

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 18th September, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chairman)
Cllr Nadia Martin (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr M.J. Tennant (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Leola Card
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr S. Trussler
Cllr Becky Williams

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr G.B. Lyon.

Cllr Mara Makunura attending the meeting as Standing Deputy.

14. POLICING AND 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 Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services, Cllr Christine Guinness.

The Chief Inspector (CI) gave her presentation which provided an overview of the past 12 months. It was noted that CI Cox's would be moving on to a new role the following week and the new Chief Inspector would be Alex Reading. Alex was an experienced officer in district policing and had chosen to get back to operational policing in Rushmoor and Hart.

The past year had been very busy, with a reduction in crimes recorded against the previous year. There had, however, been an increase in shop lifting over the year and initiatives had been introduced to help reduce the number of incidents. In addition, a decrease in drug offenses had been recorded and it was advised that robust measures were in place to deal with weapon and knife crime.

CI Cox reported on anti-social behaviour (ASB) data. It was noted that there had been a decrease in incidents of ASB in the past twelve months with 451 incidents reported against 470 in the previous year. The data was monitored monthly and considerable work had been undertaken, particularly in Farnborough town centre where there had been a resurgence of incidents, to address ASB. The Committee

discussed the different types of ASB activity and noted that these could vary widely. The Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO) were a good tool for tackling ASB and continued to be used as required. It was noted that there were currently 13 individuals with a CBO and seven individuals were in prison as a result of a breach of their CBO.

The Committee noted that Operation Sentinel, a Home Office led initiative tackling serious violence hotspots, operated in both town centres. Officers were required to patrol specific areas at set periods and had achieved 96% compliance with these requirements only missing 10 planned patrols. However, it was reported that an additional 1,422 unplanned patrols had been undertaken across the two town centres over the past twelve months.

In relation to Formal Action Taken (FAT) outcomes on criminal activity, it was noted that the number had dropped on the previous year. Resources and demand were contributing factors to the drop and although it was felt that there were enough officers to meet daily demand, more officers would always be welcome – it was difficult to follow up on incidents when officers were continually being deployed to other reported incidents. It was however reported that average handling and response times had improved on both 999 and 101 calls.

The Committee discussed engagement, in particular the role of the Local Bobbys. It was noted that the Local Bobby, of which there were four across the whole Borough, was to be involved in the community by providing a police presence, attendance at community events and through work with local partners. It was noted that the Local Bobbys were not able to be deployed to incidents to ensure that they remained available to their communities at all times. Cops and Coffee event dates would be shared with the Community Safety Team to be shared with elected Members. Other forms of engagement included Hants Alert, Let's Talk, Facebook and the Independent Advisory Group (IAG). The IAG was a group made up from the community to review and act as a critical friends on all kinds of matters relating to the police. There was currently a recruitment drive for the IAG and Members were asked to help seek members of the community who may wish to get involved.

The Committee discussed different types of crimes and where they sat in the reporting lines, it was noted that it depended on the form of the crime where it sat, for example, malicious communications could come under the categories of harassment/cyber crime etc. It was advised that a tool was available, publicly, to search crime types by area.

In response to a query regarding cuckooing, it was noted that cuckooing, where vulnerable individuals were targeted by drug dealers to store and sell drugs, was categorised as a priority crime and was handled by a specific team with wider involvement from partners such as social services.

In relation to a question regarding staffing and deployment from other areas across the county, it was advised that staff worked a shift pattern of six days on, four days off, 365 days per year. Staff levels were maintained at a certain level and each area supported each other when levels dropped or extra emergency cover was required. Recruitment was challenging due to the geography of Rushmoor and Hart and its

close borders to Surrey and proximity to London. However, it was noted that a successful recruitment drive had been held at the Princes Hall, Aldershot, and it was hoped that another would be held in due course.

Mr. Lipscombe then provided his presentation on community safety matters which included the staffing structure and the working arrangements of the team. It was noted that the Team had a statutory duty to respond to crime, disorder and ASB under the Crime and Disorder Act. 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. Other areas covered included, the co-ordination of cases with partner agencies including, meeting coordination, case conferences etc., use of formal tools and powers for more serious cases e.g. Community Protection Notices / Warnings (CPN/W), Injunctions, Closures and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO), and Antisocial Behaviour Case Reviews.

Other key areas included:

- Safeguarding lead for the Council – ensuring training and updates were provided to all staff and ensuring staff completed referrals when required
- Members of Hampshire PREVENT partnership, promoting awareness of PREVENT and sitting on the Channel Panel
- Part of Hampshire wide Violence Reduction Unit - to consider local picture and actions
- Coordination of NE Hants Domestic Abuse Forum with Hart District Council and responsible for considering applications for Domestic Homicide Reviews

The Committee were made aware of some of the facts and figures around daily work carried out by the Team, these included, 901 police 101 reports sent direct to the team to triage and follow up, 161 direct enquiries, 899 incidents recorded by the CCTV Control Room with 41 associated arrests, nine new referrals received from partners for the People meeting to consider, nine CPN/W issued, four Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with a further one pending sign-up, one Domestic Homicide review application considered and awaiting Home Office approval, and one Antisocial Behaviour Case Review carried out.

In addition to the day-to-day work, the Team had also undertaken a Think Safe project for year 6 pupils, at which 840 young people had been engaged with. A 60 camera CCTV replacement scheme had also been completed, which included three town centre CCTV cameras installed in Queensmead. Promotion of the DISC retailer system, continued detached youth work, a joint partnership cycling and e-scooter awareness campaign in Farnborough Town Centre, and promotion of ASB Awareness Week in July.

The Committee discussed the presentation and raised a point regarding the welfare of officers and the support in place to access help if required, it was noted that all staff had access to support and wellbeing services should they be needed.

In response to a query regarding closure orders, it was noted that closures could take place on any tenure of property, mortgaged or rented. Properties could be

closed for 3-6 months and issues which could cause a closure included cannabis use and noise nuisance.

In response to a discussion on the CCTV service, it was noted that there was no public access to CCTV camera footage, those with access easily obtained were the police, the Council and insurance companies. It was also noted that facial recognition and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) facilities were not available on the Council's cameras. The Committee noted that Aldershot had great coverage and the underserved areas in Farnborough were being addressed. The use of mobile cameras was costly and took time, especially if to be place on land not owned by the Council.

Other matters raised included, Farnborough town centre Sainsbury's, which was considered a hotspot, it was advised that CCTV coverage was good in the area and action was being taken to address the issues in this area. On the matter of street preachers, it was advised that complaints came from both the public and shop owners and mainly related to the volume and nature of the preaching – it was important to take account of the right of freedom of speech but also the impacts on those being subjected to it. Work was underway with faith leaders to discuss how the matter could be addressed, and a code of conduct was currently being developed for people to sign up to.

The Committee were made aware of the current concerns for the team, these included increasing numbers of cases relating to mental health and social care matters and the lack of partner resources to deal with them, ongoing community cohesion matters, ASB in Aldershot town centre – the problem had reduced since the children returned to school, but a number of young people were being worked with by the team and youth catapult issues.

The Chairman thank Chief Inspector Cox, Mr Lipscombe and Cllr Guinness for their presentation and contributions to the meeting.

15. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee noted the current Work Plan.

It was noted that the item on Community Engagement would be fully scoped at the next meeting of the Progress Group and that currently Serco were scheduled to attend the December meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.29 pm.

CLLR HALLEH KOOHESTANI (CHAIRMAN)
