

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS

12 JUNE 2019

PRESENT: Cllr Edith Macauley MBE (CHAIR), Cllr Laxmi Attawar, Cllr Omar Bush, Cllr Marsie Skeete (part), Cllr Agatha Akyigyina OBE (part) Cllr Stan Anderson (part) and Cllr Hina Bokhari, Revd Hannah Neale, Edward Abu Maliki, Dr Aru, N Vijayan, Sandra Copeland, Terry Simpson and Jerry Hall.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda item 1)

None

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda item 2)

Cllr Eloise Bailey, Mr Islam, Mr Saleem Sheikh, Emma Wiley and Cllr Joan Henry.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda item 3)

Mr Islam gave his apologies for the previous meeting and this should have been recorded.

4. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLAN – DARREN TULLEY, BOROUGH COMMANDER, LONDON FIRE BRIGATE (Agenda item 4)

Presentation by the Darren Tulley on the development of a new Sustainable Communities Strategy for Merton. Darren is the project sponsor on behalf of the Merton Partnership Executive Board (executives from the public, private and voluntary sectors based in Merton).

The focus of the Sustainable Communities Plan is how we collectively can increase social capital (supportive networks). He gave a number of examples of social capital in action in the borough e.g. Mitcham Community Orchard and explained how working together with residents, businesses and the voluntary sector could increase social capital. Darren set out the latest research on social capital and how we can measure this by ward. The plan is due to be published by the end of the year. He asked the JCC to consider how they could contribute to the aims of the new plan. He then invited questions from the JCC.

Q. Would the charts setting out the level of social capital by ward be made available to the JCC and councillors in particular?

A. Yes, this would be made available on the website that is being developed to house the new plan. Also, Darren was planning a briefing for all councillors where this information would be made available.

Q. Regarding the research on 'hard to reach' groups it was pointed out that they are not in fact 'hard to reach' but that organisations need to make an effort to engage with these groups in a way that suits them best.

A. This fact had already been noted and the piece of research we are planning is now referred to as 'seldom listened to groups'.

Q. Is there a difference between the east and west of the borough?

A. Yes, social capital is generally lower in the east and there is a link between lower social capital, deprivation and poorer outcomes in the east. However, it was important to note that this was not a blanket rule and there were parts of the east of the borough where there was strong social capital and strong ties amongst and between communities.

Q. How many surveys were undertaken and can we track the results going forward.

A. There were 1000 residents surveyed and 1300 as part of a separate survey of children and young people. We intend to track the data and plan to repeat this exercise.

Q. How much further can the Fire Brigade go with joint working with the London Ambulance Service?

Recent pilot with officers from the Fire Services out on call with LAS staff has been really positive. There are lots of opportunities to improve joint working and also to create community infrastructure e.g. Mitcham Fire Service has a community room which is free to voluntary sector groups.

5. CRIME UPDATE – INSPECTOR ROBERT WHITEHEAD, METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE (Agenda item 5)

Inspector Whitehead had circulated a report on crime levels in the borough and invited questions from the JCC

Q. Are burglaries in West Barnes a priority?

A. Tackling burglary is a priority across the borough. Whilst there had been an increase over the rolling year of 18.9% the definition of burglary did not just include theft from houses but also communal areas e.g. of flats. Confirmed that the so-called 'Wimbledon Prowler' had been arrested and charged. He had been responsible for a significant number of burglaries. Main worry now was that the public might become less vigilant as a result of this arrest.

Q. What are the police doing about the increase in Islamophobic Hate Crime?

A. Tackling hate crime is one of the Met's key priorities. Working closely with Mosques, religious groups in general and the IAG. Inspector Whitehead offered to visit any organisations suggested by the JCC.

Q. What are the police doing about the worrying increase in knife crime, particularly around prevention?

A. Section 60 powers for stop and search was having a big impact in terms of deterring people from carrying weapons. Police were working closely with schools, youth groups, RSL and council staff.

Q. Isn't distrust of the police by young people impacting on this issue and was there a risk that stop and search could worsen this? Can young people be involved in the training of officers on stop and search?

A. Happy in principle to look at this. Also, if any members of the JCC were interested in becoming members of the Stop and Search panel please let Inspector Whitehead know.

Q. It appears sometimes that there is an over-response to incidents, why is this?

A. Constantly looking at the number of officers on response and will try to ensure it matches the needs at the time. However, to note that having enough officers on the scene was safer for both the police and anyone they needed to restrain.

Q. What support is on offer to family and friends of young people under investigation?

A. This is a highly complex issue and it can be the case that parents are unaware of have difficulty acknowledging their child's involvement in criminal matters.

Inspector Whitehead also had a number of announcements to share with the JCC:

- Wimbledon Police Station still open 24/7. Also looking at the option to move officers from Wandsworth to Wimbledon. Longer term there was still a question.
- Nearly a full complement of officers in the borough. Two PCs and Two PCSO in every ward. Just one vacancy currently.
- Car crash last week and the IOPC investigating. Police cannot comment but to note that the person who reported on the incident was not actually at the scene. The full facts will emerge once the IOPC has completed its investigation.

6. REVIEW OF THE WORK OF BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) VOICE – REVEREND HANNAH NEALE AND EDWARDY ABU MALIKI (Agenda item 6)

A presentation setting out the work of BAME Voice to support BAME groups in the borough and represent their interests, particularly to statutory sector bodies and to raise awareness of their work. Things are getting better and BAME Voice forms an important bridge between BAME groups and other organisations. However, there is still a problem with organisations who want the access and contacts that BAME Voice has but who are not willing to provide funding even though they would not be able to access these organisations without the help of BAME Voice. There is a wider issue that small groups often have the access on the ground but that larger organisations do not recognise and fund accordingly. However, the situation is gradually improving with the support of key individuals such as Cllr Edith Macauley.

Heavily involved in the Windrush Celebrations and the chance to tell the story of the Windrush generation.

Q. Cllr Hina Bokhari commended the hard work of BAME Voice that was an inspiration.

A. Still a long way to go and main concerns at the moment are resources and finding premises.

Q. Where next for BAME Voice

Larger organisations are beginning to recognise the value of the work of BAME Voice but it is also important for BAME people to attend events and put themselves forward to help but there signs of progress.

Q. Can we do more to involve BAME young people.

A. Yes, something BAME Voice will look at.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 7)

None

Meeting closed at 9:30pm