

PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 7 September 2021

Present:

Councillor David Cartwright QFSM (Chairman)
Colin Hitchins (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Julian Benington,
Kim Botting FRSA, Mike Botting, Hannah Gray,
Alexa Michael and Chris Pierce

Sharon Baldwin, Dr Robert Hadley and Oscar Seal

Also Present:7

Councillor Angela Page

STANDARD ITEMS

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Alf Kennedy, Jacob Eysers, Superintendent Andy Brittain and Chief Inspector Craig Knight.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON JUNE 22nd 2021

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting of the Public Protection and Enforcement PDS Committee held on June 22nd 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on June 22nd 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

19 QUESTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER OR CHAIRMAN

No questions were received.

20 MATTERS OUTSTANDING

CSD 21089

Members noted that the matter relating to 'footpath 136' was ongoing. The Director for Environment and Community Services promised to investigate this further and to report back to the relevant Member and the rest of the Committee.

Members noted the update with respect to traffic policing. The Chairman expressed his concern with the response that had been received from MOPAC when this matter was raised with them previously. The Chairman requested that the Portfolio Holder go back to MOPAC and ask again for the implementation of more traffic policing in Bromley. The Chairman understood that some 3000 people per year in the UK were killed as a result of poor driving and considered this 'high harm'.

A Member raised the issue concerning the use of motorised scooters, mopeds and quad bikes in the borough. She felt that more action was required to curb their usage.

The Committee noted that the update with respect to the police hotspot strategy was still outstanding.

An update was received with respect to minute 12 which was the proposed meeting between the Chairman, Portfolio Holder and the Assistant Director to discuss how scrutiny of the Safer Bromley Partnership should be undertaken going forward. It was noted that the meeting was planned for the following week.

An explanation was provided concerning the 'Challenge 25' policy.

It was noted that Chief Inspector Craig Knight had disseminated the requested update regarding the 101 service. The Chairman said that he would like to have more understanding concerning the volume of calls that were discontinued because people were waiting a long time in a queue to be answered. He felt that this was an issue that still needed to be monitored.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) An update should be provided from the Director concerning the outstanding matter of 'footpath 136'.**
- 2) The Portfolio Holder should continue to raise the matter of traffic policing in Bromley with MOPAC.**
- 3) The Committee should (in due course) receive an update from the police with respect to the police's 'hotspot strategy'.**
- 4) The Committee should continue to monitor the performance of the 101 service and if possible, data should be provided concerning the number of calls that were discontinued.**

21 POLICE UPDATE

The police had sent their apologies on this occasion because they were dealing with various protests in London, in particular with regards to Extinction Rebellion.

The Chairman expressed concern that much information was being provided by the police which in fact may be of little value with respect to this Committee's role in scrutiny. He expressed the view that what was required was the setting up of a small task and finish group to look into what information was actually required for the Committee to fulfil its role, without causing significant extra unnecessary work for the police. It was important to clearly identify what the police should be reporting on.

It was noted that various police systems existed for identifying and extracting information, which made it difficult for the police in terms of collecting data to present to the Committee. In terms of the task and finish group, the Chairman hoped the police might agree to sit on the group, he also wanted the Vice Chairman of the PDS Committee to chair the task and finish group which should be 'cross-party'.

A Member stated that what was required was to clarify the terms of reference that the police would operate under in respect to the scrutiny committee. The Chairman made it clear that he did not want to ask the police for information that was not really required; he wanted to streamline the process.

A Member suggested that when the police attended the Committee, they should report on a particular theme. The Chairman said that this approach had been trialled some years ago but was not particularly successful; going forward it would be the remit of the task and finish group to consider what should be scrutinised by the PDS Committee.

A Member stated that she found the current briefings useful and reiterated the view that the thematic approach had not worked.

A Co-opted member pointed out that police resources were tight and it was the case that new engagement panels were planned that would further stretch limited police resources. This being the case, it was important for the PDS Committee to scrutinise issues that were relevant and would make a difference.

A Member cautioned that it was possible to 'create' hotspots by making more arrests. The Chairman replied that hotspots had been identified in Penge, the Crays and Mottingham, but that it was important to clarify what was meant by 'hotspots'.

A Member thanked the police for the excellent policing work that had been undertaken in the Crays with respect to drugs, where lots of arrests had been made.

The police had said that they would be issuing PCNs with respect to aggressive beggars in the borough. Members noted that the same problematic beggar was still operating in the Penge area.

A Member expressed the view that the last Community Impact Day in the Penge area was not successful and was not in reality an Impact Day at all. It was the case that when the police arrived they were directed straight to Betts Park. There was no briefing for the police officers to instruct them where to go. A weapons sweep was conducted, but again this was limited to Betts Park. The point the Member was making that what occurred (in her view) was more some sort of youth related activity within Betts Park and was not a proper Community Impact Day. The community felt somewhat cheated; she hoped that this was not just a 'tick box' exercise to say that the full Community Impact Day had taken place when in fact this was not the case. She hoped that measures would be taken to avoid a similar scenario arising in the future. The Chairman said that the Director would look into what happened on that occasion.

A Member referred back to the issue of beggars and stated that there was still one at Bromley South on a Saturday evening and there were still beggars on trains and bus stops. The Chairman said that the number for British Transport Police was publicised on trains and buses, and that they responded swiftly to reported incidents. It was suggested that BTP be invited to speak to the Committee.

The Committee expressed concern around the dangers posed by motorised scooters. They were dangerous because they were fast and silent. This was a matter that the Chairman wished to take up with the police. It was felt that in some cases their use could prove deadly.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) A Task and Finish Group be set up and chaired by the Vice Chairman of the PDS Committee, Councillor Colin Hitchins. Councillor Kathy Bance and the police would also be invited to sit on the group. The remit of the task and finish group would be to establish specifically what matters should be reported to the PDS Committee from the police and in what form.**
- 2) Enquiries should be made with the police so that an update could be provided concerning what was being done to tackle the problem of aggressive begging in Bromley.**
- 3) The Director for Environment and Public Protection would investigate what went wrong at the last Community Impact Day in Penge.**
- 4) British Transport Police should be invited to attend a future committee meeting.**

5) Enquiries should be made with the police to ascertain what plans they had to tackle the problem and dangers posed by motorised scooters in the borough.

HOLDING THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACCOUNT

22 PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The Committee noted that item 2A was flagged as red. This was the number of awareness raising events and training delivered to various groups and partners. The performance report noted that this target would not be met as a direct result of the pandemic. The Assistant Director commented that the end projection should now be blank, as it was not possible to determine the amount of opportunities at this stage.

An update was received with respect to item 2C which was compliance with Challenge 25 test purchase operations. This target was also not going to be met because of the impact of Covid restrictions. The Council was now working closely with Chief Inspector Craig Knight and the Police Cadets and it was hoped that momentum in this area could be picked up in the near future.

Items 3A and 3B would be picked up separately under the Food Safety Plan.

It was noted that there had been no serious outbreaks of food poisoning and even if there had been, this would have been responded to by the Council as it had a statutory duty to do so.

RESOLVED that the Performance Overview report be noted.

a OUTTURN 2020/21

FSD 21026

The Chairman informed Members that this report had already gone to the Executive and was primarily for information only.

A Member referred to the section where it mentioned that some funding had been transferred from the Highways budget to the Public Protection budget post funding and he wondered what that meant. It was explained that sometimes services jointly funded a post. In this case a post had been jointly funded with Highways to the value of £16k. The post in the end got delivered to something else and so the funding was recalled.

A Member referred to the notes in the report that indicated that there was an underlying staffing underspend of £129k due to a number of in year vacancies. She wondered what those vacancies were in respect of. The positions were listed as follows:

- Food Service Vacancies
- Vacancies in the Trading Standards Team
- ASB and Nuisance Vacancies
- Recruitment to the post of Head of Service formerly held by Tony Baldock

RESOLVED that the Outturn report for 2020/21 be noted.

b BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22

FSD 21053

Members resolved that the Budget Monitoring report be noted.

c FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2020–2021

ES 19061

The Food Safety Service Plan was a requirement of the FSA (Food Standards Agency).

Members were briefed that the ground gained in 2019 whereby the Council emerged from a red audit had been lost and LBB now had a backlog of cases to deal with. This was the same for all local authorities.

The FSA had drafted a two stage recovery plan that went to 2024. The Council's plans for dealing with the backlog were outlined in the report. LBB's plans exceeded the FSA requirements. It was hoped to address most of the backlog in the first year. The ability to deliver the recovery plan depended on the identified variables. The identified variables included the ability to recruit to the right posts, maintain staffing levels, and the availability of officers to work overtime.

The Assistant Director said that at the moment she was not seeking additional resources and the Team were trying to think outside of the box and develop new strategies.

The Chairman requested that the recovery plan be circulated to the Committee and applauded the setting of ambitious targets. The Assistant Director said that she had confidence in her Team to hit the targets and that new registrations were included in the plan.

The issue of the possible in house training of staff was raised. This was problematic as specialist certification was required from approved colleges. One of these colleges was Nescot and the training was long and expensive. Administrative staff were being encouraged to 'triage' where they could. Apprentices and graduates were being used to help when possible. London was vying for the same resources.

The matter of pay was raised and a Member asked if Bromley was paying enough. The Assistant Director responded that terms and conditions were under review.

It was clarified by the Assistant Director that the recovery plan noted in section 3.8 of the report was the FSA Recovery Plan and not LBB's Recovery Plan.

RESOLVED that the Food Safety Service Recovery Plan be noted.

23 ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC PROTECTION RISK REGISTER

ES 20102

Members were referred to line 24 which highlighted a risk with respect to potential increased costs of the Coroner's Service. It was noted that increased costs would be challenged by the Director for Environment and Public Protection.

Members noted line 28 which was a red risk concerning issues with the customer relationship management software. On the 1st of July, the CRM system was changed to CXM. In the trial of the new software, the new system had worked successfully, but after being rolled out it was noted that the system was generating errors and so service calls and requests were not being dealt with in a timely manner. Officers were working hard with IT and BT to resolve the issues.

It was noted that the Fly Tipping Action Plan update was scheduled for the November meeting. The previous Neighbourhood Manager that dealt with fly tipping had left the Council and his replacement was due to start work on the 20th of September. The Chairman requested that the specific duties and limitations with respect to the job specification of the new officer be clearly communicated so that Members would not be making requests that would be outside of his job specification.

RESOLVED that the Risk Register be noted and that the job specification/role of the new Neighbourhood Manager be made available to the Committee.

24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SAFER BROMLEY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

A Member referred to minute 21 of the previous minutes of the Safer Bromley Partnership Board. This minute stated that Chief Inspector Craig Knight would be bringing a paper regarding high harm crime and the Cambridge Crime High Harm Index to the next meetings of the SBP and the PDS Committee. The Committee was informed that the paper was not ready because Chief Inspector Craig Knight had been moved on to another piece of important work with respect to violence against women and girls, specifically the issue of misogyny. Chief Inspector Craig Knight would be providing an update

concerning this at the meeting of the Safer Bromley Partnership on the 9th of September.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Safer Bromley Partnership that met on the 17th of June be noted.

25 TRANSFORMING BROMLEY 2019--2023: FIRST TWO YEARS

CSD 21086

The Chairman reminded the Committee that this report had been considered by the Executive at its meeting on the 30th of June 2021 and that therefore this report had come to the PDS Committee primarily for noting.

The Chairman referred to section 3.30 and commented that he would have liked to have seen a reference to 'crime' there--as this was an important service area that was scrutinised by the Committee.

The Chairman would have liked to have another point added to the report which was the fact that the Committee played a vital role in ensuring that the many statutory responsibilities with respect to public protection and enforcement were carried out.

RESOLVED that the comments made by the Chairman and the report be noted.

26 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE OUT OF HOURS NOISE SERVICE

ES 20111

This was for information only as the proposed changes to the Out of Hours Noise Service had been actioned previously as an Independent Portfolio Holder decision. This was able to be implemented from the 4th of August 2021.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

27 WORK PROGRAMME

CSD 21090

The following additions to the Work Programme were requested:

- 1) At the November meeting, the report from the new Task and Finish Group be presented to the Committee
- 2) It was requested that going forward an item be added to the work programme for each meeting for an update from the Portfolio Holder.

3) The British Transport Police should be invited to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted and the items listed above be added to the programme going forward.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm