

## Minutes

Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities  
Policy Overview Committee  
Thursday, 20 September 2018  
Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge



Published on:

Come into effect on: Immediately (or call-in date)

### **Members Present:**

Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman)  
Wayne Bridges (Vice-Chairman)  
Nicola Brightman  
Farhad Choubedar  
Alan Deville  
Jazz Dhillon  
Kerri Prince

### **Apologies:**

Councillors Lindsay Bliss  
Vanessa Hurhangee

### **Substitutes:**

Councillors Robin Sansapuri  
Steve Tuckwell

### **Officers Present:**

Ian Anderson, Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries  
Dan Kennedy, Deputy Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Health & Wellbeing  
Jacqui Robertson, Service Manager for Community Safety  
Luke Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

## **21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lindsay Bliss and Vanessa Hurhangee, with Councillors Robin Sansapuri and Steve Tuckwell substituting.

## **22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2018**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

## **24. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was agreed that all items would be considered in public.

## **25. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE UPDATE REPORT**

The Business Manager for Complaints and Enquiries introduced his report, and informed Members that as a result of a review of the Council's corporate complaints procedure by this committee, it had resulted in significant changes to the way complaints are now being handled. His report would show the impact of these changes, in particular the procedure had been streamlined and fewer complaints were now escalating to stages 2 and 3.

The Committee were informed that for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018:

The number of informal complaints had reduced from 416 in 2016/17 to 222 for 2017/18. The main reason for the reduction in informal complaints recorded was the change in service provider, as the current provider is more effective at answering the questions being asked.

The number of Stage 1 complaints had fallen from 285 for 2016/17 to 243.

The number of Stage 2 complaints had also fallen from 40 in 2016/17 to 23 for 2017/18. This was expected, as officers are applying the revised corporate complaints procedure by using their discretion to escalate a complaint direct from Stages 1 and/or 2 to the Ombudsman.

There were no Stage 3 complaints recorded for 2017/18.

The number of complaints investigated by the Ombudsman for 2017/18 was ten. The Committee can have some reassurance that the implementation of the change in the complaint procedure had not resulted in a deterioration of performance.

Councillors heard that 8,502 Members Enquiries were received for 2017/18, and the year before it was 9,185. This change was largely due to the way that enquiries were recorded, with multiple enquiries received on the same issue classed as one enquiry.

The Committee heard that four compliments were received, but was informed that this could be due to the fact that the recording of compliments is not promoted as well as it should be. Members were informed that an article would be appearing in the Council's All Staff E-mail to encourage officers to send their compliments to the Complaints and Enquiries Team so that they can be better recorded.

Members commented that the impact of the Committee's review into the complaints procedure has led to clear improvements, and stated that the statistics showed that the Council dealt with complaints efficiently. Councillors also noted that there were probably many more compliments received but these were not recorded.

Responding to questioning from the Committee, the Business Manager for Complaints and Enquiries confirmed that when a complaint is received and dealt with informally, the Council aim to reply within two or three working days. If a complaint is registered as a formal complaint, it is acknowledged within two working

days and the complainant is then informed who will respond and when they can expect to receive their response.

Councillors were also informed that, where the Council were deemed to be at fault and a complaint upheld, the organisation will complete a “learning memo”, report the result of the complaint to Senior Managers in the relevant service area, and the Council can then follow-up on this to ensure services are improved.

**RESOLVED: That the Annual Complaint Report for Corporate Services be noted.**

## **26. REVIEW A: POLICING IN HILLINGDON**

The Deputy Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Health and Wellbeing, and Service Manager for Community Safety were in attendance at the meeting and addressed the Committee with details of the policing structures in Hillingdon.

Councillors were informed that the Community Safety Team (CST) identified the needs of the borough with regards to crime prevention, and was working with partners in the Safer Hillingdon Partnership to tackle a number of issues, such as youth violence, burglary, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse. The team works alongside other Council departments, such as Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour and Social Care, as well as the Police, Fire Brigade and private sector landlords, to identify these issues to tackle. Once identified, the CST’s partners can then pass on any resident feedback regarding local issues to the relevant partner and action can be taken to tackle the problem with partners, for example; police, truancy officers, environmental enforcement teams, trading standards etc.

The Committee heard that the Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP) was a statutory body responsible made up from a number of statutory members, that receives progress reports on crime and sets targets for crime prevention. The SHP also completes needs assessments for the Borough, and compares Hillingdon with other neighbouring local authorities, and once a year, sets a plan to tackle local issues. It is also able to hold partners to account for the delivery of local actions plans to tackle these concerns.

The Service Manager for Community Safety discussed the changes made to policing within Hillingdon, and noted that on 6 June 2018, Hillingdon joined the London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow to form the West Area Basic Command Unit (BCU), which replaced the Metropolitan police’s old 32-borough model by merging neighbouring local police forces to form twelve new BCUs. Trials for the model were carried out in the east, and central north, of London.

Members were informed that the Council funds two sergeants and 5.5 constables with two grants; an annual grant of £81k, and a further grant of £538k for three years which ends in March 2020. These grants are matched by the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), which provides a further 7.5 constables. Currently, in the north of the Borough there is one sergeant and five constables, while one sergeant and eight constables operate in the south of the Borough. Officers were

asked whether Ealing and Hounslow fund additional officers, and the Committee noted that an answer to this question would be supplied outside of the meeting.

The Committee heard that the Service Manager for Community Safety meets with the Safer Hillingdon Partnership, Inspector and both local sergeants on a fortnightly basis, as well as other officers who bring cases to the Tasking Teams. There is also the opportunity to directly task the Police with issues that have been raised via Member Enquiries, and if an investigation requires a specialised task, the Police are able to use a Tasking Team for this. It was confirmed that Tasking Teams were still ring-fenced to Hillingdon, with money allocated for Hillingdon only.

Responding to questioning from Councillors, it was confirmed that one of the current Partnership Inspectors was in Hillingdon before the new BCU-merger, and the other has come from Hounslow. Members also heard that at the end of each month, the two partnership sergeants share their day-to-day work results with the Council to examine what actions they have taken over the previous month. It was noted that when large Metropolitan Police operations take place, such as at Notting Hill Carnival, then Police officers who are usually on patrol in Hillingdon may be called away to help at these events.

The Committee were informed that under the new policing structure, there were more regular meetings taking place between the Council and Police, with other Council departments represented, and not just Community Safety officers. The Deputy Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Health and Wellbeing confirmed that this helps the Council to ensure they are getting value for their financial contributions, and allows the Service Manager for Community Safety to look at the Borough's priorities and ensure they are considered and protected by the Police, as well as leading to more cohesive working that is directed more through intelligence.

Members asked whether there were initiatives in place to improve problem areas for the Borough, and heard that a lot of work was happening on current issues, such as violent or knife crime. The use of knife arches and plain-clothes officers has helped, while the Safer Neighbourhood Board is using companies to go to schools to deliver messages to pupils on the consequences of actions and knife crime. The Committee noted this was good to hear, as knife crime is a major issue, both nationally and within London, and also commented that Ward Panels had noted that drug and knife crime has reduced lately, which was promising news and a reflection of the good work that is happening to tackle local issues.

Responding to Councillors' questioning, it was confirmed that with regards to Tasking Teams, the Council now have more ownership of local issues as they can direct officers specifically to areas where they have heard local issues have arisen or may arise, and the Service Manager for Community Safety confirmed that this was a good way to get value for money for the Council's contributions. Members heard that it is important to remember that there are occasions when officers must be given flexibility to deal with issues that could be related to high-level intelligence.

The Deputy Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Health and Wellbeing cited fly-tipping as an example of where the new policing structures have also been

beneficial to the Council. Previously, when incursions onto land have led to fly-tipping, and Council legislation could take a couple of days to pass to counter this issue, while the Police could act immediately. Now, with the new BCU, it is possible for officers to contact the Borough Commander or Superintendent directly, who can treat an incursion as a priority and act quickly to prevent fly-tipping or damage to the site. Historically, this has been a major issue for residents and has come at a high cost to the Council, as cleaning up from fly-tipping diverts resources away from other areas. This direct link to senior Police figures within the BCU have allowed the police to act quickly and effectively, and also help foster a shared understanding of the priorities of the Council.

The Committee expressed concern that there was a possibility the Council could lose its direct contact with the Police under the new structure, and that resources could be diverted away from Hillingdon to neighbouring boroughs. However, the Deputy Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Health and Wellbeing confirmed that, while on occasions officers may be diverted away to help with issues outside Hillingdon, this issue works both ways and Hillingdon can call on additional officers from Hounslow or Ealing to help with major issues. Additionally, this helps with the responsiveness to issues and fosters a mutual understanding that is beneficial, as well as giving the Council further experience and knowledge that they can rely on from officers outside the Borough.

The Service Manager for Community Safety confirmed that the Council are confident the Tasking Teams have a robust structure. One sergeant has changed since the formation of the new BCU, but this did not alter the relationship between the Council and the Police. Furthermore, it can be helpful for changes to take place, as officers are able to bring best practice from other Boroughs or areas of the country.

The Deputy Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Health and Wellbeing confirmed that CCTV infrastructure was a key area of investment for the Council to not only tackle crime, but also reduce the fear of crime. There are around 900 CCTV cameras in the Borough, and many of these have been in operation for around twenty years, which led to the decision by Cabinet to agree a three-year programme to upgrade the CCTV cameras in Hillingdon. So far, 87 upgrade schemes were in the process of being rolled out, and this was due to be completed by the end of autumn. It was also confirmed that the rollout was being completed quicker ahead of the timescale laid out for the project.

Members heard that the Uxbridge town centre CCTV had been upgraded, and the CCTV Control Room was being improved. The investment means that the old analog system will be upgraded, which will lead to clearer pictures, greater zoom capabilities and the ability to focus cameras on an incident. Furthermore, a number of systems that are currently standalone, without their recordings connected to the control room, can only store recordings for 30 days. Under the new system, the cameras are wireless, high-definition, and connected to the control room hub. The new system significantly enhances the surveillance capabilities of the Borough, as the new technology is able to “auto-track”, meaning it can sense motion and pan around to follow someone or something, whereas previous cameras had to be fitted and manually moved.

Responding to questioning from the Committee, officers confirmed that the new cameras are capable of facial and movement recognition, and provide sharp, clear images, even in low-level light. It was agreed that officers would try to demonstrate the new CCTV capabilities to the Committee at a future meeting, if possible.

Councillors asked whether the CCTV footage was available for the local police force, and were informed that there were police operators within the CCTV Control Room. This allows the police to see an issue and report it straight away, along with sending images to the Police immediately. The Police can also formally request footage, which can be provided by the control room faster than previously. Members agreed that this was encouraging to hear, and any methods to speed up the process of getting information to the Police were very welcome.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, officers confirmed that the Council were in the process of upgrading the backup CCTV operation room. Members asked whether there was a backup system that would allow a supply of images to the CCTV control room, should electronic issues arise, and whether there was a single point of failure that could prevent images from being recorded. It was agreed that officers would provide a written answer to this question.

The Committee asked what the process was when a current issue was reported by local residents, and they were informed that the control room would be able to locate CCTV images of the area and pass these onto the police. This was recently put into practice after a spate of car break-ins, and allowed the Police to identify and arrest the perpetrators.

With regards to the new rollout of cameras, officers confirmed that they could be used for multiple purposes. Both fixed and movable cameras can be relocated if necessary, and mobile cameras can be moved to a new location to deal with a current issue before being returned to its previous location if necessary. The Council and Police look at all options of where to locate the cameras to ensure they have the most impact on preventing crime.

Responding to questioning, officers confirmed the process for moving a standalone camera. This involved ensuring that the move adhered to GDPR rules and a privacy impact assessment, before proving that the move of the camera was justifiable with current evidence, and other less intrusive actions had failed. The Council would engage with the Police and contact centre to gather the relevant evidence, and then put in a request to the relevant Cabinet Member to move of the camera. Once agreed with the Cabinet Member and Leader of the Council, often following a site visit, the installation and move of the camera was approved, and could take up to ten days.

Members heard that following the current rollout of CCTV cameras (Phase 1 & 2 of the rollout), Phase 3 would begin, which included cameras that were more dedicated to preventing fly-tipping and installing additional cameras where required.

Officers commented that the Council was linking up with neighbouring boroughs, and this has led to improved communication and warnings from the neighbouring boroughs, which was one major benefit of the new tri-borough structure. Members

heard that the Police were very good at sharing information, alerting the relevant teams and officers to react very quickly to any local issues.

The Committee asked about the potential of sharing information or images with police officers on the ground, and were informed that the Police within the control room could guide officers on the ground to an incident. Councillors heard that the next stage was being explored to develop CCTV to allow officers remote access to images, and once safeguards regarding CCTV have been received, this will take place and would be a significant help for police operations as officers carried tablets and could receive the images directly.

Regarding the future of the CCTV system, the Deputy Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Health and Wellbeing confirmed that they hoped for future automatic number plate recognition technology to be installed, which would help populate a database that could flag up vehicles that did not have tax or insurance, as well as vehicles that were of interest to the Police in relation to crimes. This would then allow the Police to build an idea of vehicle movements and give the Police a broader picture that would allow them to better combat crime.

The Committee thanked the officers for their attendance and important insight into the new policing structure and CCTV systems. Officers noted that the Partnership Sergeant stated that should any member of the Committee be interested on going on a tour with local police officers, then to contact them and this could be arranged. It was confirmed that a tour of the CCTV Control Room could also be organised.

**RESOLVED: That the evidence submitted within the witness session, with regards to the Committee's review into Policing within Hillingdon, was noted.**

**27. FORWARD PLAN**

**RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.**

**28. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2020**

**RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.**