

Minutes

EXTERNAL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

22 March 2022



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Nick Denys (Chairman), Devi Radia (Vice-Chairman), Darran Davies, Scott Farley (In place of Peter Money), Heena Makwana and June Nelson</p> <p>Also Present: Superintendent Anthony Bennett, Superintendent, Metropolitan Police Service PC Penny Brown, Metropolitan Police Service PC Dave Butler, Metropolitan Police, Metropolitan Police Service Sergeant Graham Edwards, Tri-Borough Licensing Sergeant, Metropolitan Police Service Daniel Ferrer, Licensing Team Manager Glen Nicolaides, Station Commander, London Fire Brigade Jacqui Robertson, Service Manager for Community Safety Sergeant Anish Sharma, Metropolitan Police Service Stephanie Waterford, Head of Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Licensing & ASBET</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services Manager)</p>
54.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i></p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Simon Arnold and Councillor Peter Money (Councillor Scott Farley was present as his substitute).</p>
55.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting.</p>
56.	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC <i>(Agenda Item 3)</i></p> <p>RESOLVED: That all items of business be considered in public.</p>
57.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 22 FEBRUARY 2022 <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i></p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2022 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
58.	<p>SAFER HILLINGDON PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE MONITORING <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.</p>

London Fire Brigade (LFB)

Mr Glen Nicolaides, Uxbridge Station Commander for the London Fire Brigade, advised that Mr Alan Taylor was the Borough Commander for Hillingdon. He noted that a 32m ladder had recently been purchased for Hillingdon and hose layer units were available to accommodate longer distances between a fire and the water source.

Members were advised that home safety visits continued to be undertaken by the Fire Brigade where a list of ten issues were checked on site. The freephone number for this service had been advertised on the side of the fire appliances, through banners on the fire station and on social media and had been promoted through a television advert and podcast. Referrals could be made by the householder, the local authority, relatives, etc, and could be made over the phone or through the website. As part of this service, any existing smoke alarms would be tested and free alarms could be installed. Mr Nicolaides noted that, as there had been a long list of requests for home safety visits, the most high risk or vulnerable residents had been prioritised to reduce their exposure during the pandemic. The Fire Brigade had previously also given out free carbon monoxide alarms to landlords.

Mr Nicolaides advised that a new service had been initiated in the Borough where the Fire Brigade provided small business premises with advice, guidance and support. The Fire Brigade would sometimes undertake unannounced visits to these small premises (including those premises which were thought to be at less risk of fire) to ensure that fire safety regulations were being met. Mr Nicolaides urged residents to continue to phone and report fires rather than posting reports on social media.

It was noted that a lot of preventative work had been undertaken across the whole Borough and that visual audits had been undertaken of every street to identify any issues of concern. As a result, there had been a reduction in the number of fires in Hillingdon from over 700 in 2018 to just over 500 in the last year. Mr Nicolaides advised that there did not appear to be any long term hotspot areas anywhere in the Borough.

Mr Nicolaides advised that a modelling system had been put in place for the whole of London to identify where resources would be best placed and to ensure that it only took around 5-6 minutes for a fire engine to arrive on scene. He noted that London had quite a lot of resources at its disposal and that pumps from outside of the Borough would attend a fire in Hillingdon if needed (a Memorandum of Understanding had been put in place with places like Surrey and Berkshire for this purpose). Although there might be a fire where a lot of fire engines attended, this might not be as a result of the severity of the fire or the need for more officers. This demand on resources might be because the water source was so far away from the fire that the water needed to be pumped from engine to engine to get it to the fire.

Members were advised that, as taller buildings were politically deemed to be higher risk, the Fire Brigade undertook regular visits to blocks of flats (approximately four times each year) to ensure that sufficient mitigation measures were in place. The Fire Brigade had recently been attending virtual meetings with tower block tenants and would like to do more of this to deal with any concerns about fire safety.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, fire stations had been unable to welcome any members of the public inside. Now that restrictions had been lifted, the Uxbridge station was starting to open up to the public again with an open day organised for May 2022 and plans being developed to hold a tea party during the

festive period. The Mayor of Hillingdon had also visited the station to meet with the cadets.

Mr Nicolaides advised that the Fire Brigade would be regularly consulted on relevant planning applications and dealt with thousands each year. Responses to these consultations were undertaken by a central hub that dealt with planning applications and change of use requests from across the whole of London, thus improving the response times. This proactive consultation process, which might require a site visit, prevented more costly reactive adjustments after a building had been erected.

Anti Social Behaviour Relating to Licensed Premises

Mr Dan Ferrer, the Council's Licensing Team Manager, advised that, although there was a duty on the local authority, as a responsible authority, to work with partners and deal with enforcement issues as well as applications, the Council also had a role in relation to prevention. This good working relationship with partners had been highlighted during the pandemic when the Council had worked closely with neighbouring boroughs and the police in information sharing and undertaking joint visits.

Challenges faced in Hillingdon with regard to licensing tended to be in relation to things that were outside of the local authority's control. In addition, managing residents' expectations could also sometimes be a challenge when any decisions made needed to be based on evidence.

Mr Ferrer advised that the Hunterz Lounge licence had been reviewed following concerns about crime and disorder, public safety and public nuisance issues. The police had been able to provide crime and disorder data for the review and the premises licence had been revoked. Although an appeal had been lodged, this had subsequently been dropped.

Members were advised that Hillingdon had a very effective Pub Watch scheme in place which provided a consistent and transparent approach to collaboration. Although partners could help pubs to set up a Pub Watch, the trade would be responsible for organising and maintaining the group. The scheme enabled member premises to communicate with each other and with the Civic Centre CCTV room via radios and had provided the Council with an invaluable network through which it had been able to disseminate information about restrictions during the pandemic. Benefits to the publicans included a reduction in undesirable activity on their premises and the "banned from one, banned from all" approach often curtailed inappropriate behaviour. Although there was no similar Pub Watch scheme for off licences, a Bet Watch scheme was in operation in Hayes.

Sergeant Graham Edwards, Tri-Borough Licensing Sergeant from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), advised that, following a restructure of the MPS, a tri-borough licensing team had been put in place, governed by a central licensing team. Each borough had two dedicated licensing police officers (in Hillingdon these were PC Penny Brown and PC Dave Butler) whose daily activities included checking every incident of crime and triaging any notable interactions that needed to be entered onto the licensing system. This information then helped with any future enforcement activity. There were 1,672 licensed premises in Hillingdon, 36% of which were pubs and clubs. Recently, the age of those involved in ASB in pubs tended to be those in their late teens / early twenties which was thought might be caused by them having less experience of social drinking settings due to the pandemic.

PC Dave Butler, Licensing Lead for Hillingdon, advised that the BID Team had provided an injection of officers to support the night time economy in Uxbridge which saw a lot of pedestrians. In addition, there were private security guards in the town, a police foot patrol and door staff which were all linked via radios to the CCTV room in the Civic Centre. Approximately 90% of incidents were reported by staff at the premises.

Sgt Edwards advised that the MPS and the Council had a stepped approach to enforcement based on 4Es: Early Intervention; Evidence Gathering; Enforcement; and Evaluation. Early intervention was always undertaken to try to achieve compliance but was not always successful and therefore the review of a licence should never come as a surprise to the licence holder. The statutory timeframes associated with an application could sometimes be a challenge with only two dedicated police officers.

Concern was expressed that there were times when the licence holder did not comply with the requirements, despite early intervention having been undertaken. Ms Waterford advised that the stepped approach meant that this situation would be escalated but that, for any prosecution to be successful, it could take a long time to gather sufficient evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a crime had taken place.

Sgt Edwards advised that new applications were sent to all responsible authorities for comment. The police checked whether the applicant had any relevant convictions - there was also provision in the Licensing Act in exceptional circumstances for the police to make objections to applications from individuals who did not have a relevant conviction. Robust and correct evidence would be needed to support this type of objection.

Ms Waterford noted that the principle in granting a licence was similar to that of a driving licence. Applicants had to demonstrate a level of knowledge and, once granted, would get to keep their licence if they adhered to the rules. Any action taken to address any flouting of the rules needed to be proportionate.

Members were advised that the licensing police officers in Ealing were collocated in the building with Council officers from teams such Trading Standards and Food Hygiene. This arrangement worked well in maximising the benefits of partnership working.

Members queried whether partners were sufficiently quick in dealing with issues such as premises selling to underage children who then caused anti social behaviour in the vicinity. Ms Stephanie Waterford, the Council's Head of Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Licensing and ASBET, advised that, when such issues arose, the Licensing Team worked with colleagues in Trading Standards and the MPS to address them as well as undertaking test purchases. Although an instant resolution would be welcomed by some, there were statutory procedures that needed to be followed and any action taken needed to be proportionate. As such, the team was guided by case law to provide a proportionate response, using powers provided by anti social behaviour legislation. Sgt Edwards advised that, if an incident was very serious, they would bring a summary review which was undertaken within very tight timescales with a review being undertaken within three days.

Members queried whether there were any disagreements between the MPS and the Council about what was deemed to be a proportionate response. Mr Ferrer noted that, with regard to crime and disorder, the police acted as the primary lead. This was reflected in case law.

Although the Safer Hillingdon Partnership had provided a range of statistics in the report, Members asked whether there was any data recorded in relation to anti social behaviour (ASB) incidents directly relating licenced premises. Ms Waterford advised that this was not something that was currently recorded but could be considered in the future. Intelligence was regularly shared between partners so that they were able to identify hotspots across the Borough. She also noted that the Council's threshold for what was considered ASB was not necessarily the same as that of residents.

Members were advised that there was no requirement to advise local residents or Ward Councillors of any Temporary Event Notices (TENs) in their area. If there were no concerns from the responsible authorities (who had to raise any objections based on evidence within three days) and the requirements of the licence were met, the TEN had to be granted. There was no provision for members of the public to object to a TEN.

If a TEN licence holder failed to meet the requirements of the licence, they would be breaking the law and could be prosecuted. There was no statutory requirement for the Council or the TEN licence holder to display a notice about their event and it was thought that this would be disproportionate as the vast majority of events were compliant.

TENs were restricted to a maximum of 499 people at the event. Applicants could have a maximum of 15 TENs that covered no more than 21 days per calendar year. Each event could be no more than 7 successive days and there had to be at least 24 hours between each event.

Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP) Performance

Superintendent Anthony Bennett, West Area Basic Command Unit (BCU) – Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), advised that violence against the person had decreased by 6% for the period from March 2021 to February 2022 compared to the same period in 2019/2020. Violence with injury had reduced by 8%, robbery offences had gone down by 46%, burglary offences were down by 52%, vehicle offences had reduced by 24%, general theft offences (including shoplifting) were down 24%, drugs offences had reduced by 1% and offences relating to the possession of offensive weapons was down by 8%. Hate crimes had increased by 20% and further investigation needed to be undertaken to understand this increase.

Although crime in Hillingdon had reduced by 10% overall, there had been a 44% increase in sexual offences in Hillingdon. It was suggested that this notable increase might have been the delayed reporting of incidents that had occurred during lockdown following a drive to encourage victims to report these crimes.

Further resources had been given to the public protection team to ensure that they were adequately staffed in relation to their work around violence against women and girls (VAWG) with one additional Chief Inspector and an Inspector. There had also been seven additional officers brought in to deal with rape across the MPS.

The MPS had been working with the courts to speed up the prosecution process and officers had been specifically trained with regard to domestic abuse and providing victims with support. Hillingdon had issued a high number of stalking protection orders and had significant funds available for patrolling areas where VAWG was deemed to be an issue, including Uxbridge town centre.

Members were advised that Street Safe had been introduced in the previous year. This scheme enabled women to go online and report areas where they felt unsafe and was linked to the walk and talk events that had been held. Work was then undertaken with the SHP partners to improve the perception of safety in these areas.

Police officers had been visiting secondary schools and, more recently, primary schools to talk about personal safety and what was / was not acceptable. These talks were tailored to the age of the audience. £120k of problem solving funding had also been used to resource initiatives such as knife arches, CCTV cameras and diversionary activity for young people.

Insofar as professional standards were concerned, Supt Bennett recognised that there had been unacceptable behaviour and language used by a minority of officers in the MPS which needed to be addressed. The Professional Standards team had been enhanced and would be undertaking case reviews. Every officer in the West Area BCU had received two briefings in the last two months to identify what was acceptable behaviour and to set out how unacceptable behaviour should be challenged. To encourage unacceptable behaviour to be challenged, officers were able to report it anonymously or in person to someone other than their line manager. Following the Danny Morgan report, changes had been made to how the police dealt with property and to declarable associations with journalists and individuals with a criminal record.

Following the Child Q safeguarding report, further work was being undertaken with regard to stop and search procedures to ensure that all officers were aware of the correct procedure. A community monitoring group had been set up in Hillingdon to look at the stop and search process and to monitor performance. The group would meet every three months and would be able to monitor the footage from body worn cameras. Improved stop and search supervision had been put in place to make the process more rigorous and a briefing had been provided to all police officers locally.

Supt Bennett noted that the MPS was keen to consult with young people about the stop and search process and to talk about how they felt. However, concern was expressed that young people had no confidence in the police. Supt Bennett reiterated that the MPS needed to continue to try to engage with these young people and maximise the opportunities for residents to question the police directly. It was hoped that broadening the outreach, a continued visibility and a willingness to listen / act on feedback ('you said/we did') would build the community's confidence and trust in the police.

Ms Jacqui Robertson, the Council's Community Safety Manager, advised that the Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP) Board had commissioned a review of the SHP in the Autumn to identify better ways of working in partnership. The review also looked at: how data could be enriched and better used to help shape priorities; and how engagement with Safer Neighbourhood Boards, Ward Panels and Neighbourhood Watch could be improved. As it was anticipated that the results of this review would be available by June 2022, Ms Robertson agreed to provide an update at the Committee's meeting on 14 September 2022. In the meantime, the SHP priorities from 2021/2022 would be rolled into 2022/2023 as the reduction of violent crimes was likely to continue to be a priority for the police.

Ms Robertson regularly attended Ward Panel meetings and noted that many of the main complaints raised by residents were in relation to issues that could be resolved by the Council without the need for the police to be involved, e.g., littering. Further work was needed to strengthen the relationship between the police, Council, residents and other bodies.

Members were advised that MOPAC funding had been secured to install a knife bin in West Drayton. This funding would also go towards the provision of ten presentations from doctors to young people about how to help someone who had been stabbed and the purchase of 31 bleed control kits which would go out to strategic locations across the Borough.

It was noted that incidents of anti social behaviour (ASB) occurred across the whole Borough. However, as the type of ASB varied from ward to ward, consideration was being given to prevention and early intervention activity being targeted to each area. Ms Robertson advised that the Council had funded a scheme in schools where Unlock Drama went in to talk about issues such as gangs and knife crime. The Council had worked closely with the Safer Schools Officers to set up football clubs and boxing clubs to divert young people and the Dr Bike scheme had also been used as a diversionary activity. Further work was being undertaken to engage with primary schools.

Although the boxing clubs and football clubs (with well-established links to Brentford Football Club) were tried and tested ways of diverting young people from crime, these were very sports orientated initiatives. Consideration could be given to alternative interests such as music/mixing/producing. Better links between the police and youth services were also needed so that the police could work alongside the Council when the youth services visited ASB hotspot areas. A review of the Council's youth services was being undertaken to identify what was currently available and any gaps in the service. Members asked that the results of this review be brought back to the Committee at a future meeting.

Concern was expressed that residents who reported instances of ASB were being told by the MPS that the issue would not be treated as a high priority. This kind of police non-response did not encourage residents to engage with the police as there was the perception that no action would be taken as a result and therefore nothing would change.

Supt Bennett stated that not enough progress had been made since the McPherson report had been published. He noted that engagement was undertaken across London, centrally and locally but there was still not enough action being taken to encourage youth engagement. As such, it was important for young people to engage to enable change to take place. Locally, the police were committed to continuing to engage with communities to try to build bridges.

Insofar as staffing was concerned, Members were advised that new officers were put on rotation through the different teams. These officers were in addition to the usual Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) officers and would be properly supervised by officers who needed to have been trained appropriately. It was recognised that the areas covered by SNT sergeants had increased.

Changes to Ward boundaries would be effective in May. The MPS was currently looking at what this would mean but it was thought unlikely to have much of an impact on Ward Panels. It was suggested that information be given to those attending Ward Panels about what issues could be dealt with by the Council and what would fall to the police.

Supt Bennett advised that a Youth Provision Specialist Scrutiny Panel had been set up in Ealing in conjunction with the Youth Justice Service to review the youth provision in the Borough to prevent young people from offending / reoffending. It had started in

March 2022 and was meeting every 6-8 weeks to look at issues such as stop and search and provide feedback.

RESOLVED: That the discussion be noted.

59. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme. Members agreed to cancel the meeting scheduled for 27 April 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting, which commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 9.00 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nikki O'Halloran on 01895 250472. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.