

Minutes

Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities
Policy Overview Committee
Tuesday, 6 November 2018
Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge



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

Members Present:

Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman)
Wayne Bridges (Vice-Chairman)
Lindsay Bliss
Farhad Choubedar
Alan Deville
Jazz Dhillon
Vanessa Hurhangee

Apologies:

Councillors Nicole Brightman
Kerri Prince

Substitutes

Councillors Simon Arnold
Stuart Mathers

Officers Present:

Raj Alagh, Borough Solicitor
Bill Hickson, Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Manager
Jacqui Robertson, Service Manager for Community Safety
Rob Smith, Head of Revenue and Benefits
Luke Taylor, Democratic Services Officer
Iain Watters, Financial Planning Manager

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nicola Brightman and Councillor Kerri Price, with Councillor Simon Arnold and Councillor Stuart Mathers substituting.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

39. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was confirmed that all items marked as Part I would be heard in public, and all items marked as Part II would be heard in private.

40. POLICING IN HILLINGDON

The Service Manager for Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Manager were in attendance to address the meeting regarding combatting anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Borough under the new policing structures.

The Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Manager informed the Committee that the team that he was responsible for was essentially an enforcement team and an extended arm of the “policing family” that worked under the same rules as the police in the vast majority of cases.

Members heard that the Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team (ASBET) were responsible for anti-social behaviour, waste management issues ranging from rubbish that was put out on the wrong day to large fly-tipping instances that were tackled alongside the Environment Agency, tenancy management breaches, noise, dust and odour nuisance, abandoned vehicles, and oversaw services such as animal welfare and pest control that were looked after by contractors. The team is also involved in “action days” alongside environmental enforcement officers and ASB officers.

Councillors were informed that ASBET had a very strong working relationship with the Community Safety Team (CST), particularly after the move to a Tri-Borough policing structure, as weekly meetings were held with CST to discuss concerns, successes, and areas of crossover between the two teams. In addition to this, fortnightly meetings were held with the Police Tasking Team, where officers could submit tasks for the police to complete, such as combatting ASB reported to the Council by residents in the area affected, including, but not limited to, street-drinking, harassment, drug use, drug dealing and intimidation.

The ASBET Manager stated that, when the assistance of the Police was required, this assistance could be arranged with the help of the Service Manager for Community Safety and CST, and on these occasions, support from the Police was received very regularly, considering the limited resources that the Police were working with. When urgent requests were needed to be made to the Police, the Service Manager for Community Safety was able to pass these on directly.

The Committee heard that there was a very strong working relationship between the ASBET and CST, as a lot of the teams’ work was interlinked. Prior to the new policing structure, ASBET officers approached police officers in the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) directly with issues that led to varying degrees of success. Some SNT officers were keen to be involved in issues, while others were less enthusiastic. The new arrangements make it much easier to pass on information

to the police and get issues dealt with, courtesy of the bi-weekly tasking meetings, and responses to tasks are more positive.

Responding to questioning from Members, the ASBET Manager stated that if there was persistent dumping of rubbish, ASBET would work closely with Waste Services to identify potential “hotspots”, and visit the site throughout the week, collecting materials and searching through the refuse for evidence, before taking appropriate action. However, due to the increased public awareness of fraud, and anti-fraud measures, such as removing names and addresses from letters, it is now more difficult to find evidence. Additionally, when a CCTV camera identifies a culprit, the picture cannot currently identify who the person is and ASBET must investigate, but many people are reluctant to share their knowledge of who the person is.

The Committee questioned how ASBET is linked with the Tasking Team, and how work is passed on to the Police. The ASBET Manager commented that when ASBET are notified of an issue, they look at all aspects of it and consider whether it is in the remit of the police. If it is, a tasking form is then completed and submitted to the Police. Urgent issues, information or requests are passed on outside the fortnightly meetings as priorities. The Service Manager for Community Safety noted that various information is received from ASBET and these are presented to the Tasking Officers fortnightly, as well as passing on other issues that have arisen from other boards, and the Tasking Officers then prioritise the issues they have received, as they may have information that the Council is not privy to. Members heard that this information could be received from all over the Borough, and it is passed on to the Police when necessary, who then state what action can be taken and what issues are for others, such as dedicated Ward Officers.

Responding to Members, the ASBET Manager noted that his team is building relationships with social landlord colleagues. In the past there were issues in this area, and restructuring had held relationship building back, but regular meetings between ASBET and social landlords were helping to build relationships. These regular meetings allow the Council to question the landlords on actions that have been taken, and social landlords are also able to refer issues back to the Council or ask for information regarding CCTV or ASB concerns. The ASBET Manager noted that it was important to build a two-way working relationship, and while this has been achieved with some social landlords, it is important that the Council try to achieve this with all involved. The Committee commented that it was vital that the Council was proactive and not just reactive to issues, and it may be useful for Housing Associations to have a voice at the table to express concerns over ASB and other issues.

Councillors stated that it was important that Hillingdon remained a priority for the Police, but questioned what opportunities there were to work with neighbouring boroughs, as crime did not stop at borough borders. The ASBET Manager stated that there was crossover where the Council could afford it, such as with traveller incursions, and on these occasions, neighbouring local authorities gathered together to share information and look for an emerging picture of the scenario, including potential future issues that may arise and intelligence sharing. Members heard that it was important to build on this and invite other local authorities to participate and help combat arising problems. In the past, regular meetings with the London Boroughs of

Hounslow and Ealing and Buckinghamshire County Council took place, and it has been suggested that these meetings are regenerated in the future.

Responding to questioning from the Committee, the ASBET Manager confirmed that the right structures and systems were in place. Members were informed that within ASBET, communications were good and there was no need for extra resources or officers as things stand. Furthermore, the use of the Service Manager for Community Safety as the single point of contact works very well. The Service Manager for Community Safety confirmed that, in her absence, her deputy was a former Borough Commander.

The Committee heard that the Service Manager for Community Safety held a monthly meeting with the CST Managers in both Hounslow and Ealing, and these meetings help foster closer working relationships and the sharing of resources. Additionally, Lisa Cronin, the Inspector for Neighbourhoods and Partnership at the Police, oversees all the teams and comes to fortnightly meetings to tell all the Councils of any emerging borough-wide trends.

Furthermore, Members were informed that the Partnership and Prevention Hub, based in Hounslow, sends a daily update of crimes to the Service Manager for Community Safety, some of which are cross-borough crimes.

Responding to Councillors' questioning, it was confirmed that there were cases when Police had been concerned about a lack of CCTV coverage, and in these cases, CCTV was installed.

The ASBET Manager confirmed that currently, there was not anything that came to mind to improve communications and processes, and while there were good and bad moments in any relationship, any bad moments were few and far between. The structure was good, processes were simple, and currently everything was fit for purpose.

Members thanked the officers for their attendance and the information given.

41. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: That the forward plan be noted, and responses be requested on the following issues:

- 1. What are the requirements and thresholds requested in the Playground Refurbishment Programme contract, and does this include playgrounds on housing land or does it refer to just open spaces?**
- 2. How is it decided who to sell land to when the Cabinet consider the disposal of land?**

42. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2020

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

43. HEATHROW BUSINESS RATES

This item is included in Part II as the authority believes that the public interest in withholding the Information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it (exempt information under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 as amended).