

Agenda Item 3

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

7 SEPTEMBER 2022

(7.15 pm - 9.30 pm)

PRESENT: Councillor Edward Foley (in the Chair), Councillor Michael Brunt, Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Councillor Billy Hayes, Councillor Gill Manly, Councillor Nick McLean, Councillor Stuart Neaverson, Councillor Tony Reiss, Mansoor Ahmad, Cruise, Dr Stannard and Roz Cordner

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Councillor Martin Whelton, Councillor John Oliver, Keith Burns (Head of Commissioning and Market Development), Zoe Gallen, Louise Round (Interim Executive Director of Innovation and Change) and Katy Saunders (Safer Merton Business Support)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Usaama Kaweesa (Cllr Martin Whelton as substitute) and Cllr Paul Kohler (Cllr John Oliver as substitute).

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

However, Cllr Mike Brunt will abstain from voting on item 9 (as a Chair of CHAS).

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

Prior to the meeting, the Chair received an email from Cllr Paul Kohler requesting amendments to the minutes

Page 2 - First paragraph: On further questioning Cllr Ross Garrod confirmed a blueprint would be circulated within 12 months and this timeframe should be included in the minutes. The Panel RESOLVED to agree this addition.

Members of the Commission discussed Cllr Kohler's request that the minutes be expanded upon with regards to the AELTC, however Members agreed to leave as is, as the essence of that discussion is mentioned.

Lastly redacted minutes are available to Councillors on this Panel but we are aware there have been some difficulties with access on Modern Gov and this is being looked into.

The minutes were agreed.

4 BCU COMMANDER: CRIME AND POLICING IN MERTON (Agenda Item 4)

The Chair invited Chief Superintendent Lis Chapple to give a brief opening statement.

The Chief Superintendent requested to put on record her thanks to the people in this room, and to other partners, for the incredible and compassionate partnership work over the very sad incident that occurred in Galpins Road. It's been a time of significant difficulty for the families involved and I know a lot of the officers and Members in the room have given a lot of personal time to this issue. We continue to pursue our investigation on the matter.

The Metropolitan Police are now formally in special measures, as are several other forces nationally. I am in regular dialogue with the chief executives, including Hannah Doody, about our plans and how we'll be dealing with this.

We have a new Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, who starts on Monday and will be doing some press to set out what he hopes to achieve in his 100-day plan. We do know neighbourhood policing will be heavily prioritised.

In response to questions from Commission Members:

Neighbourhood crimes are burglary, anti-social behaviour, theft of motor vehicles and theft from motor vehicles. We have a combined burglary and robbery team as that's how resources across all BCU's are set up. Now because of the spike in robbery, from Monday, we will have split that team into separate robbery and burglary teams and I'm really hoping that that will help improve the focus and outcomes.

Across the whole BCU we do have the highest reductions of burglary in the Met so most other BCU's are showing a very small reduction or even a small gain, but we have overall the best rates for reducing burglary.

Regarding the issues raised at a public meeting in relation to how people's properties had been accessed in Galpin's Road, Cllr Whelton asked the Chief Superintendent whether she would be willing to attend one of the public meetings in Pollards Hill to help build trust with the community. The Chief Superintendent confirmed she is very happy to attend community meetings if that is needed.

The Ride-along Scheme is still in operation. Councillors can complete a short application form here:

Link to Ride-along scheme (currently working)

<https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/st-s/stop-and-search/ras/met/ride-along-scheme/>

The BCU is divided into two from a response policing perspective - we have two response bases.

- Twickenham - serves Kingston and Richmond
- Wimbledon – serves Merton and Wandsworth

Following the meeting, the Chief Superintendent supplied the information requested by Members below.

Neighbourhood officer vacancies

Wards with vacancies:

- Abbey - 1 PC instead of 2 as 1 PC is acting up as an Acting/PS
- Cricket Green - PCSO leaving to become PC
- Ravensbury - 1 PC has moved to Merton Park
- Village - 1 PC instead of 2 as 1 PC is acting up as an Acting/PS
- Merton Park - PCSO leaving for another role in the Met

Total Officers/PCSO's:

- 37 DWO's (3 under strength)
- 18 PCSO's (2 under strength)

There are 6 Sergeants, 2 are temporary in the role and the others are Substantive

Safer Schools Officers

The number of schools officers that Southwest BCU is allocates is 4 PS and 39PCs. There is currently 1 PC vacancy across the BCU which is at Kingston In the next few months we have the following leaving:

- 1 PS leaving on promotion
- 2 PCs leaving on promotion
- 1 PC moving to Heathrow
- 2 PCs retiring
- 1 PC resigned

Adverts have been put out and we have interested parties.

Sanction detection definition

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/191822/detection-open-data-notes.pdf

The Chair thanked the Chief Superintendent for attending.

5 SAFER MERTON: VAWG STRATEGY (Agenda Item 5)

The item was introduced by Katy Saunders (Interim Community Safety Team Manager), who provided an update on the work on the violence against women and girls agenda and the VAWG strategy which will cover 2022-25.

Merton Council plans to obtain white ribbon accreditation, which will demonstrate our commitment to engaging with men and boys to end violence against women and girls. We are currently working to recruit white ribbon ambassadors to help lead on

this work and we aim to launch the new strategy in November, during the 16 days against domestic violence and abuse campaign. During this year's campaign we plan to link in with a local partner AFC Wimbledon to send a clear message that men and boys in Merton want to be part of the change to promote equality and respect of women and girls and encourage the harassment of women to be called out.

In response to Commission Member questions,

- Our refuge provision has 17 beds for women that are fleeing domestic abuse. Of the 17 rooms/units - some are set up for women with children and some are set up for single women.
- Majority of reports are Domestic Violence based. Other classifications include forced marriages, honour-based violence, FGM and sexual violence.
- Sanction detection rates roughly around 15% for DV.
- Rape 6.3% (the conviction rate for rape nationally is extremely low - less than 1%).
- Domestic abuse cases are very complex, and investigations can take a very long time.
- The walk and talk initiative is still ongoing - female officers agreeing to meet with female members of the public to visit areas where women have indicated they feel less safe. Following this visit, we work with the Council and others to look at whether a lighting solution is needed etc.

Community Safety Manager happy to share the specific domestic violence profile produced by our data analysts.

6 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (Agenda Item 6)

The item was introduced by Alun Goode (Interim Head of Community Safety) and Katy Saunders (Interim Community Safety Team Manager).

Public spaces protection orders are one of a range of measures introduced by the anti-social behaviour crime and policing act 2014 to combat anti-social behaviour and its impact on individuals and the communities. A PSPO identifies a public space and prohibits certain activities within that area and a breach of a PSPO is a criminal offence.

In October 2020 the Council implemented a PSPO to address alcohol related ASB in the following five wards: Cricket green, Figges Marsh, Graveney, Lavender Fields and Ravensbury.

The current PSPO expires in October 2022 and from gathering evidence from our partners, and the results of the latest public consultation, we believe there is a case to extend the current PSPO for a further three years.

We also propose that work begins to consult on applying for a borough wide PSPO in future and this is with the aim of making Merton a responsible drinking borough and will help to ensure our public spaces, such as our parks, open spaces and town centres are places for everyone to enjoy safely.

In response to questions:

One of the reasons for looking at the borough wide consultation is because we are receiving complaints from residents in other parts of the borough, which indicates the problem is not confined to those five awards alone.

Cllr Martin Whelton would welcome an extension to Pollards Hill and borough wide.

There were six FPN's issued in the last financial year and in 2022 so far there's been two FPN's issued.

We've tasked the Kingdom officers over the past few weeks to attend Mitcham town centre daily. Last week they engaged with 21 street drinkers and in addition they handed out 16 leaflets to residents explaining what the PSPO is. It has also been explained to the Kingdom officers that they do need to offer the support information before going to the step of issuing an FPN.

7 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 (Agenda Item 7)

A Commission Member commented that the report didn't contain enough information. The Scrutiny Officer explained that the report has been streamlined in comparison to its previous format to make it a bit more accessible, particularly for residents.

Other Members felt that the report has been presented in a professional manner and provides information about successes as well as the work of each Panel.

Cllr Whelton paid tribute to the work of the previous Chair of the Commission, Councillor Peter Southgate, who deserves rightful recognition of what he achieved over his 16 years.

A Member noted that reports like this evolve over time. Change was brought about to this report because of feedback that happened in the past. Therefore, as newcomers to scrutiny, we must go with the flow and develop things over time in the same way.

8 MEMBER SURVEY 2021/22 (Agenda Item 8)

Members discussed the low return rate of the survey.

It was around the time of the election that the information was being collected, with members leaving the council/stepping down.

The Chair reminded Members there is a collective responsibility to participate, as well as a personal responsibility, and we do need a higher return rate next year.

9 OSC WORKING GROUP FEEDBACK (CHAS) (Agenda Item 9)

The Chair invited Louise Round to speak on the report.

Whilst this item is on the forward plan for Cabinet on 19 September, this may be moved. It was decided that the final report would be agreed offline as some further information and amendments were still required.

10 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)

The work programme was agreed.