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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

16 MARCH 2022

(7.15 pm - 8.35 pm)

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Southgate (in the Chair),
Councillor Peter McCabe, Councillor Ben Butler,
Councillor Sally Kenny, Councillor Billy Christie,
Councillor Paul Kohler, Councillor Aidan Mundy,
Councillor John Dehaney, Councillor Thomas Barlow and
Mansoor Ahmad

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors

Cathryn James (Interim Assistant Director, Public Protection)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from co-opted members Roz Cordner and Dr Oona Stannard.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed with one amendment requested by the Chair, of an additional sentence added to the 'Repurposing the high streets' item:

"The Chair explained that only the summary report and recommendations had been circulated to Members. The report to Cabinet would include sections on each of the five high streets plus the SWOT analysis".

4 SAFER MERTON (Agenda Item 4)

Peter Clifton, Interim Head of Service for Safer Merton, gave a brief overview of the report contents including an update on antisocial behaviour, overall patterns and trends and the work undertaken to tackle antisocial behaviour.

The Interim Head of Service commented that it is clear from the consultation activity that antisocial behaviour is a significant concern for local residents, as is the case across most boroughs in London.

Attention was drawn to an error at point 1.34 of the report which is a table providing data on the London Ambulance call-outs for alcohol-related calls. The labels in the first column are the wrong way round – it is actually the wards in the PSPO which

should be in the bottom row of that table (they did not see an increase in call-outs) however it is the wards outside the PSPO which saw the increase.

In response to Commission Members questions,

- Additional CCTV cameras have been placed in anti-social behaviour hotspots and environmental crime hotspots.
- The enforcement of fly-tipping and environmental offenses takes place under the Enforcement Team in the Public Spaces department not Safer Merton. The Safer Merton team seeks to support that work by placing temporary cameras in hotspots to try to increase the probability of catching footage that can be used as evidence.

Action: Peter Clifton to ask Public Spaces team how money generated from fines is used.

- We have a very effective CCTV service that captures around three and a half thousand incidents a year and results in around 600 pieces of evidence, either being shared with police or different teams in the council for investigation and/or enforcement. However the equipment is old and has aged so a lot of the planned upgrade is around replacing that equipment with newer technology and software improvements.

Action: In response to a request from a Commission Member, the Interim Head of Service agreed to look at the normalization of data by ward.

5 BCU COMMANDER - CRIME AND POLICING IN MERTON (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair welcomed the South West BCU Commander, Chief Superintendent Elisabeth Chapple, to the meeting.

Members welcomed the opportunity to hear further detail to the answers provided in the report.

All the London boroughs are participating in the 'walk and talk' initiative to address the issues raised in the violence against women and girls' strategy. The 'walk and talk' scheme is advertised on Eventbrite and we have found that if officers and community members get to know each other in their local area then that builds confidence in policing, not only in those individuals, but also in the rest of the community that see these interactions.

Safer Neighbourhood team have been very active in terms of raising awareness of keyless car thefts as well as giving residents the means to prevent these.

The catalytic converter thefts across the BCU and in Merton are concentrated in more affluent areas. Our best weapon is crime prevention - packs are available from the manufacturers with an additional bolt to secure the catalytic converter.

In response to supplementary questions, the Borough Commander:

- Agreed to send separate officer and staff figures.
- Confirmed that all BCU's will align their neighbourhood teams to the new ward boundaries
- Agreed to send further information on the CBT fund to Members. The recently announced Cognitive Behavioural Therapy fund means that we can nominate young people, who might otherwise be involved in crime, to receive extra support from partners.

6 TOPIC SUGGESTIONS FOR 2022/23 AND AOB (Agenda Item 6)

Members were reminded to submit their topic suggestions.

This will be the last meeting of the Commission for the Chair, Cllr Peter Southgate.

Cllr Southgate commented on how very important scrutiny has been to him, and how much it makes a difference to the Council and the way we govern ourselves.

Cllr Peter McCabe thanked Cllr Southgate for his very thorough, diligent and conscientious contributions and for continually providing Members with the opportunity to really dive into the work of those that we are here to scrutinise. Cllr Southgate will be missed greatly on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, we thank you.

Cllr Ben Butler and Cllr John Dehaney were also thanked for their contributions to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.