

Minutes



EXTERNAL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

15 September 2021

HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Nick Denys (Chairman), Devi Radia (Vice-Chairman), Heena Makwana, Stuart Mathers (In place of Peter Money) and June Nelson</p> <p>Also Present: Chief Superintendent Peter Gardner, Chief Superintendent, West Area BCU - Metropolitan Police Service Sergeant Allyson Keith, Safer Schools Team, Metropolitan Police - Youth Partnership Roy Parsons, Chair, Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch Jacqui Robertson, Service Manager for Community Safety</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services Manager)</p>
18.	<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 Councillors Simon Arnold, Darran Davies and Peter Money (Councillor Stuart Mathers was present as his substitute).</p>
19.	<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>
20.	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that the first half of Agenda Item 7 would be held in public and that the second half of that item would be held in private.</p>
21.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 20 JULY 2021 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2021 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
22.	<p>CHILDREN'S DENTAL SERVICES DRAFT FINAL REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Councillor Sue O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing, to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the recommendations included in the draft final report on children's dental services in Agenda B reflected the recommendations that had been agreed by Members at their last meeting on 20 July 2021. The Chairman advised that he had spoken to partners about the proposed recommendations which had been well</p>

received. He had also spoken to the relevant Council officers and Cabinet Members who had all provided positive feedback.

Councillor O'Brien noted that the Committee's report had been highlighted at the Hillingdon Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 14 September 2021 as the issue of children's oral health sat within the Child Healthy Weight Action Plan. With the schools now reopened for the new academic year, the report was thought to be timely as actions could now be rolled out. It was noted that there had been absolute buy in from partners.

Councillor O'Brien recognised that the review had started before the pandemic and that there had been a change of Members involved over the course of the review. She thanked all of the Members that had been involved for their hard work on the review and for a fantastic report.

It was thought that the two most important recommendations would be those in relation to ongoing oversight by the Select Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED: That the final report be agreed.

23. WORK PROGRAMME (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Chairman noted that Councillor Arnold had previously requested that the Committee receive an update on the progress of the Hillingdon Hospital development at this meeting. As there had been little information currently available, it had been agreed that a brief update would be provided as part of the health updates at the meeting on 7 October 2021 and that a more detailed discussion could take place at the meeting on 27 January 2022.

It was proposed that the health partners attending the meeting on 7 October 2021 be asked to focus on two main issues (alongside any other issues that they wanted to raise):

1. What action had been taken to prepare for winter pressures?
2. What action was being taken to deal with the backlog that had arisen since the start of the pandemic?

In addition, it was agreed that health partners be asked to provide actual numbers in relation to any backlog that had arisen. It was also agreed that The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust be asked to provide an update on action taken in relation to infection prevention and control following the improvement plan that had been put in place.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be agreed.

24. SAFER HILLINGDON PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

Sergeant Allyson Keith advised that she led ten police officers (Safer Schools Officers (SSOs)) that made up the Safer Schools Team in the West Area. The Team worked with secondary school head teachers in the Borough in relation to safeguarding, diversionary and preventative actions. Each of the ten officers on Sgt Keith's team were designated to work with three schools and also worked with the Council and other partners. Each secondary school in the Borough had a named officer contact within

the Schools Team.

The role of SSOs was to break down barriers and build relations with young people. The SSOs maintained a presence in the schools, routinely giving presentations and working in partnership. This had resulted in the creation of mutually trusting relationships whereby young people would proactively reach out to the SSOs.

It was noted that a lot of the work undertaken by the SSOs was in relation to safeguarding. The team worked hard to divert young people away from crime rather than criminalising them. To this end, two clubs had been set up for these young people which were each staffed by two of Sgt Keith's team with links to other agencies. These clubs covered a number of schools but were resource intensive so the creation of additional clubs was not possible within existing resources.

Over the summer holidays, the team had been working with young people to reduce truancy from school. They had also been working with police cadets in the Borough to undertake underage test purchases of alcohol from off licence premises (as there were links between this behaviour and child criminal exploitation (CCE)).

Members were aware of diversionary activity that had taken place within the Borough and noted how effective this had been. Sgt Keith advised that the team had links with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and looked at what the schools could do to help those young people that had been identified. The team also worked with the Youth Offending Service, Social Care and other agencies once the school had brought a young person to their attention. Action was then taken to map out the young person's contacts to get a clearer picture of how to help them.

In terms of preventing a young person from being involved in criminal activity, it was noted that the Schools Team was reliant on the DSL flagging young people with early indicators such as persistent disruptive behaviour. At the request of Members, Sgt Keith agreed to look at what effective preventative action was taken in other Boroughs to identify any gaps in the Hillingdon provision and forward this information on to the Democratic Services Manager.

Sgt Keith advised that the amount of information provided varied from school to school. However, all schools valued the service provided by the team. For example, although it was not thought that there was an issue in Hillingdon, schools welcomed weapons screening as they saw it as the police supporting schools by taking preventative action.

Prior to the pandemic, the "Your Life, You Choose" programme had been running. This was a multi agency drop down event for Year 7 pupils which covered a number of issues including knife crime, grooming, drugs, the court system, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and CCE. This programme was now back up and running and was available for all secondary schools. In addition, the team was available to have chats, deliver presentations and hold assemblies in secondary schools on issues such as cyber bullying, personal safety and robbery, drugs, sexual offences, knife crime and gangs.

Sgt Keith confirmed that the Youth Engagement Team worked with primary schools in the Borough and provided a transition session for those young people moving from Year 6 (primary school) into Year 7 (secondary school). All DSLs were also able to contact Sgt Keith for signposting.

Chief Superintendent Peter Gardner, Commander for the West Area Basic Command

Unit (BCU), advised that there were a number of measures of success. The team's productivity was monitored with regard to the number of presentations and engagements undertaken. Although the ultimate measurement would be the overall levels of violence, it was important to also look at the activities that had been undertaken by SSOs.

C/Supt Gardner advised that it had been a very busy period for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and for the West Area BCU. Over the summer, police officers had moved to 12 hour shifts to cope with the increase in demand on the service from things like the bank holiday weekend and Extinction Rebellion protests (which had drawn police resources from across the whole of London). Officers were tired but continued to work hard.

It was noted that the country was fast moving into the "Autumn Nights" period where there was a routine increase in the number of burglaries undertaken. The campaign to provide information to residents on how to protect their homes would again be run this year in partnership with the Council.

With regard to the performance of the Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP), it was thought more representative to compare the current figures with 2019 rather than 2020 which had been significantly affected by the pandemic. It was noted that, between 2019 and 2021:

- Offences overall had reduced by 14% in Hillingdon (3,700 fewer offences);
- Burglary had reduced by 39% (989 fewer offences);
- Robbery had reduced by 44.7% (355 fewer offences);
- Violence with injury had reduced by 14.6% (370 fewer offences);
- Total gun crime had reduced by 40.4% (19 fewer offences);
- Total knife crime had reduced by 42.7% (155 fewer offences);
- Knife injury victims (U25 non-DA) had reduced by 24.1% (7 fewer offences);
- Shoplifting had reduced by 27.4% (428 fewer offences);
- Theft from a person had reduced by 40.3% (213 fewer offences); and
- Anti Social Behaviour calls had reduced by 12.6% (1,681 fewer calls).

Although the police had been able to sustain these reductions so far, there was concern that there had been a 4.3% increase in domestic abuse (128 more offences). There had also been increases the number of reports of rape (+10%) and sexual offences (+26% - more than half of which had been in familial / domestic settings). It was thought that there may have been an increase in reporting following the murder of Sarah Everard.

Insofar as sexual offences were concerned, there had been an increase in incidents such as sexting and touching over clothes. The MPS had relaunched the Ask Angela campaign and had been raising awareness of it amongst staff in restaurants and bars across the Borough. Police patrols had been increased in high footfall areas and a pilot was being undertaken whereby female officers would be taking a group of women out along transport routes to talk about how safe they felt.

The last 18 months had been a difficult period and had shown that inter agency working had never been more useful or more valued. It was noted that an additional 50 officers were expected to join the West Area BCU in the next few months.

Ms Jacqui Robertson, Community Safety Manager, advised that the Council had been working alongside the police. She would be attending an event on 17 September 2021 in West Drayton and another on 19 October 2021 in Botwell where she would be

talking to women about safety, health and wellbeing. Monthly targeted problem solving days had also been arranged where leaflet drops were undertaken. However, it was thought that printed materials could not replace the value of face to face contact with residents with things like information stalls.

C/Supt Gardner advised that, if an allegation was made to an officer, they were duty bound to put a crime report on the system. The community policing model had been based around ward officers and in each ward there should be two dedicated police officers and a PCSO. These officers would then hold workshops and ward panel meetings which were key ways of getting information. The Online Watch Link (OWL) network was also retained here.

The OWL network was thought to help keep communities safe, reduce crime and keep people informed of what was going on locally by targeting messages at specific geographical areas. It was a secure platform for the public and shared with the police and Council to maximise the potential of schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch and Business Watch. Approximately 17,000 Hillingdon residents had signed up to OWL which was the highest subscription rate in London. It was thought that OWL could be better used in getting messages back out to local subscribers with feedback on how the information that residents had provided had resulted in positive outcomes.

Insofar as ward panels were concerned, it was recognised that their effectiveness varied. C/Supt Gardner hoped that the ward officers would flag it if they thought that their panel meetings were not going as well as they should. He met with neighbourhood policing teams on a monthly basis.

It was noted that the Council paid for additional officers in the Borough and it was queried whether Hillingdon was getting value for money if local police officers were being diverted to deal with issues such as Extinction Rebellion protests. C/Supt Gardner advised that the officers paid for by the Council were ringfenced and would not be redeployed elsewhere apart from for extreme aid days. He would provide figures on this issue to the Democratic Services Manager. Joint tasking and working with the local authority had added significant value locally.

C/Supt Gardner advised that very few instances of hate crime had been motivated by protected characteristics. However, there had been an increase in the number of aggravated hate crimes which tended to follow things like increased reporting of issues around immigration in the media. C/Supt Gardner would provide the Democratic Services Manager with exact figures.

It was noted that some residents had reported crimes such as car thefts, catalytic converter thefts or burglaries to the police and had received a CAD number. However, there had not been any subsequent police presence at the scene or follow up contact made by the police. C/Supt advised that there were not enough police officers to send out to each report of crime. If a crime was reported to an officer at the scene, that officer would undertake a primary investigation. If the crime was reported online or via the telephone, the report would be logged and an initial assessment undertaken. If it was thought that there were enough leads, the report would be passed to police officers for further investigation.

C/Supt Gardner advised that, following the report of a crime, residents were supposed to receive a letter. If this was not happening, he would need to investigate the reason as there was a requirement for officers to keep residents updated on the progress of an open investigation.

Although C/Supt Gardner understood that residents were upset when they became the victim of crime, youth violence was currently being prioritised. His priority for the West Area BCU was preventing individuals from being stabbed and preventing serious sexual assault. That said, information gathering about issues as important. If a catalytic converter theft was reported, any information about the thief's vehicle registration number was logged and could help to identify and prosecute the perpetrator. With regard to reports of anti social behaviour, if officers were unable to respond immediately, they might look to put a tasking team into the area.

It was recognised that low level incidents could resonate into violent crime. Concern was expressed that, if there was no police presence following the report of low-level crimes, how could residents be confident that there would be a response to reports of higher-level crimes. C/Supt Gardner advised that there were well understood links between drugs and crime. The West Area had led the MPS in action against drugs through the Drugs Focus Desk model which had now been rolled out across London. Levels of gun and knife crime had subsequently been halved as a result of the work undertaken in relation to drugs.

Concern was expressed in relation to public confidence and satisfaction with the 101 service (the non-emergency contact number for the police) which varied across the Borough. C/Supt Gardner recognised that there had been challenges but that there had been some improvement in the service.

It was noted that information was being circulated and available to those residents that had subscribed to OWL and were digitally connected. C/Supt Gardner advised that engaging with those that were not digitally connected had proved more challenging. Although police officers would attend community meetings and events when they could, the MPS did not have the resources to do regular leaflet drops and larger public meetings had been paused during the pandemic.

Members were advised that all parts of the Borough were policed based on their needs. Areas of deprivation did not have fewer resources allocated to them than more affluent areas. Resources, and discretionary effort, were targeted at areas with high demand / high crime.

Members suggested that Ward Councillors and local community leaders would often have a profile with community groups across the Borough and could be used to signpost towards assistance that could be provided. In one instance, there had been a slight increase in burglaries in a particular area which hadn't appeared significant. However, Councillors had been able to flag that the fear of crime had increased as the nature of the burglaries had changed to aggravated burglaries. C/Supt Gardner noted that they all wanted the same thing so any assistance would be welcomed by the police.

Mr Roy Parsons, Chairman of Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch (HNW), advised that HNW was comprised of around 500 Watches, the coordinators of which were vetted. Typically, each covered 40-100 properties. Although some of the residents did not have access to the Internet at home, a message could possibly be sent out to them via their coordinator if there was an issue that they needed to be alerted to. Mr Parsons advised that HNW maintained an excellent relationship with the police but that HNW would appreciate more Police information being circulated.

It was noted that HNW had been supporting the police and providing advice to

residents for around 20 years. The scheme received a small grant from MOPAC and was managed by the Council with an office at Manor Farm House. As well as producing a newsletter, HNW was able to answer some questions on behalf of the police and provide information about CCTV and crime prevention.

HNW had a steering group and had developed a good working relationship with the Council's Community Safety Team where information could be exchanged. HNW was networked the Police across London as well as with Forces in surrounding areas such as Hertfordshire and Thames Valley.

OWL had been introduced in Hillingdon in May 2018. The system had been adopted by about half of all London authorities and was part funded by councils and part funded by MOPAC. It was noted that OWL could be used to send out messages to subscribers and could be accessed by an app that had recently been launched and could be downloaded.

Mr Parsons advised that OWL membership was currently higher in the north of the Borough so action was being taken to increase sign up in the south. He would let the Democratic Services Manager know the minimum age that an individual could sign up for OWL membership.

HNW had been working with the Community Safety team to identify venues in the south of the Borough such as libraries where local residents could be signed up for OWL on the spot. The Leader of the Council had also been supportive and had agreed to include information about HNW and OWL in Hillingdon People.

With the increasing accessibility of domestic CCTV, sign up to CCTV Watch was also being promoted as it provided the police with additional resources. It was estimated that this facility saved the MPS around £½m-£1m per year.

As well as a strong relationship with the police where information was collected and shared, HNW had also received support from the community and local MPs. However, although OWL brought tangible and significant benefits to the areas that it covered, the future funding of the system was uncertain and this could have a negative impact on the future of Neighbourhood Watch. The loss of OWL would also mean the loss of contact details for all of those residents that had signed up to the service.

Members were advised that OWL was privately run by a small organisation as a not-for-profit business. The police valued OWL for its operational value and residents valued it for its communication value. It was thought important that the Borough not lose the networking and information sharing facilitated by OWL.

Mr Parsons advised that, if a resident wanted to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in their area, they would need to email the HNW office (all@hillingdonhw.co.uk), stating their name and where they lived. Leaflets would then be sent out and checks done on the person making the enquiry to confirm their identity.

RESOLVED: That:

1. Sgt Keith provide the Democratic Services Manager with information about effective preventative action taken in other Boroughs;
2. C/Supt Gardner to provide the Democratic Services Manager with figures on the redeployment of the ringfenced officers paid for by the Council;
3. C/Supt Gardner provide the Democratic Services Manager with exact figures on hate crime in the Borough motivated by each of the protected

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| | <p>characteristics and the number of aggravated hate crimes;</p> <p>4. Mr Parsons let the Democratic Services Manager know the minimum age that an individual could sign up for OWL membership; and</p> <p>5. the discussion be noted.</p> |
| | <p>The meeting, which commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.44 pm.</p> |

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.