

Runnymede Borough CouncilCrime and Disorder CommitteeTuesday, 8 October 2024 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors S Saise-Marshall (Chair), C Mann (Vice-Chair), V Cunningham, T Gates (In place of A Berardi), S Jenkins, E Kettle, K Lee and J Mavi.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor R Davies.

In attendance: Councillors M Smith and P Snow.

## 7 **Notification of Changes to Committee Membership**

Councillor Gates substituted for Councillor Berardi.

## 8 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

## 9 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## 10 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 11 **Policing Update**

The borough commander began by paying tribute to former Councillor Malcolm Cressey following his recent death, acknowledging his contributions to the neighbourhood watch scheme and the wider community.

The policing update was presented within the context of the borough policing priorities, with vehicle nuisance and rowdy behaviour being the two most common forms of anti-social behaviour during the reporting period.

Addlestone town centre had the most reports of rowdy behaviour, which had been the subject of hotspot policing involving increased patrols, engagement with the community and soft searches.

Work was ongoing to identify a suitable venue for a youth boxing project that was hoped would be an outlet for younger people and open doors for domestic violence victims. Coaches and funding had been identified, and updates on the project would be provided at future meetings.

A significant increase in the issuing of Community Protection Warnings and Community Protection Notices had been issued compared to 2023, both of which were a rapid and effective method for dealing with antisocial behaviour. The importance of encouraging residents to report issues was emphasised to the Committee.

Dedicated resources had been assigned to Freshers' Night at Royal Holloway University

resulting in numerous stop and searches by plain clothed officers, whilst a reduction in antisocial behaviour in the vicinity of the university had been recorded. Similar dedicated patrols would be in place for Halloween and New Year's Eve to dynamically react to antisocial behaviour, whilst the police would continue to support Remembrance and Armistice Day events across the borough.

In relation to preventing violence against women and girls, officers continued to work with domestic violence teams to visit the victim on the same day with caseworkers assigned and Domestic Violence Protection Orders issued where the threat remained, whilst a prolonged recent spate of high-profile exposures had resulted in a vehicle identified and a person arrested and charged.

Operation Shield was a new policing pilot initially used elsewhere in the county utilising plain clothed, behavioural detection trained officers to identify males preying on females in a nighttime setting. Any intelligence was captured and shared. As the Runnymede nighttime economy differed to elsewhere in the county the initiative had been adapted to great effect at Thorpe Park and consideration would be given to where it could be piloted elsewhere.

Days of action had taken place to address high harm and persistent offenders, which included joint operations with Spelthorne and Elmbridge to target one area on a rotation basis.

Burglaries remained high in the borough, and problem-solving teams had been looking at hotspot areas including New Haw and Virginia Water. Several suspects had recently been charged with burglary offences, increasing the borough's solved outcomes statistics.

A day of action to address road safety had recently been undertaken, and the creation of a new casualty reduction post and appointment of more PCSOs had allowed a greater focus on road safety and associated crimes.

Overall crime stats had reduced in the borough over the reporting period, and whilst burglaries remained high the overall total was significantly lower than both Elmbridge and Spelthorne. It was hoped that winter plans would assist in prevention.

When asked about the prospect of the insurgence of gangs in the borough following a spate of graffiti, the borough commander advised there were no serious concerns, some individual displays had been seen and a Community Protection Warning issued. Work remained ongoing with Royal Holloway University given the student demographic and threat of county lines.

The borough commander was asked to elaborate on the increase in hate crimes, and it was advised that a small increase had been reported, primarily due to the current political landscape and tension following local and national elections. An upward right-wing trend had been noticed in relation to the proposed opening of a mosque in Egham and an individual had been arrested. It would remain an area under close observation. There had been no right-wing protests following large-scale, high-profile protests elsewhere in the country over the summer.

In response to queries about hotspot policing, it was advised that ANPR cameras would be installed at discreet locations, and resources would be used to best engage with the community, including leaflet drops and using social media to spread the word. Councillors were asked to share posts by Runnymede Beat where appropriate.

The committee thanked the borough commander for his attendance.

The Runnymede Community Safety Partnership had focused on three priority areas that had been identified as being a priority for 2023-25: preventing violence against women and girls, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse related death reviews.

Much of the focus around preventing violence against women and girls was around StreetSafe, which allowed the user to anonymously report safety concerns in a particular area. Reports had been tabled at action meetings, and stickers had been placed in prominent locations around the borough to promote its use. Councillors were encouraged to promote its use, whilst officers agreed to liaise with the Council's Communications Team to produce posters in locations such as pubs and restaurants.

Furthermore, reusable metal straws and "spikeys" had been deployed in order to help prevent the spiking of drinks.

Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews were established on a statutory basis to ensure lessons were learned when a person died through domestic abuse. No new reports had been received in the past 12 months, however the three reviews from 2022/23 continued to progress and would be published once approved by the Home Office.

Antisocial behaviour had increased by 18% in 2023/24 and had been drawn together from all services within the council. The top three categories being fly tipping, noise and litter. Multi-agency meetings and joint patrols continued, whilst support for victims of antisocial behaviour was available through the Support Coaching Service.

(The meeting ended at 8.28 pm.)

Chair