answers to Question 1a), 1b), 1c), 1d), 1e) and 3 are all covered by the following answer:

In the light of the Prime Minister's promise of an extra 20,000 police officers across the UK, the Metropolitan Police and MOPAC are reviewing their estate strategy. The exact impact will depend upon the allocation of the additional officers that the MPS receives and the subsequent operational allocation of that uplift to different types of police services in different locations within the service; both these aspects could impact the exact requirements for the size of the estate.

4. If the government does provide 20 000 more police officers, what numbers would the BC hope to have for our area and how would she deploy them?

Answer - We don't yet know the numbers of additional officers that will be coming to the Metropolitan Police. The Met is represented on the National Policing Board that has been set up to oversee the uplift, and is also working internally to get ready, both through strategic planning and logistical arrangements. The Commissioner has said publicly that the Met aims to gain about 6000 of the 20000. I hope that a significant number would come to local policing and the twelve Basic Command Units (BCUs), including South West. I think that all five strands of the BCU require more officers (Response Policing, Neighbourhoods Policing, Safeguarding (rape and serious sexual offences, child protection, domestic abuse, hate crime, mental health liaison & multi-agency work with partners), CID including gangs and proactive plus the HQ function that is the glue that binds the five strands together and includes professional standards, Operations Room, criminal justice team, Local Resolution Team. I

anticipate there will be some central steer on where the additional officers on BCUs will be posted as well as a degree of local scope for me as BCU Commander, to best meet the needs of the South West London boroughs.

5. How do the response times to both reports made through 999 and 101 in Merton compare to the other boroughs within the BCU?

Answer - The table below shows the percentage of “Immediate” graded calls (emergency calls that we aim to attend within 15 minutes – there is no distinction between calls to 999 or 101, both can be graded as Immediate) that we attended within 15 minutes. The August figures are not yet available.

	May	June	July
Merton	81%	82%	81%
Kingston	78%	80%	76%
Richmond	85%	83%	81%
Wandsworth	84%	83%	81%

6. How do you measure the effectiveness of neighbourhood police teams? And if they are falling below those standards, what action is taken to make improvements?

Answer - Assurance and governance of local neighbourhood policing teams is delegated to the neighbourhood strand superintendent. Effectiveness is assessed across a range of quantitative and qualitative measures set locally by the BCU Commander and centrally for the Met by the Commander for neighbourhoods. Weekly and monthly performance conversations are held within the strand and a monthly local Performance Review is chaired by the BCU Commander. South West BCU ensure that we perform against Key Performance Indicators and the cross strand delivery of these. Actions to address performance are managed through this meeting structure.

Performance is also managed through working in partnership to intervene early, reduce demand and engage with vulnerable individuals. Ward, Schools, Youth Engagement, Integrated Offender Management and Youth Offending Teams all contribute to this. The key performance measurement of the partnership in Merton is discharged through the Safer Stronger Merton Executive, Youth Offending Board, and Youth Crime Prevention Board. The key performance contribution within these areas is to reduce reactive demand.

7. What can be done to tackle anti-social behaviour before it escalates?

Answer - This is answered in the paper to be presented by the Head of Community Safety, titled ASB, Knife crime and Street Drinking – the challenges, successes and future work streams

8. What do you think your officers in Merton should be focusing on and what are the goals you have set them?

Answer - The Met's seven year strategy "Met Direction" provides the framework for me to set local goals. The Met's operational priorities are:

- Focus on what matters to Londoners – violence tops the public's concerns and tackling it is our top priority. This includes terrorism, knife and gun crime, sexual offending, domestic abuse and safeguarding vulnerable people from predatory behaviour.
- Work more closely with partners and the public
- Achieve the best outcomes in the pursuit of justice and in the support of victims.

On the South West BCU, I have set five Key Performance Indicators to measure progress and focus efforts, although of course we measure a wider range of operational performance indicators both on our own and in partnership with Safer Merton; these include the local crime priorities set by Merton Council.

These are the five Key Performance Indicators for the BCU:

- Stop and search – increase the amount we are doing
- Emergency response – get there safely and as quickly as possible
- Wanted offenders and outstanding suspects – reduce the overall number
- Domestic abuse – increase the arrest rate
- Robberies – solve more

9 What is the Borough Commander doing with her force to deal with low level ASB which is causing local residents concern and making them feel unsafe? (such as motor bike taking and driving, graffiti in local parks and groups of youngsters gathering riding bikes on road in residential areas).

Answer - This is answered in the paper to be presented by the Head of Community Safety, titled ASB, Knife crime and Street Drinking – the challenges, successes and future work streams.

10. Please provide figures on the number and nature of crimes reported that can be attributed to the Eastern Electrics festival on 3rd & 4th August this year, and the number of arrests made and charges brought. Please provide comparable figures for last year's Eastern Electrics festival.

Answer -

In 2017 at EE there were 5 recorded reports of anti-social behaviour and 1 report of sexual assault by touching.

In 2018 at EE there were 7 recorded reports of anti-social behaviour on police indices, 1 report of common assault, 4 of theft, 1 of possession of drugs and 3 of possession with intent to supply drugs.

In 2019 there were 35 recorded crimes over the two days and 297 Stop and Searches carried out by police. Details of the 35 crimes recorded were as follows:

Possession of drugs with intent to supply x 8, possession of drugs x 17, stabbing x 3, robbery x 4 (including a GBH), assault on police x 2, public order offence x 1.

11. What could the police have done better to avoid the stabbings at the EE festival in Morden Park?

Answer - Whilst the benefit of hindsight provides greater information, the policing plan was commensurate with the intelligence picture prior to the event.

The learning from the event continues and the police will consider an appropriate response to any future application. Inspector Whitehead the Merton Neighbourhood Inspector is leading discussions at this stage but I'm not going to comment further on matters as that may then impact upon possible future legal proceedings.

12. What is the ongoing strategy for knife prevention locally and are there Gang influences starting to take hold in the Borough?

Answer - This is answered in the paper to be presented by the Head of Community Safety. The knife crime strategy is a community safety partnership (Safer Merton) priority.

13. Post the Wimbledon Burglar (WB) what are the Police doing to do raise awareness that just because the WB has been caught residents should not become complacent in case of new targeting?

Answer - We have raised this point at a number of meetings after Astrit Kapaj was detained and the Dedicated Ward Officers continue to work extremely hard with residents and the Neighbourhood Watch to stress that he was not the only burglar to target Wimbledon. Whilst there has been a small year on year rise in burglaries over the last 12 months, the last few months have seen low numbers. Our Proactive team, Burglary and Robbery Investigation Team (BRIT) and the Dedicated Ward Officers continue to work extremely hard to protect residents and identify and prosecute offenders when possible.

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