

Decision Maker: Public Protection and Safety PDS

Date: 20 September 2011

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: UPDATE ON PUBLIC DISORDER IN BROMLEY

Contact Officer: Susie Clark, Communications Executive
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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Director of Environmental Services

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

This report provides an overview of the actions taken by the Council in partnership with the police following the public disorder experienced in Bromley on Monday 8 August, 2011, which took place after similar, though more severe, riots in other areas of London.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

To note the contents of the report.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Safer Bromley.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
 3. Budget head/performance centre:
 4. Total current budget for this head: £
 5. Source of funding:
-

Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional):
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Boroughwide and businesses
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 Background

3.2 Bromley experienced public disorder in its high streets following similar, but more severe, riots in Tottenham and other parts of London during the weekend of the 6/7 August 2011, coinciding with outbreaks of violent disorder in other cities across the UK. Rioting and looting took place in Bromley, Beckenham, Orpington, and the impact of the disorder was felt to a lesser extent in wards such as Biggin Hill, Penge and Cator, Hayes and Coney Hall, Petts Wood and Knoll and Plaistow and Sundridge.

3.3 Monday night, 8 August 2011, saw the start of the rioting in Bromley Town Centre and beyond. The CCTV Room became aware of numbers of youths on the streets seen on camera and took a number of calls from local police asking the operators to survey various areas across the borough's high streets.

3.4 The first real trouble was recorded on CCTV at around 2100 hours outside MacDonald's in Market Square. The CCTV Control Room Manager (Contractor) who was at home at that point, heard what was happening in other areas of London on the news and contacted the Control Room. It was immediately apparent that the operators were being overwhelmed with calls. She made the decision to attend the Control Room at 11pm, so providing a third surveillance capability and remained there until 3am. She returned at 7am the following morning to begin downloading footage for the police. To date 2500 hours of footage has been taken away by police to try and identify suspects. A total of 57 properties were damaged as a result of the disorder mostly in Bromley Town Centre, Orpington, the Nugent Centre and Beckenham High Street.

3.5 Some businesses in the affected areas experienced low levels of damage to frontages, others were subject to serious loss of stock and equipment due to looting. Fortunately, none of the properties were damaged or destroyed by fire as a result of the disorder, but nonetheless the cost to the local business community is likely to run into several tens of thousands of pounds.

3.6 Immediate Police Response

3.7 Bromley police reacted with extreme bravery to contain the situation during Monday night, given that many of their riot trained officers were deployed in other parts of London as the scale of disorder experienced was not anticipated in Bromley. From Tuesday, the police operated with a much enhanced presence and quickly gained full control of the situation.

3.8 Council Response

3.9 At the Council, the decision was made to operate a limited Borough Emergency Control Room (BECC). A hot line was set up between the BECC and the Operations Room at Bromley Police Station so that at designated times of the day reports were fed into this unit which enabled a comprehensive picture to be built up of the affected parts of the borough and the extent of the rioting. Extended working hours were undertaken to keep pace with events and remain apprised of developments.

3.10 The Chief Executive, Emergency Planning Officer and a small team from Bromley were on call for London during the period of the disturbances. The Chief Executive taking up his role as CE or 'Gold' for all London Boroughs (on rotation with all other London CEs).

3.11 During Tuesday 9 August, the Council's Environmental Services people swiftly cleared up the resulting mess in the high streets. In addition, they worked closely with the police to identify

loose debris, street furniture and building materials that could potentially be used as missiles in any further disorder and arranged for these to be removed.

3.12 The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder were kept fully apprised of the situation throughout and they quickly agreed that Ward Security patrols could be used to work alongside the police in the high streets to send out a strong message of support to Bromley businesses and provide a further visible uniformed presence on the streets.

3.13 Also, during Tuesday, rumours about further violence and looting, mostly unfounded, perpetuated a culture of fear and unrest across Bromley borough. People aware of the previous night's disorder across the borough, and the relative close proximity to even worse events in Croydon, gave rise to concerns for their safety. Rumours of further violence flourished and although they were totally groundless, people started to act on them. Council staff saw businesses (and in one case the car park in the Walnuts in Orpington) closing in their locality.

3.14 Emergency Planning and Communications

3.15 It was against this background that the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) in conjunction with the Chief Executive and Communications Executive were meeting twice daily (early morning and late afternoon) in order to build an accurate picture of what was happening within Bromley. Information was fed in through the hotline between the EPU and the Operations Room at Bromley Police Station at designated times of the day. This enabled an accurate overview of the affected parts of the borough providing up-to-date information as to the extent and detail of the rioting and looting for onward transmission to interested parties, notably businesses and Members.

3.16 Throughout these events regular communication was maintained from the Police and the Council through a wide network of partners to both give information about the ongoing situation and also provide reassurance that things were under control. This was especially important to counter the many and varied rumours that abounded in the early days of the disorder.

3.17 The EPU became the focal point throughout for managers seeking advice and for staff from other parts of the Council e.g. providing answers to questions concerning public transport.

3.18 Business Support

3.19 The Director of Renewal and Recreation and the Town Centre Team supported by Communications compiled and hand delivered information to affected businesses immediately after the disorder and began planning an approach for on-going support. Since the riots a wealth of information for businesses has been put on Bromley Council's website for the benefit of the business community.

3.20 On 7 September a report went to Executive detailing the funding schemes announced by Central Government and the London Mayor and seeking approval for delegated authority to be provided to the Director of Renewal and Recreation to decide on details of the Council's support to assist businesses to recover from these events.

3.21 Facts and Figures (Bromley)

- 2500 hours of CCTV footage in the hands of the police and 43 master tapes
- Experienced CCTV operators assisted police by obtaining close ups of perpetrators and vehicles used

- Up to date CCTV technology provided the highest possible quality images
- Suspects pictures from CCTV on the News Shopper website/police website and on large screens in the Glades during the weekend of 3-4 September
- 83 crimes were attributed to the riots
- 48 non-residential burglaries, but no robberies
- Suspects - 5 female and 127 male from varied backgrounds
- Arrested - 62 people, 21 bailed and 41 committed for trial
- The Courts have been robust
- Across London there were 75,000 suspects which will amount to three years of investigations.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as the extra hours and other work associated with the disorder was dealt with under existing contract agreements.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal, Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]