

Runnymede Borough Council

CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE

4 April 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M J Maddox (Chairman), S L Dennett, Mrs L M Gillham, T J F E Gracey, N M King, Mrs Y P Lay and P S Sohi.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors S M Mackay and P J Taylor.

576 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

577 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 February 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

578 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor P J Taylor.

579 RUNNYMEDE POLICING UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on policing in Runnymede from Inspector Pinkerton, the Borough Inspector.

Runnymede had the lowest total of Total Notifiable Offences (TNO)s for the three northern Surrey policing boroughs (i.e. Elmbridge, Runnymede and Spelthorne) from April 2018 to March 2019. 28% of the TNOs for those three boroughs had occurred in Runnymede. When comparing all 11 Surrey districts, Runnymede was placed 6<sup>th</sup> out of 11 for reported crime. Inspector Pinkerton was pleased to report that Runnymede had had the largest yearly reduction in crime of any district Council in Surrey over the period April 2018 to March 2019. The attendance rate for Grade 1 incidents this year had improved with 68% attended within 15 minutes, the target time.

There had been a significant decline (a 42.1% reduction) in residential burglary incidents after a historically high number in 2017/18, although there had been more burglaries since January 2019 than in the equivalent period for the preceding year. The three main areas of Runnymede affected by burglary were Addlestone, Egham and Chertsey, with a significant recent increase in New Haw. Several local burglars had been arrested and work continued with surrounding forces to deal with cross-border offenders. Residential burglaries (an intrusive crime which meant people did not feel safe in their houses as well as having property stolen), continued to be both a Borough and Divisional priority.

Advice was given to the public on how they could avoid burglaries to their homes at "Meet the Beat" sessions where the police met the public and also electronically through Twitter and Facebook and email communication with neighbourhood watch groups. People who had been burgled were issued by the police with information on how to deter burglars and 1,000 free property identification kits had been made available to mark items to make it possible to trace stolen property. A Member of the Committee suggested that the police should consider ways in which they might communicate with more elderly frail residents who might not be able to attend "Meet the Beat" sessions and might not have internet

access. Another Member was pleased to report that the police had been active in knocking on doors to people's houses to give them advice on avoiding and deterring burglary in New Haw as a proactive response to the recent increase in burglary incidents in that area.

Another Member stated that members of the public who were working in the day time were not always able to attend "Meet the Beat" meetings and suggested that an evening meeting should be convened by the police to be held in Addlestone, possibly at the Runnymede Civic Centre. In response, Inspector Pinkerton agreed to consider arranging a meeting to discuss policing to which members of the public would be invited on a weekday evening in Addlestone.

There had been a significant reduction in theft which was down 9.5% (126 fewer offences). Vehicle crime, and in particular thefts from vans, which affected people's livelihoods, had a significant increase of 20% (83 more crimes). There had been a small uplift in violent offences, the majority of which were violence without injury, consisting of threats being made by social media. For the year to date to the end of March 2019, Runnymede police received 700 calls a month which put Runnymede in 6<sup>th</sup> place out of the 11 Surrey districts. About one third of calls received were for Grade 1 incidents.

There had been 8,326 TNOs from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, including 360 missing person inquiries, 103 where there was a risk of serious harm or criminality, 824 concern for safety, mental health and vulnerable adult incidents and 421 Child Protection incidents. On average each mental health related TNO took approximately seven times more police time to deal with than each TNO for other matters such as, for example, burglary or criminal damage.

An increase in Surrey police officers had been funded by an increase in the police element of the Council tax and although it was expected that the Runnymede Safer Neighbourhood Team would receive additional resources the details of the allocation that they would receive were not known at this stage.

Runnymede was placed 6<sup>th</sup> out of 11 Surrey districts for numbers of reported hate crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and had the lowest level of hate crime and ASB of the three Northern Surrey policing boroughs. Racial crime constituted 85% of hate crime – most of this was at a low level with crimes typically consisting of insulting words or swear words. There was no obvious link between hate crime in Runnymede and Brexit. ASB reports in Runnymede had dropped by 6% by the end of the 2018/19 financial year. Rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour had reduced by 12.5% but constituted about half of all ASB reports, nuisance neighbour reports were down 24.7% and the greatest increase in reports was for vehicle nuisance/inappropriate vehicle use which was up by 32%. Addlestone Town had seen the greatest drop in ASB reports (40%) which suggested that the Public Space Protection Order for Addlestone had been effective and the biggest ASB increase had been in Egham Town (32%). Addlestone Town, Thorpe and Hythe and Chertsey Meads and St Ann's accounted for half of the borough's ASB reports.

Surrey Police had supported a national anti-knife crime campaign, Operation Sceptre. Knife crime was often related to gang activity and as part of Operation Sceptre people had been given the opportunity to surrender their knives or weapons without fear of prosecution, proactive activity had taken place to raise awareness of the dangers of knives and knife sweeps had been carried out.

Runnymede's Safer Neighbourhood Team continued to combat anti-social parking in the community by using park smart leaflets to inform drivers of their inconsiderate parking. The police were not able currently to ticket part of the A30 for anti-social parking because of its designation as a rural clearway. In response to a request from a Member, Inspector Pinkerton agreed to consider whether it would be appropriate to arrange for police officers to issue tickets on one occasion or possibly two occasions to cars parked in The Causeway, Egham in the vicinity of Greggs and Wicks. The Member reported that cars

parked in this location were causing an obstruction that was preventing larger vehicles passing through safely and that a group of about 10 cars were consistently parked in contravention of parking requirements from about 8.30am to 5.00pm each day in this area.

Noting the large number of ASB incidents for Thorpe and Hythe, a Member inquired whether the presence of Thorpe Park in the borough led to a large number of crime incidents, anti-social behaviour reports or concern for safety of welfare incidents. The Committee noted that with a facility of the size of Thorpe Park, there would be a number of incidents and agreed to provide further details to the Committee. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Team had a good working relationship with the Thorpe Park management. Approximately 2 ½ million people visited Thorpe Park each year and the Thorpe Park management were very concerned that the public should not use knives or drugs on their premises and sought to reduce any dangers or risks associated with using their facilities in partnership with police.

The Committee was pleased to note that the Public Space Protection Orders for Addlestone Town and Hazel Close, Englefield Green had been successful and had not resulted in displacement of crime elsewhere in the borough. Problems with youths in the Addlestone One car park had been dealt with through physical measures to stop bikes and skateboards gaining entry. A new camera and better lighting had helped to reduce crime in Hazel Close.

Action had been taken which had resulted in a decline in ASB incidents at the Waitrose car park in Egham, in littering at Sandgates car park in Guildford Road and in anti-social driving on the Thorpe industrial estate. There were no current organised crime groups logged as based in Runnymede but the area was affected by organised crime group activity coming into the borough. There was a rise in violent crime across Surrey. Measures were being put in place to tackle drug use to reduce crime in the community, including more visible patrols by police officers.

The Committee thanked Inspector Pinkerton for continuing to keep them informed about policing issues in Runnymede.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.17 pm.)