

# **PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 20 June 2024

## **Present:**

Councillor David Cartwright QFSM (Chairman)  
Councillor Kim Botting FRSA (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Mark Brock, Julie Ireland,  
Josh King, Alexa Michael, Michael Tickner and  
Pauline Tunnicliffe

Hugo Maxwell and Eythan Soysa (BYC Co-opted  
Members)

## **Also Present:**

Councillor Angela Page (Portfolio Holder)  
Councillor Sophie Dunbar (attended virtually)  
Councillor Harry Stranger

## **STANDARD ITEMS**

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The Chairman expressed his thanks and appreciation on behalf of Members for the valuable support and service given to the Committee by Steve Wood, Democratic Services Officer, as he had now stepped down from his role as Committee Clerk.

Apologies were received from Councillor Thomas Turrell and Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe attended as substitute. Apologies were also received from Councillor Sam Webber and Councillor Julie Ireland attended as substitute. Councillor Sophie Dunbar attended virtually.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest. The Chairman reminded the Committee that Purdah was still in place.

### **3 MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT PDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 19TH MARCH 2024**

Members considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Public Protection and Enforcement PDS Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 be agreed and signed as a correct record.**

**4 QUESTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

No questions were received.

**5 MATTERS OUTSTANDING**

**CSD24066**

A Member referred to the 712 alleged breaches of planning control and noted there were 455 Legal Instructions and 344 Notices issued. Further information and details were requested regarding the 111 cases where no action was taken.

A Member commented on the response regarding ring-fencing MOPAC money for drug-related projects. In response it was confirmed that such projects could be considered, but alongside other areas. It was stated that feedback would be given from the PP&E Committee to the Safer Bromley Partnership stressing the importance of the grant going towards drug-related projects.

In an update regarding the request for a list of Neighbourhood Watches, it was confirmed that although the request had been made the current response was that this was not possible due to GDPR. However, the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme had been contacted to discuss this further during an in-person meeting, together with other areas of concern.

**RESOLVED that the Matters Arising report be noted.**

**6 CROYDON AND BEHAVIOURAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE UPDATE**

Attending the meeting on behalf of the Directorate were Jonathan Northfield, Interim Service Director, and Onyekachi Nwankwo, Head of Nursing and Quality.

Members heard from the Report Author, Jonathan Northfield, that the Directorate had continued to work with all stakeholders and partners to ensure the provision of quality services which were responsive to the care and support needs of all users. Work had continued with the 5 year Strategy; 'Aiming High, Changing Lives' and the Trust's five strategic ambitions. Regular strategic meetings were held to engage with the local community.

Working collaboratively enabled the focus to be on prevention, with early intervention being important. The work with community services was currently undergoing transformation to improve the quality of care offered. The

workforce was being developed to reflect the changes in the market and the support needs of users, and a wider range of staff were now being called on to meet those needs.

Members noted that the access measures at Bethlem Royal Hospital had slowly eased to allow the site and its facilities to be widely used by the public once again, with the grounds offering access for dog walking, local clubs and the popular 'Park Run'. Public exhibitions at the Museum of the Mind were also heavily utilised by the public, together with a number of school visits.

The Certitude Supported Housing Scheme of 3 units of 12 flats at 'The Orchards' continued to provide accommodation to support the recovery of users and their needs. Members were informed that there had been a reduction in the number of reports of anti-social behaviour over the last year, both in and outside of the units, and this was testament to the work being done in this setting.

The speaker explained to Members that the low secure residential forensic rehabilitation unit 'Ward in the Community' was still planned to be transitioned from its current site at Lambeth Hospital, to the Bethlem Royal Hospital site. However, as this was part of wider planned works, the move was delayed and now expected to take place in late 2024.

Members were informed of the continuation of the adherence to the Bromley Protocol regarding the reporting of AWOL (absence without leave) cases to previously agreed groups, with all AWOL cases being reviewed. AWOLs were always a concern, but they could be a part of an individual's recovery journey. The majority of AWOL cases were from those who were on pre-agreed and signed-off medical leave.

The Directorate was pleased to inform Members that although there were 11 AWOL incidents in the past year, this was a significant reduction when compared to the 25 incidents in the previous year. Leave and AWOL training was continuously reviewed, in conjunction with the Police and other services.

The Chairman thanked Mr Northfield for the positive and reassuring Report, particularly with Members' previous concerns regarding AWOL cases. Several Members added their congratulations and thanks to the Directorate for their work at Bethlem, noting the reduction in AWOL cases and the good links and communication with the Police and other partners. Councillor Tickner declared that he had previously taken part in the 'Park Run' in the grounds of the hospital.

Concerns were raised regarding patients with mental health issues and their attendance at Bromley GP surgeries, particularly in relation to cases where the Police were called but did not attend. In response, Mr Northfield confirmed that the majority of Bethlem residents would not be registered or attending Bromley GP surgeries. However, there were Community Mental Health Teams and Primary Care Nurses available to deal with such cases when required. The Chairman informed Members that the Metropolitan Police were

due to attend the next PP&E PDS meeting and could be asked to respond to questions regarding non-attendance of Police at such incidents.

**RESOLVED that the Croydon and Behavioural and Developmental Psychology Operations Directorate update be noted.**

## **HOLDING THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACCOUNT**

### **7 UPDATE FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT**

An update was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement.

The Safer Bromley Strategy for 2024-27 was signed off in April 2024 after consideration by the PDS committee and then the Leader, and a Development Workshop then followed in May 2024. The Portfolio Holder informed Members that Karen Proudfoot, Projects Manager, was now moving things forward with partners to further develop the framework. Time had been used to undertake some 'deep dives' into various parts of the service, and further information would come before the committee in due course.

**RESOLVED that the update from the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement be noted.**

### **8 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORTS**

#### **a PP&E PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW**

#### **ES20387**

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Safer Communities explained that the reason for the delays on 3 alerts not being published was due to work pressures on colleagues within the Communications Team meaning targets weren't met. The process had now been streamlined to improve efficiency.

Members also heard that alerts were issued to those signed up to receive them e.g. members of the public, Councillors, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators etc. This was usually in response to emerging trends or issues that came to the attention of the Trading Standards Team and included spikes in scams, rogue traders and cold-caller activity.

The Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement stated that some of the alerts may also be seasonal as issues arose at certain times of the year, and alerts may also be linked to National trends. The Trading Standards Team aimed to be pro-active rather than re-active.

**RESOLVED that the Performance Overview Update be noted.**

**b PUBLIC PROTECTION & ENFORCEMENT DRAFT  
PORTFOLIO PLAN**

**ES20391**

In response to a Member's question regarding the issue of badly hoarded homes within the Borough, the Assistant Director of Public Protection confirmed to Members that the number of such cases was low, but the severity was high and hoarding could be both dry and wet. Wet hoarding was where wet substances were involved and also where animals were at the property, whether deceased, decaying or living in the unhygienic conditions. In such cases the RSPCA would be involved when engaging with the resident.

A query was raised regarding Bromley's involvement in infestation issues within peoples' homes. The committee heard that it would depend on the tenure of the property i.e. Housing Association, local authority or private-rented. Bromley would be involved if the infestation was impacting on neighbouring properties or area, with further action taken if required.

In respect of recurring infestations outside of properties and peoples' homes, e.g. in alleyways, behind flats, near shops etc, the committee noted that a major part of controlling the problem was general housekeeping, i.e. ensuring correct disposal of food and rubbish, availability of secure dustbins etc.

Comment was made on the amount of vape shops opening up and to what extent were these premises regulated, especially to ensure that super-strength vapes were not being sold within the Borough.

Members heard from the Head of Safer Communities that this was an area where Trading Standards were very active, although such premises were unregulated in that the Borough could not control how many shops could open or their location. Regulations applied to the product, and as a tobacco product their purchase was age restricted. The Government was looking to introduce more legislation to prohibit certain vape types, particularly disposable vapes. The issue of vapes was a big priority within the Borough, with seizures of vapes and test purchasing continuing. Trading Standards would be tasked to enforce any disposable vape legislation when it came into place.

Referring to the seizure of vapes, the Head of Safer Communities informed Members that for 2023, 3450 vapes were seized, together with 2015 illegal cigarette packs. This was a big increase on the previous year which saw 1659 vapes seized.

Regarding schools' involvement with the problem of under-age vaping, Members were informed that Trading Standards had spoken to Head Teacher forums to obtain information on where pupils were buying vapes and these premises could then be visited for inspections, seizures and under-age test

purchasing. It was felt that schools also implemented their own approach to the use of vapes within their grounds.

The Chairman commented that the Bromley Youth Council could play a part by contacting schools to obtain the information required on vaping, and their representatives on the committee could take this suggestion back to the BYC.

A BYC co-opted member informed the committee that the BYC had produced a video previously sent to schools, but some schools had been more receptive than others. A question was asked of whether between the BYC and Trading Standards there was a way of distributing the video more widely, and it was suggested that this issue was raised through the BYC Line Manager.

A Member commented that there was a lot of concern regarding the issue of the sale of vapes to those under-age within the Borough. The Chairman recommended that the Member write to him with suggestions for possible ways to improve/develop current Trading Standards strategies in this area.

Councillor Brock declared that he had been previously employed by a smoking cessation company and still held shares with the company. Members heard that it was felt that generally the country was behind with vaping legislation and this created a lot of the problems regarding vaping issues.

With regard to the Borough's anti-idling enforcement, a Member expressed appreciation for the work done in this area and expressed the view that it was important to educate parents on the importance of parking correctly and considerately around schools. The Chairman stressed the importance of both education and enforcement in this area. The provision of CCTV cameras was not a statutory responsibility on the Council, and the Chairman informed Members that he would be raising questions regarding numbers, availability and costs of CCTV cameras and would share findings with Members if appropriate.

**RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement be recommended to endorse the outcomes, aims and performance measures set out in the draft Portfolio Plan.**

**c FINAL OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24**

**FSD24041**

Members noted a concern that in the future there would be greater pressures regarding the monitoring of the Committee's budget, setting the budget and in its final outturn. As such the Chairman requested greater detail in future reports to aid with scrutiny and budget setting.

The Director of Environment and Public Protection agreed to discuss future reports and the details to be provided with fellow Officers.

In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Director of Public Protection confirmed that short explanations clarifying the Environmental Protection-DEFRA Grant, Licensing-Home Office Grant and Food Standards-DEFRA Grant would be added to the Matters Arising for the next PP&E PDS meeting.

**RESOLVED that the Final Outturn Report 2023/24 be noted.**

## **9 PP&E CONTRACTS REGISTER**

### **ES20393**

The Committee noted the PP&E Contracts Register report.

The Chairman informed Members there were four red flags and requested an update on the Mortuary Contract and secondly on the Domestic Abuse Service. In response the Director of Environment and Public Protection confirmed that the Borough was currently within the timescales for considering the first four contracts as per the list on page 63, and for action to be taken. At the relevant time Officers would provide options for a temporary contract extension if required. Members noted that the Report showed that there was currently no cause for concern regarding the contracts administered by this Portfolio.

Regarding the Domestic Homicide Reviews, with the contract due to end in October, the Head of Safer Communities stated that work was being undertaken to look at a different delivery model. Instead of recommending procurement for a similar model, Members heard the plan that on a case-by-case basis, an independent Chair would be appointed. Other local authorities across London were also being looked at regarding how funding was provided for the Domestic Homicide Reviews. A paper exploring different options around funding would also be taken to the Safer Bromley Partnership.

**RESOLVED that the Contracts Register report be noted.**

## **10 PP&E RISK REGISTER**

### **ES20389**

It was noted that the 'Increased Costs for the Coroner's Service' was still rated as red, as it had been for some time.

Members heard from the Assistant Director of Public Protection that the Coroners Service was a consortium of four boroughs, with Croydon as the lead authority for service delivery and budget management. There was much liaison between the four members attempting to resolve issues, but a resolution was not expected within the short term. Bromley had a clear picture of what a good value service should be and were continually asking questions of Croydon as the administrative body, particularly in relation to expenditure.

**RESOLVED that the update on the Public Protection and Enforcement Risk Register be noted.**

**11 WORK PROGRAMME**

**CSD24076**

The Chairman confirmed that the Police update was now due to be presented at the September PP&E PDS meeting. The Chairman would discuss with Bethlem Royal Hospital possible dates for a visit.

In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that there could be an opportunity for Members to observe test purchases for age-related goods, with arrangements to be made with the Trading Standards Department.

**RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted.**

**12 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)(VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

**13 PP&E PDS PART 2 CONTRACTS REGISTER DATABASE EXTRACT**

Members noted the Part 2 Contracts Register report.

**RESOLVED that the Part 2 Contracts Register report be noted.**

The Meeting ended at 8.32 pm

Chairman