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Runnymede Borough Council

Crime and Disorder Committee

APPENDIX 'A'

Thursday, 3 February 2022 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J Furey (Chairman), S Dennett (Vice-Chairman), A Balkan, D Coen, L Gillham, R King, and S Williams.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors S Mackay and S Walsh.

1 **Notification of Change to Committee Membership**

The Group mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of their wish that the change listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The change was for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillor removed would be reappointed.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Remove From Membership</u>	<u>Appoint Instead</u>
Runnymede Independent Residents'	Councillor A Alderson	Councillor L Gillham

The Chief Executive had given effect to this request in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

2 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee on 7 October 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Walsh.

4 **Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

5 **Runnymede Policing Update**

The Committee received an update on policing in the borough provided by Inspector Wyatt, the Borough Commander.

Inspector Wyatt advised that there were five priority areas with the Surrey Police And Crime Plan 2021-2025. These were preventing violence against women and girls in Surrey, protecting people from harm in Surrey, working with Surrey communities so that they felt safe, strengthening relationships between Surrey Police and Surrey residents and ensuring safer Surrey roads. The five borough priorities were tackling anti-social behaviour, preventing violence against women and girls, disrupting County Lines, preventing burglaries and road safety.

The Committee queried why disrupting County Lines drugs networks was given a high priority. Inspector Wyatt advised that County Lines activity gave rise to hidden crime which could not be quantified and criminals running County Lines would sometimes resort to violent crime to maintain their status within the organisation. It was agreed that future

policing updates would provide information on the various harms to the community caused by County Lines activity.

There had previously been three County Lines operating in the Runnymede area. All of those had been disrupted by the police. Two more Lines were now in operation and the police were working on disrupting them now. Children as young as 11 or 12 years old were becoming involved in County Lines. Various methods were used by the police to warn young people not to take part in County Lines and to alert them to the dangers. These methods included youth engagement officers, the junior citizens scheme and the multi-agency approach which was adopted in the Community Safety Partnership to tackle problem children who were known offenders and who might be encouraging other children to take part in County Lines.

It was noted that preventing violence against women and girls was a national policing priority as well as a priority in Surrey. The police sought to reduce harm to everybody in the community. Women and girls formed a group which warranted special attention. One of the reasons for this special attention was that most sexual offending was committed against women.

It was noted that there had been 5,125 recorded crimes in Runnymede for the year to date which represented an 8% increase. The Committee noted a breakdown of the different crime types and changes in the number of offences in Runnymede classified by crime type. It was noted that some offenders had been identified by smart doorbell technology although the use of face masks by offenders was increasing.

13.3% of recorded crimes in Runnymede resulted in solved outcomes which was a good result when compared to the Surrey Police overall figure of 11.3% and a 9.7% figure for Elmbridge and 9.4% figure for Spelthorne. There were a number of reasons for the low level of solved outcomes for recorded crimes which was the case across the country. Two of the main reasons in Runnymede were that no offender could be identified (41.7%) and that the victim did not support the prosecution (22%). Victimless prosecutions were only undertaken for the most serious offences. The percentage of solved outcomes for recorded crime was also affected by the way in which the Home Office required crimes to be recorded. For example, if a car was maliciously damaged once, this was recorded as an offence. If the same car was maliciously damaged again, this was recorded as another separate offence.

The Committee inquired about the impact of mental health issues on police work. The police referred cases to mental health services where there were alcohol, drugs or mental health reasons for offending. It was noted that about 20% to 30% of police time across the country was spent on mental health issues.

The Committee noted a comparison of offence types in Runnymede in 2019 (pre Covid) and in 2020 and 2021. The number of burglary offences had reduced in 2020 and 2021. Fraud, harassment and offensive weapon cases had increased. The offence of harassment occurred when alarm of distress was caused to a victim on two or more occasions. The police had operated the Operation Sceptre initiative against offensive weapons which consisted of targeting knife carriers, weapons sweeps and education. Patrols had been adjusted to the new pattern of offences. It was agreed that a statistical breakdown of the various types of fraud offences (e.g. cybercrime, phishing, romance fraud, bank fraud) would be included in future policing updates.

Burglaries had reduced partly as a result of more people working from home during the pandemic which resulted in fewer opportunities for burglary. The police were also targeting known burglars. Burglary was tackled in various ways – through problem solving initiatives such as Operation Bluebottle, through Meet the Beat in partnership with Crimestoppers and through the police working cross-border to identify trends and pursue offenders.

The Committee noted comparisons of anti-social behaviour (ASB) across various locations in Runnymede pre-Covid (2019) and during Covid (2020/2021). Covid breaches had been recorded as ASB which had resulted in high ASB figures for 2020 and 2021. The police analysed data to focus their efforts on problem ASB areas and used the ASB car to respond to incidents as they occurred. It was agreed that future policing updates would provide information on particular ASB hotspots within the borough and on the numbers of ASB cases in Runnymede compared to other local Surrey district Councils.

The Committee noted details of various actions taken against ASB which included closures, community protection warnings, Community Protection Notices, Criminal Behaviour Orders and ASB warning letters. A breach of a Community Protection Notice was a criminal offence. A Criminal Behaviour Order listed actions which must not be taken and a breach of such an Order was a criminal offence.

It was noted that a wide category of offences were classified as ASB and anti-social driving of vehicles accounted for over 50% of all ASB cases. The Chairman stated that the public frequently expressed concern about unlawful and inconsiderate parking. Inspector Wyatt advised the Committee that if parked vehicles caused an obstruction then the police could take action to remove them. It was agreed that the next policing update would include any data that the police had on unlawful and inconsiderate parking.

Inspector Wyatt reported on the progress of Streetsafe which was a national initiative where people who had felt unsafe in a public space could report it anonymously. The Committee commended Inspector Wyatt for his work in making the public in Runnymede aware of this initiative including through various on-line channels. It was noted that 89 reports had been received from the public in Runnymede using the Streetsafe tool, compared to 64 in Spelthorne and 62 in Elmbridge. Based on the information received from the public, targeted patrols had been undertaken by local officers and the longer term implications of the initiative had been discussed by various agencies working in partnership in Joint Action Group meetings.

Public satisfaction surveys had been carried out in respect of Runnymede Police. A Joint Neighbourhood Survey had shown that 87.4% of responders were satisfied with Runnymede police performance and 69.8% of responders were satisfied with Runnymede Police action on ASB. The offences that the public were most concerned about were first - cybercrime, second – drug dealing and third – burglary. It was noted that cybercrime was classified as a type of fraud offence. Specialist cybercrime teams supported police officers in tackling cybercrime and the City of London police had particular expertise in this area of police work.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work done by Runnymede Police and the consultation undertaken by Runnymede police with residents in various locations in the borough regarding policing in their area.

(The meeting ended at 8.32 pm.)

Chairman