

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY
ORGANISATIONS
7 JUNE 2016

PRESENT Councillors Edith Macauley(in the Chair), Fidelis Gadzama,
Marsie Skeete, Charlie Chirico, Adam Bush

Rev Mrs H Neale, MR Rizvi, Councillor Akyigyina, Mr Hadi, Mr B
Afridi, Rev. Copeland, Rev Wakefield, Councillor Joan Henry,
Mrs S Kumararajah, Mr John Dimmer, Ms Evereth Willis, PC
Matt Bryan, DCI Nicola Church, Sgt V Bower

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

None

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr J Hall, Mr Sheikh, Ms Colquhoun, Councillor Latif
and Mr Savage.

3 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed.

4 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)

There were no matters arising.

5 POLICE UPDATE - SGT VERE BOWER (Agenda Item 6)

Sargent Vere Bower presented a Police update report. He informed the meeting that
Crime overall is up by 6.1% compared to the previous twelve months.

Much of this rise in reports of domestic violence can be explained by changes in
recording standards and how violent crime is classified.

He also reported that Hate Crime incidents have increased across the Metropolitan
Police Service and training has been delivered to all officers around the reporting of
disability hate crime and its impact.

There are on-going problems between the organised crime groups from the Tamil Community in Mitcham. Also Motor vehicle crime is on the increase

Questions

What is Islamophobic? Sgt Vere replied that it is any crime where the victim is a Muslim and thinks that they were assaulted because of their faith.

How is the police working with voluntary organisations to tackle violence in the Tamil community? Sgt Vere replied that a large population of young males have been congregating at different locations in the evening and engaging in anti-social behaviour. The young people have been visited at home and given warnings. The Police are targeting people who continue to congregate outside the Off Licence and Betting shop.

What is the Police doing about the issues brought over from Sri Lanka? There was an appeal for the Police to work closely with the Tamil community.

Sgt Vere informed the meeting that Mitcham is the focus for Tamil males who come from across London. A Tamil form has been launched at Mitcham.

Councillor Gadzama suggested that the Islamophobic crime should not be separated

Rev Wakefield informed the meeting that the Safer Neighbourhood Board is working with the Police to tackle the issues of concern locally. The MP for Mitcham and Morden has had community meetings when issues have arisen. Rev Wakefield urged the members to give other contacts if they have them.

Sgt Vere explained that a tactic used by the Police is to visit the young men in their homes to deliver the notices. This has more effect because often their parents did not know what they are involved in.

Councillor Skeete said that in her ward the community is concerned about young people riding mopeds and causing a nuisance. She asked how the problem could be curbed?

Detective Chief Inspector (DCI) Church replied that across the south west cluster there had been a 300% increase in moped theft. There are operations to target thieves and the last two weeks there has been a decrease. DCI Church clarified that a prolific Wandsworth thief has recently been charged with 20 thefts but was not given a custodial sentence.

DCI Church informed the meeting that the Borough Commander met with the Judiciary to explain the impact of thieves not being given custodial sentences.

Following discussion Councillors Macauley and Chirco clarified that the Magistrates have to follow sentencing guidelines. Numerous factors are taken into consideration but if the defendant has no previous convictions it is unlikely that a custodial sentence will be given.

Councillor Akygiyna suggested that the Police need to gain people's trust and should engage with local people to encourage them to join the forum in Mitcham.

Sarva suggested that violence starts at home and parents also need advice and support and need to be involved.

Rev Copeland asked what is being done to educate parents and families to combat anti-social behaviour. Sgt Vere replied that his tactic was to speak to the young people in front of their parents and explain the impact of their behaviour on local people. Most of the youth are in university or at college and their parents were unaware of their behaviour outside the home.

Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

DCI Nicola Church informed the meeting that the IAG is being refreshed and needs to be more representative. The IAG is a forum for the Police and community representatives to discuss issues of concern and meets 3 or 4 times a year. The IAG acts as a critical friend to advise the borough's police and is particularly helpful for critical incidents.

Rev Copeland expressed an interest to join the IAG. Rev Wakefield suggested that Hannah Neale as the chair of BAME Voice should be invited to join the group.

6 OPERATION FAIRWAY - COUNTER TERRORISM THREAT AWARENESS - PC MATT BRYAN (Agenda Item 5)

P.C. Matt Bryan informed the meeting that he delivers Counter Terrorism awareness briefings to businesses and local organisations.

He will be presenting to licensed premises, the All England Tennis Club and Military Cadets in advance of Armed Forces Day and is willing to deliver to other organisations as required.

The current threat level is substantial.

The video 'Operation Fairway' was shown. The film shows a shopping centre being attacked and looks at the role various people played and examines how the attack could have been avoided.

7 VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY - AMJAD AGIL,
POLICY, STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER, LBM (Agenda Item 7)

John Dimmer informed the meeting that the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering strategy is being refreshed. A steering group chaired by Simon Williams comprising partner agencies such as MVSC is overseeing the development of the strategy.

The group will meet monthly and provide a draft strategy by November 2016 to allow recommendations to be considered as part of the budget setting priorities for 2017/18 and beyond.

Mr Dimmer advised that Merton has a vibrant voluntary sector and high volunteering levels. The strategy is being developed in challenging times and needs to consider factors such as the Social Value Act and the impact of cuts.

An engagement plan is in place to identify priorities and issues for consideration. Mr Dimmer informed the meeting that there is an opportunity for the JCC to raise issues for the steering group to consider. He asked the JCC how it wants to be engaged in the process.

Councillor Akiyigina asked what will be different as people already work together? Mr Dimmer replied that the JCC could consider where the funding cuts will be and how the support from the council is changing.

The Social Value Act is not used well in Merton, e.g. working with local labour – favouring local organisations. He stated that Merton can learn from best practice. There is a risk that if you don't consider alternative actions the sector will diminish at a time when the partnership wants it to expand.

Rev Neale advised Mr Dimmer that money is an issue as funding is made available to larger organisations and smaller ones are being squeezed out. She suggested that this is an area that needs to be looked at.

Rev Copeland said that more information is needed on what the options being considered are. How do you help larger agencies to include small ones as part of their bidding? He added that it is important to be involved in cuts discussions because of local need.

Councillor Macauley asked the JCC representatives to give suggestions to John Dimmer.

8 SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD UPDATE - ABAYEH SAVAGE (Agenda
Item 8)

The report was noted.

9 EQUALITY STRATEGY UPDATE - EVERETH WILLIS, EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION OFFICER,LBM (Agenda Item 9)

Evereth Willis updated the meeting on the progress made to implement the Equality Strategy 2013-17. She also informed the meeting that the strategy was being refreshed and would be combined with the community cohesion strategy.

The new strategy will be signed off by council in February. Ms Willis asked the JCC to consider the priorities that should be included in the refreshed strategy.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 10)

None.