

Runnymede Borough Council

Crime and Disorder Committee

Thursday, 28 March 2024 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J Furey (Chair), T Gates, E Gill (In place of L Gillham), A King, S Lewis and S Whyte (In place of T Burton).

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors N Prescott (Vice-Chair), A Balkan and M Singh.

In attendance: Councillors S Jenkins and M Smith.

15 Notification of Changes to Committee Membership

Cllr S. Whyte substituted for Cllr T. Burton and Cllr E. Gill substituted for Cllr L. Gillham.

16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A. Balkan and Cllr M. Singh.

18 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

19 Policing Update

The committee welcomed the borough commander to the meeting, who presented the modern slavery data following a request for the information at the previous meeting. The importance of the first contact with victims was emphasised, particularly in the context of the challenging nature of securing convictions in what is usually an organised crime affair. The borough commander agreed to provide the committee with modern slavery statistics for neighbouring boroughs.

Numerous reports of antisocial behaviour in the form of car meets had been received over recent months. The owners of any vehicles found to be involved faced a sliding scale of intervention, culminating in a community protection warning which can then lead to arrest. An officer dedicated to antisocial behaviour had been engaging with local businesses, going through CCTV and a bid had been made for ANPR to focus efforts.

Community Protection Warnings – designed to prevent antisocial behaviour deemed to spoil a community’s quality of life – had been used to great effect in recent times, with ten issued already in 2024 compared to seven across the whole of 2023.

Prevention of burglaries remained a high priority and a burglary prevention team had been established that was dedicated to identifying patterns and enhance intelligence. The committee asked for information at the next meeting of figures on solved burglaries, along with a more in-depth view on burglary figures across the borough’s towns. Many suspects were believed to have travelled into the borough from either Thames Valley region on the motorway network or across Staines Bridge. Police would be liaising with local the Neighbourhood Watch in an attempt to help solve the issue.

Burglaries targeting businesses and in particular tools was also an issue facing the borough, and to help combat this a designing out crime officer appointment had recently been made, who would engage with businesses and communities around additional support, particularly in the availability of CCTV, which can often be challenging to obtain.

In a tactic to address cases of violence against women and girls, domestic violence victims were now being visited by a PCSO the day after an event and whilst the suspect was still in custody in the hope of alerting neighbours to an incident that might prompt greater community awareness and vigilance.

Lots of work remained ongoing with Royal Holloway University, particularly around awareness to drink spiking. Further activity was taking place on social media and officers remained proactive during more prevalent dates in the university's calendar.

The borough commander was keen to seek member ideas on engagement method ideas with the wider public. Recent initiatives included pop up street briefings and an unannounced proactive reassurance event at shoplifting hotspots to encourage business owners to report incidents. Several members were aware of the initiatives and reported positive feedback from residents.

£1m of government funding would soon be coming into Surrey to assist with antisocial behaviour hotspot policing. This would be led by an inspector and focus on teams attending hotspot locations in a visible and proactive manner over a 15-30 minute period.

Whilst the total number of crime statistics in Surrey had increased, Runnymede's crime statistics had decreased, and Runnymede remains a very safe borough. An increase in hate crime was linked to the current political landscape.

In response to any threats or abuse to councillors, the borough commander urged members to share any intelligence and information as early as possible in order for it to be assessed. A protest team existed within Surrey Police that assessed intelligence and corroborated risk whilst balanced against ensuring the public had the right to engage in the democratic process. Any personal abuse or crimes committed should also be reported.

It was reported that referrals to Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings (CHaRMM) had decreased. Officers were working to identify vulnerable people that could be reported into the CHaRMM mechanism by identifying repeat occurrences and the impact this has on the wider community.

(The meeting ended at 8.22 pm.)

Chair