

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 19th September, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chairman)
Cllr S. Trussler (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Leola Card
Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr P.J. Cullum
Cllr Thomas Day
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr M.J. Tennant

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Nadia Martin

14. COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Committee welcomed Chief Inspector Gillian Cox, Hampshire Police and the Council's Community Safety Manager, David Lipscombe who were in attendance to report on current issues, challenges and positive news stories within the policing and community safety sector. Also in attendance was the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Cllr Becky Williams.

Mr Lipscombe provided an overview of the Community Safety Team and their key roles and responsibilities. It was noted that the Team were the first point of contact for calls primarily relating to anti-social behaviour (ASB), crime and disorder and neighbourhood youth disruption. Early intervention methods were used to try and tackle these issues in the first instance, these methods included warning letters, home visits, education, and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

Management of the CCTV service also fell within the Teams' remit. Since the relocation of the CCTV unit to Runnymede, the service had benefited from increased hours of service and better camera review options. A request was made for a cost analysis of the CCTV service.

An update was provided on the Community Patrol Team, following a recruitment process, there were now five members of the team with one vacancy. Those in post had recently completed the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme course, which allowed officers to be granted with certain police powers.

The Committee were apprised of what had gone well and current concerns for the Team. Things that had gone well included, a closure order at a property where the

residents were causing significant ASB, Think Safe - a Year 6 project highlighting how to act in certain scenarios, and "Yellow Brick Road" a project which helped young people at risk of exploitation. Current concerns included Farnborough Town Centre where the street attached/homeless had recently been causing a number of issues, neighbour disputes and residential cannabis use, and mental health and housing issues.

The Committee were informed about the response to the recent Community Safety Survey. It was noted that the survey could only be completed online at present, however 930 residents had responded, double the number of responses from the previous year. It was also reported that a larger number of young people had engaged with the survey following contact with the two local colleges. However, only 3% of respondents had been from the Nepalese community and consideration on how to increase this for the 2025/26 survey, would be given. The length of the survey was also discussed and it was felt that it could be shortened for future years.

It was advised that on 9 September, a meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community Safety had taken place. The meeting attended by Elected Members and Officers from Basingstoke and Deane, Hart and Rushmoor reviewed the partnerships priorities for 2023/24 and endorsed the work of the Safer North Hampshire Strategic Community Safety Partnership and its plans for 2024/25 which included:

- Improving feelings of safety and health outcomes within the Community Safety Partnership area
- Serious violence
- Domestic abuse
- Antisocial behaviour
- Town centre engagement

The Committee discussed the presentation and raised a query regarding the "Choices" project. "Choices" was a project funded by the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) allowing a group of experts to attend schools and engage with years 6 and 7 on a variety of issues, including drug use, alcohol use, sensible decision making, healthy relationships etc. It was noted that the project had been offered to all schools in the Borough but take up had been mixed.

A discussion was also held on the subject of fly-tipping, and requests were made for data by ward, land divisions, enforcement boundaries and that consideration be given to increasing the penalty charge amount.

The Chief Inspector (CI) gave her presentation which provided an overview of the past 12 months. It was noted that this would be CI Cox's second year in post. The past year had seen a lot of organisational change and challenge, but it was advised that the team were now in a strong position, with stable leadership and solid working relationships with partners to move forward.

The Committee were apprised of the crime data for the period between August 2023 and July 2024. Crimes with the largest number of occurrences were noted as violence against the person and theft offences. However, it was noted that

occurrences of ASB had seen a reduction since June 2024, this could be attributed to levels of reporting and ASB meaning different things to different people. The outcome data had also been reviewed and this had shown a positive picture where an increase in crime had occurred, there had also been an increase in outcome.

Data was provided on Operation Sentinel, a Home Office led initiative tackling serious violence hotspots, of which there were two in Rushmoor, Aldershot and Farnborough town centres. Regular patrols of the areas were made and the teams ensured they followed guidance to be visible, observant and engaging. Since April 2024, methods had been amended to achieve 100% compliance rates.

Data on 999 and 101 calls was shared with the Committee, each showed big improvements on the previous years. For 999 calls the SLA was up by 17% as a result of more calls being answered quicker. With regard to 101 calls the average time to answer had reduced by 81% (03:07 minutes from 16:09 mins the previous year). It was suggested that this positive message could be promoted within the community to encourage more people to report via this channel.

The Committee noted the challenges and opportunities faced by the police service. these included:

- Victim satisfaction – it was noted that levels of victim satisfaction had dropped and there was a push within the service to improve through better communication.
- Drug related harm – it was noted that drugs were the greatest harm in the borough, it continued to be a priority of the community and it was vital that the work to prevent drug related harm was managed effectively.
- Protests – the force had and would continue to work to support the district during periods of unrest. The police worked within the community to ensure everyone felt safe allowing for the democratic right to protest. A request was made to involve CI Cox in the newly established Community Engagement Task and Finish Group following the Notice of Motion to Council on 15 August on Community Tensions.
- Resourcing – It was reported that the current resources met the demand in the area, however more resource would always be welcomed.

CI Cox advised on the engagement efforts within the force, these included Hants Alert - a platform to inform of current issues, Let's Talk – face-to-face surveys to identify key problems and highlight emerging issues and making the team more visible through Cops and Coffee sessions. Social media continued to be used to highlight successes. Ward distribution and contact information was also shared for the four local "Bobby's", engagement with the officers was encouraged and should more resource be allocated distribution of areas would be reconsidered.

The Committee discussed petty crime and low level criminal activities, such as shoplifting, petty vandalism and cannabis use. CI Cox advised that it was difficult strike the right balance, as things affected people and communities differently, by

tackling individuals' behaviours you lessened the occurrences of petty crime, but limited resources made this difficult. It was however noted that these types of crime should be reported and they would be looked at on a priority basis.

Further discussions were held around specific matters, these included;

- Threats to public officials - it was noted that Operation Bridger was in place, but mainly enforced around election periods. CI Cox would provide any information available to Elected Members for their information.
- Use of available town centre unit in Farnborough as a police hub to help address recent ASB – Cllr Becky Williams advised that following the recent increase in ASB in the town centre, the Community Safety Team were working with specific individuals to address the issues. A comprehensive strategy to tackle ASB was also be prepared.
- Shoplifting – it was advised that the action taken against a shoplifter was store dependent. The police worked with the stores to understand their targets, security and CCTV provisions, and addressed any incidents of shoplifting as deemed appropriate.
- Provision of 725 new police officers – it was noted that the new recruits would be distributed across Hampshire by the force's Corporate Insights Team.

ACTIONS:

What	By Whom	Date
Provide data on numbers of fly tipping incidents by ward	James Knight, Service Manager - Place Protection	November 2024
Map of what land belongs to who to be shared with Members	James Knight, Service Manager - Place Protection	November 2024
PPO stated as having said that the Council cannot enforce on VIVID land - is this correct?	James Duggin - Executive Head of Operations	November 2024
Provide POC for MOD Land to members	James Knight, Service Manager - Place Protection	November 2024
Review the length of the Community Safety Survey for year three to make it shorter	David Lipscombe - Community Safety Manager	2025/26
Consideration be given to the amounts charged for PCN's to be a more effective deterrent.	David Lipscombe - Community Safety Manager	--

Consideration be given to the promotion of 101 and the impacts of crimes that are not reported, as part of ASB week in November 2024	David Lipscombe - Community Safety Manager	November 2024
Share any information relating to treats against public officials with Members	Gillian Cox, Chief Inspector	November 2024
Extend invitation to Gillian Cox to attend the meeting of the Community Engagement T&F Group	Adele Taylor, Committee Admin Ian Harrison, Executive Director	10 October 2024
Provide a list of the schools who have engaged in the "Choices" Programme	David Lipscombe - Community Safety Manager	October 2024
Provision of cost data analysis on the CCTV Unit	David Lipscombe - Community Safety Manager	October 2024

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Cox and Mr Lipscombe for their presentations.

15. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan and the addition of speeding and road safety issues to the Hampshire Highways item, these would be picked up at the next Progress Group meeting. It was also noted that the work was being progressed on the Action Tracker and an update would be provided at the Progress Group.

The meeting closed at 9.17 pm.

CLLR HALLEH KOOHESTANI (CHAIRMAN)
