

Minutes

EXTERNAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 March 2017

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chairman), Ian Edwards (Vice-Chairman), Teji Barnes, Mohinder Birah, Tony Burles, Brian Crowe, Michael White and Jas Dhot (In place of Phoday Jarjussey)</p> <p>Also Present: Colin Wingrove, Borough Commander - Metropolitan Police Service Lynn Hawes, Service Manager - Youth Offending Service Antony Rose, National Probation Service</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Dr Steve Hajioff, Director of Public Health Mike Wolski, Interim Emergency Management and Response Neil Fraser, Democratic Services Officer</p>
35.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Jarjussey. Councillor Dhot was in attendance as his substitute.</p>
36.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Dhot declared a non pecuniary interest in respect of Item 5: Youth Offending / Safer Hillingdon Partnership Performance Monitoring, in that he worked for HM Prison Service in Feltham Young Offender's Institute.</p>
37.	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That all items of business be considered in public.</p>
38.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 15 FEBRUARY 2017 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman, together with the other Committee Members, asked for a note of thanks to be passed to the Head of Democratic Services regarding the high quality of the clerk's minutes from the previous meeting. It was recognised that the meeting had been challenging to record, due to the high number of speakers, but that the minutes were of exceptional quality and accuracy.</p> <p>It was suggested that the minutes be used as the basis of a report to be forwarded to the Chairman of the Local Safeguarding Children Board for review, before being brought to a future Cabinet meeting.</p>

In addition, Councillor Burles requested that the topic be considered for a future Member Development session. The Chairman advised that a discussion had been held with the Conservative Group's Chief Whip, who had confirmed that there was session on Mental Health forthcoming. CSE and other topics could be incorporated into future sessions, potentially via Member Training days or through items brought to meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board and other relevant committees. Debby Weissang, CSE Strategic Manager - Children's and Young People's Service, who spoke at the previous meeting, would likely be involved in any such sessions, though these matters were still being discussed.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2017 be approved as a correct record.**
- 2. That a further report be forwarded to the Chairman of the Local Safeguarding Children Board for review, before being brought to a future Cabinet meeting.**

39. **YOUTH OFFENDING / SAFER HILLINGDON PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE MONITORING** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked them for giving their time to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to enable the Committee to comment on the impact of the work being undertaken locally by the Safer Hillingdon Partnership partners and the Youth Offending Service. It was recognised that youth offending was a 'hot topic' and Members were eager for additional information and updates on this important issue.

Mark Wolski, Interim Emergency Management and Response, addressed the Committee on the topic of Crime and Disorder Reduction. Mr Wolski confirmed that that, upon review of the overall crime statistics for the Borough, it was apparent that violent crime including knife crime and knife crime with injury, together with the number of young people involved in such crime, had increased over the past 12 months. In comparison to other London Boroughs, Hillingdon was 15th highest for knife crime, a comparatively low figure. Instead, Hillingdon saw a higher prevalence of robbery and burglaries.

Work was being undertaken to determine where and why violent crime was occurring. The Botwell and Townfield Wards showed the highest instances of knife crime within the Borough, while Hayes was often a focal point for such crime. The cohort of young offenders seen to be involved were from within the Borough, with local postcode addresses, though there were instances of groups committing crimes within the Borough but residing in areas outside the Borough, such as Southall.

Early intervention and outreach were recognised as important factors when addressing these issues. The Hayes Initiative was designed to bring partners together, focussing on Hayes as a crime centre and crime generator. It was confirmed that a paper would be brought to the Safer Hillingdon Partnership to further elaborate on this.

Colin Wingrove, Borough Commander, addressed the Committee on behalf of the Metropolitan Police Service. Mr Wingrove confirmed that within London, knife crime as a whole had increased. Within Hillingdon instance of knife crime had risen from 150 to 200 instances. To address this, the Police and Crime Plan 2017 - 2021 had been drafted set out the strategy for policing and crime reduction in London over the next four years.

46 knife crime offences had been recorded within Hillingdon over the current calendar year, an increase of 14 offenses in comparison to the same period in the previous year. Incidents of crime, including robbery against commercial entities (such as betting shops) and personal robberies, had increased from 299 to 405. However, this was a stark reduction compared to the approximately 1000 offenses recorded annually five years ago. This overall downward trend was likely due to an increase in quality education as well as a wider public use of technology, for example the increase in usage of smart phones with tracking and encryption made these items less attractive to steal. Burglaries and robberies were more commonly seen in the south of the Borough.

£7.5m, via Crossrail investment, had been allocated to regenerate the Hillingdon area and provide the means for partners to come together and coordinate actions to prevent crime. This included improved store frontages, engagement schemes within local communities, and an increase in CCTV coverage, all of which were designed to make the area safer for honest residents and more hostile to criminals. The Safer Hillingdon Partnership, alongside the Youth Offending Service and the Probation Services, would work together to instigate initiatives and provide support across the Borough.

There was a reliance on receiving notice from members of the public to detect possession of knives, though officers were also being trained to search for knives during stop-and-search instances, in the same manner in which they checked for possession of drugs. It was recognised that there was often a link between drug use and knife crime. 29.4% of offenders using knives when committing crimes were subsequently detected. It was agreed that the figures for detections of offenders causing injury by knife, together with crime statistics broken down by ward, and inclusive of comparisons to neighbouring and nearby Boroughs, would be forwarded to Committee Members outside of the meeting.

When comparing crime statistics to other nearby or neighbouring Boroughs, Dr Hajioff, Director of Public Health - London Borough of Hillingdon, confirmed that the Office of National Statistics defined Hillingdon's neighbours based on a variety of contributory factors, including population, age, and ethnicity. Hounslow was recognised as having a similar population and a commensurate number and type of offences to Hillingdon (64 offenses with injury in rolling year). Ealing (57 offenses with injury) and Brent (83 offenses with injury) displayed higher proportional knife crime. Harrow, a smaller Borough, had comparatively less crime (46 offenses with injury). Hotspots for crime included Southall and the Uxbridge corridor, and particularly within areas of high footfall such as large town centres.

Members suggested that analysis be undertaken to review contributory factors to crime, such as population demographics including age, ethnicity, and gender, to enable targeted assistance within those problem areas. Colin Wingrove confirmed that the Neighbourhood Confidence and Crime Comparator Tool could be used to look at all Wards within London. Areas were split into clusters, with the Hayes cluster ranking 38th out of 106 clusters for instances of criminal activity. The tool was confirmed to be available for use by members of the public.

In addition, the Home Office provided measures to compare areas of similar population density and demographics, to enable strategic analysis. Mr Wolski confirmed that a target date of 8 weeks for strategic analysis of the data had been set, for review by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Mr Wingrove discussed drugs within the Borough, and confirmed that the most commonly possessed drugs were cannabis, cocaine, and heroin. Young people (under

18) most commonly abused cannabis and alcohol, rather than opiates or cocaine. Certain areas, such as Hayes, were seen as having a high prevalence of openly available drugs, which in turn contributed to possession of knives, violent crime, and anti social behaviour such as street drinking. Future plans to address such matters would include profiling, analysis, and early intervention.

Through analysis of the individuals arrested for possession of drugs, a picture of the characteristics and personality traits of the people involved was formed. Often, such people would have a chaotic lifestyle, or potentially mental health issues, that contributed to them wanting to drink or use drugs in higher quantities. It was pleasing that recent targeted actions against the suppliers of drugs had led to convictions.

London's next Police and Crime Plan recognised the growing issue of knife crime, and proposed to incorporate a pan-London knife crime strategy. As the strategy developed, it was expected that there would be increased working with offenders and victims as well as partners, such as the Child Protection Service, to create a unified strategy across all London Boroughs and thereby reduce knife crime. A response to the draft plan consultation had been sent to the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC), requesting clarity of what the plan's proposed initiatives, and its implications towards safeguarding, would mean, particularly in light of the proposals outlined within the Wood Report.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wingrove for his attendance and presentation, and Lynne Hawes, Service Manager - Youth Offending Service (YOS), then introduced a presentation on the YOS, part of the Youth Justice System.

Members were informed that the Local Authorities, in partnership with police, probation and health authorities, were required to establish multi-agency youth offending teams to co-ordinate the provision of youth justice services in their area. The YOS worked with young people aged 10-17 who came into contact with the criminal justice system, and its aim was to prevent offending by children and young people through interventions designed to address those risk factors associated with the behaviour.

The service was currently comprised of 16.5 fte practitioner posts, 16 sessional, workers, 26 volunteers (a statutory requirement), 2 students, and 3 operational managers together with a Service Manager. Specialists within the team included YOS officers, Social workers, Police officers, Probation Officers, Substance misuse workers, Interventions coordinators, Mental Health Workers, Restorative Justice Officers, and Education, Training and Employment workers. It was felt that the good core of specialists provided a 'wrap-around' package for young people.

Services for young people included an Appropriate Adult for under 18s within the police station, triage of low level first time offenders out of the criminal justice system, the delivery of formal pre-court disposals and support programmes, court services (including remand management and court reports), Referral Order Panels (trained community representatives devising intervention programmes for young offenders), management and implementation of community court orders (including parenting orders) and custodial through-care and licensing.

The number of First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System had reduced since October 2012 (from 109 to 99, and from 121 in October 2013 to September 2014), predominantly due to the increased intervention of people seen to be at risk. Hillingdon's numbers were lower than the London average and lower than similar authorities such as Harrow, Hounslow and Sutton. Though not quite at the national average, it was accepted that this was not a true reflection as national figures were

skewed due to differing population densities and demographics within county councils.

Custody rates had been seen to have reduced by approximately 50% since 2013 (from 30 to 14), and Hillingdon's figures compared favourably in comparison to neighbouring authorities. Those remanded into custody were detained within youth offending facilities or secure children's homes. As the total number of young people aged 10-17 years within the Borough had not reduced, a reason for the reduction was suggested as there being a smaller cohort in the criminal justice system, although these people had more complex needs and some challenging personal circumstances. In addition, Courts had increased confidence in local programmes and services, such as 'tag and supervision'.

Re-offending rates had reduced since 2011/12 (from 120 to 74), a trend seen throughout the last 10 annual quarters. However, the most recent quarter had seen an increase, possibly due to a group of young people well known to the service who were consistently re-offending. This particular group had complex needs, which required input from a number of different agencies including Health and Education. Despite this, Hillingdon had continued to perform better than London and the neighbouring family of authorities.

It was highlighted that if a young person re-offended, they were often placed back with their families. Whilst this was not always felt to be the best outcome for the young person, the young person could not be removed without sufficient grounds to do so. There were very few families for whom accommodation was an issue, and some families often colluded with their child regarding their offending behaviour.

Statistics relating to Looked After Children (LAC) were not separated from the data, and it was known that LAC comprised a high percentage of the cohort in question. Often this was due to the complex needs and challenging circumstances of the child, but equally, it was apparent that residential units and foster homes would often rely on the police to mediate and manage a situation that, were the child living at home, would be dealt with by the parent or guardian. Moving forward, it was important to train these guardians to manage such challenging behaviour without resorting to calling the police and thereby criminalizing the child, in a similar manner to how schools and other service providers dealt with issues. However, it was recognised that there were occasions when calling the police was the most appropriate action to take.

Restorative Justice included a victim offender conference, comprising formal face to face meetings between the victim and the offender, led by a trained facilitator. Indirect restorative justice involved messages being passed between the victim and the offender by a trained facilitator. Participants did not meet, and messages were passed via letter, recorded video or audio. Direct Reparation was an activity completed by the offender, as identified by the victim, whilst Indirect Reparation was an activity completed for the good of the wider community.

Improvements had been seen over the last 18 months. Previously, victims were contacted by the police directly, though very few wanted to be contacted in this manner. A specific post had since been created to support victims and as a result, engagement with victims had increased, with most reporting that they were very satisfied with the process and outcome.

Challenges for the service included the introduction of the new national Assetplus assessment and planning tool. The recruitment, development and maintenance of a skilled workforce was a national issue, and it was felt that there was too much emphasis placed on academia rather than having the appropriate skills to properly

work with young people.

Whilst the cohort of young people was smaller, the young people had greater and more complex needs, for which there were no quick fixes. Budgetary pressures on agencies were leading to higher thresholds and longer waiting lists, and positive opportunities for young people were reducing. Uncertainties over central government funding remained, and time would bear out what impact the governments' changing expectations would have on the young people themselves.

Statistics were discussed, and it was highlighted that the number of young men offending was broadly the same as seen previously. However, the number of young women involved in group offences or girl on girl violence had been seen to have increased. The number of young people involved in the supply of illicit substances had increased in previous years, an activity mainly controlled by adults. This activity was also linked to the sexual exploitation of young women, with reports of young women being used as 'rewards' for young men who had 'performed well' in their roles within the group.

To address the concerns regarding youth violence and associated offences, a newly developed Violence and Vulnerability Panel now met every 6 weeks, and included representation from the Police, Health, and YOS services, among others. The panel was tasked with identifying young people at high risk of youth violence, mapping who they were associating with, and formulating strategies on how best to disrupt this behaviour. It was recognised that there was often adults involved in the violence, and not just young people.

An example of the kind of work undertaken was discussed. Staff had been tasked with mapping certain young people's interactions through social media. Through this mapping it had become apparent that the young people were associating with a particular group involved in CSE, which had led to an intervention operation. Testimony from young women involved in similar matters had revealed that social media often acted as a catalyst for girl on girl violence, as the individuals involved often had underdeveloped conflict management skills, which led to issues escalating beyond proportion and resulting in violence.

Dr Hajioff confirmed that he had recently attended the London Digital Mental Health Wellbeing Forum, at which concerns over the impact of social media on young people were discussed. Of particular concern were closed messaging groups, such as WhatsApp, the contents of which were not visible to those outside the group. For obvious reasons, this made it difficult to identify and address problems.

Ms Hawes confirmed that helping young people with substance abuse problems was challenging, as the young person involved would often disengage and refuse treatment, stating that there was no problem. Work remained on formulating a treatment and referral system, and how to communicate sufficient messaging regarding available services to promote service uptake. Public Health was confirmed to be reviewing this, for future incorporation into the Local Plan for Hillingdon. Further actions were being taken through the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Awareness Week. A Multi Agency Support Hub, inclusive of Children's Services, shared data and intelligence to instil best practice and avoid duplication.

Councillor Crowe highlighted that further work needed to be undertaken with LAC at their schools, as often their use of drugs and alcohol was linked to frustrations with their academic achievement.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hawes for her presentation, and suggested that Ms Hawes attend a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board to present on this topic. Members were supportive of this suggestion, and it was further requested that details of crimes reported from the Borough's residential units be fed back to Members outside of the meeting.

Antony Rose, National Probation Service (NPS), addressed the Committee, confirming that the aim of the service was to ensure public protection, rehabilitate offenders, and prevent victims. The service was now a commissioning service, working with service providers to provide support as per licence conditions, (such as conditions mandating access to drug rehabilitation services). The NPS was accountable to the Secretary of State, with commissioned services scrutinized by the Ministry of Justice.

The NPS worked with offenders aged 18 and over, and received individuals from the YOS and other services. Individuals were worked with jointly from the age of 17 ½, to ensure a smooth transition from children's services. The seconded Probation Officer within the YOS would then determine, by way of individual assessments, where the young person was to be directed to, with high risk and MAPPA cases remaining with the NPS, and medium and low risk cases transitioning to the London Community Rehabilitation Company (LCRC). Some interventions were confirmed to be kept at the NPS, including sexual offender treatment services.

Assessments were carried out via the OASys Assessment Tool, which reviewed individuals on a case-by-case basis. The Tool looked at previous and current offences, personal circumstances, the motive and nature of the offending, victim issues, whether the offense was a one-off, and other pertinent information, and assessed the likelihood of an offender to re-offend, identified and classified offending, assessed the risk of serious harm, as well as risks to the individual and others, among other risks. Actuarial data was reviewed as a starting point. If the score was deemed sufficiently high, then the individual would be referred to the NPS. If below a certain score threshold, then the individual would be referred to the CRC. Reassessments could be carried out and individuals could be referred back to the NPS, but once registered with the NPS, that individual would remain with the NPS, regardless of whether the risk was deemed to have reduced.

The allocated Probation Officer would then develop a plan to manage the risk presented by the offender and then link this assessment to a supervision plan. With regard to those offenders sentenced to probation, key performance indicators specified that they must be allocated to community rehabilitation companies within 2 working days. If the case was deemed to be under NPS authority, then the case officer would arrange an appointment with the individual.

Partnership working was often challenging due to budget constraints. Staffing was an issue, with the availability of suitable practitioners recognised as a longstanding challenge that remained to be overcome.

Data from 2014 onwards was still to be reviewed, but information obtained prior to 2014 showed staff case loads, and the number of re-offenders, to have slightly increased within the Borough. This was made up of re-offenders and new offenders, often linked to drug use, with an understanding that often offenders would use stronger drugs as they grew older.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rose for his attendance and acknowledged the good work being undertaken by the NPS in what was a challenging period of change for the

service.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Details of detection rates for knife crime with injury be forwarded to Members by email;**
- 2. Knife crime statistics per Hillingdon Ward, and in comparison to neighbouring Authorities, be forwarded to Members by email;**
- 3. Ms Hawes be invited to present an item at a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board;**
- 4. Details of crimes reported from Borough LAC residential units be forwarded to Members by email;**
- 5. the discussion be noted.**

40. **WORK PROGRAMME 2016/2017** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme. Possible items for future meetings were noted, and it was agreed that Members were to email the Chairman or the Interim Senior Democratic Services Manager, should they have ideas for further topics.

It was suggested that the London Community Rehabilitation Company (LCRC) and the National Probation Service (NPS) be invited to a future meeting, to elaborate on some of the topics discussed at this meeting, and to discuss how the proposals outlined within the Wood Report may affect them, were the proposals to be implemented.

Councillor Edwards confirmed that due to time constraints, the proposed Community Sentencing item was likely to roll over to the new municipal year, and that he would work with the Interim Senior Democratic Services Manager to finalise meeting dates and report timeframes.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The LCRC and NPS be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee;**
- 2. Members email the Chairman or Interim Senior Democratic Services Manager with suggestions for future items; and**
- 3. The Work Programme be noted.**

The meeting, which commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 8.05 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nikki O'Halloran / Neil Fraser on 01895 250472 / 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.