

Runnymede Borough Council**Crime and Disorder Committee****Thursday, 6 July 2023 at 7.30 pm**

Members of the Committee present: Councillors N Prescott (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), T Burton, T Gates, L Gillham, E Kettle, A King, S Lewis and J Wilson (In place of A Balkan).

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor J Furey (Chairman).

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Furey.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4 Runnymede Community Safety Partnership Annual report

The Community Safety Manager presented the Runnymede Community Safety Partnership annual report, with priorities for 2022/23 being violence against women and girls, Prevent (anti-terrorism), modern day slavery, and antisocial behaviour.

31 reports had been received via Street Safe in relation to violence against women and girls, detailing 89 concerns, whilst the Domestic Abuse Outreach service continued to be provided by YourSanctuary, who received 676 referrals for the Runnymede area.

Three death notifications linked to Domestic Abuse had occurred, and all three case reviews were ongoing and would be published accordingly once finalised and approved by the Home Office. In response to a query about timeframes, whilst reviews should take six months, all three were currently over this threshold, with the sheer volume and specialist role required to carry out these reviews cited as reasons for the delay, along with considerable delays once submitted to the Home Office.

A total of 316 community resolutions had been issued, which was an out of court disposal primarily aimed at dealing with first-time offenders. Six community protection warnings and three community protection notices had been issued.

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that both live PSPO areas in the borough were under review, with an update report going to the next Community Services Committee.

Any proposed amendments to a PSPO would have to go through public consultation and a Committee report provided to amend, extend or discharge the PSPO. Several Members stressed the importance of residents logging issues in order to provide the necessary data to make a judgement on a PSPO.

5 Policing Update

The Committee welcomed the borough commander to the meeting, who reported that total offences in the borough had decreased by 423 over the past 12 months, with solved outcomes running at 13.2% against a county wide 11.2%.

It was felt that the cost-of-living crisis had resulted in an increase in lower-level thefts, and the borough commander would cover this in more detail at the next Committee.

A fall had been seen in antisocial behaviour, however there was a feeling this was down to under-reporting, and the borough commander asked the Committee to encourage residents to continue to report incidents to help identify trends.

Antisocial behaviour hotspots in the area were currently Brox Road, Ottershaw and Egham Town. Brox Road primarily centred around a takeaway unit where customers were blocking residents' driveways, dropping litter and being abusive. Increased police presence had caused a downturn, and further mitigation measures were being considered.

Following a targeted operation in Egham Town, two individuals had been charged with 25 offences and no longer allowed to enter the borough, which was hoped would decrease the problem.

Government were currently considering legislating nitrous oxide that would make possession illegal in addition to production and supply in the same way as a controlled drug, but it was currently unclear when this would take effect. A Member suggested contacting the local MP in order to get a timeline.

The Committee asked about the benefits of a Joint Enforcement Team (JET), and the borough commander felt its creation in Runnymede would be very useful in both enforcing the PSPO, which currently only the police have the power to do, as well as being the enforcement arm of any Council function with enforcement powers, such as Community Services or Environmental Health. Whilst it was not the JET's purpose to solve crimes, evidence suggested that it plays a role in deterring it. The borough commander agreed to the Committee's request to provide a written statement setting out what he considers the benefit of a JET.

The Committee was also supportive around the role of the JET, and in addition to seeking the support of the borough's County Councillors, the Committee Vice Chair would follow up with the Police & Crime Commissioner about possible funding, as it was noted that there was currently no budget envelope to fund its creation.

The Borough Commander asked Members to encourage residents to continue to report crime, and would provide a QR code in addition to the contact details for the police to make the process easier. Enquiries would also be made about the feasibility of allowing Committee Members to shadow officers during their shifts.

When asked about the effectiveness of CCTV, the borough commander felt that it was extremely effective in being able to resolve some incidents in a timely manner. It was also useful to have access to CCTV terminals within the Civic Centre, which was not something afforded to other boroughs.

A Member asked about the process for prevention of violence against women and girls, one of Surrey Police's five priorities as part of the Police & Crime Plan 2021 – 2025. It was advised that Street Safe played a key role in identifying hotspots, and patrols tailored to provide police resources at those locations.

As Street Safe was an anonymous tool police officers compensate for not being able to

speak direct to the person who reported the incident by increasing presence in the area and speaking to multiple residents to add to the initial intelligence.

In response to victims of violence against women and girls being reluctant to report incidents to the police, the borough commander encouraged residents to report the matter, adding that the process was set up to guide victims through it, and dedicated teams were on hand to take victims through the process as sensitively as possible.

The Committee thanked the borough commander for his attendance.

(The meeting ended at 8.17 pm.)

Chairman