

**Runnymede Borough Council****Crime and Disorder Committee****Thursday, 5 October 2023 at 7.30 pm**

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

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

In attendance: Councillors S Jenkins.

**6 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**7 Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

**8 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**9 Policing Update**

The borough commander began by emphasising the Surrey PCC's police & crime plan for 2021-25. A committee member felt there was an inconsistency in violence against women and girls being a priority and yet misogyny was not currently considered a hate crime. The borough commander advised that whilst this would be considered within the factors of the motivations of a crime, the criteria was set by home office guidelines and any changes would require national lobbying under political means.

A committee member felt there had been a sharp rise in driveway obstructions since the pandemic, combined with abusive behaviour when challenged by the occupants. This was particularly prevalent in the vicinity of schools during drop off and pick up times. It was advised that preventing a resident from leaving their driveway was a police matter and would be deployed to where resources allowed, whilst prevention of gaining access to a driveway was a council matter.

Preventative work and addressing the culture was key to the police's response to such matters, and it was advised residents should call 101 or utilise the online chat as it was happening to report such issues.

The borough priorities would be changing prior to the next meeting of the committee in line with the new chief constable's priorities, with a likely focus on crimes targeting businesses.

The borough's crime statistics revealed a large increase in robbery, primarily due to a sharp increase in the Egham area and had resulted in a number of individuals being arrested and charged. The slight increase in adult abuse reflected a national trend, and the police were working closely with Adult Social Care on ways to intervene.

A member was keen to find out more about the impact of modern slavery in Runnymede,

and the borough commander advised that this went across multiple areas. A modern slavery team existed within the borough, and the borough commander would provide more detail on modern slavery at the next committee.

Despite a downward trend in antisocial behaviour, the borough commander felt this continued to be an under-reported offence and urged members to encourage residents to report it to help the police understand the bigger picture and plan patrols accordingly. A committee member highlighted that such under-reporting might be down to concerns about retaliation, to which the borough commander confirmed that any reports would not be shared more widely, whilst if members felt able to share specific information or locations the police would consider making discreet enquiries to follow the matter up. Reporting to Crimestoppers was also an option.

Brox Road remained the only antisocial behaviour hotspot in the borough, and work was ongoing on what was a very specific issue, whilst car rallies remained an issue in the Thorpe Industrial Estate. The police response was initially to send participants a warning letter, and if that was ignored a community protection warning would be issued. Continuing to report issues to police would improve intelligence on where and when to patrol.

Shoplifting offences had significantly increased both in Runnymede and nationally, and the police worked with the shops concerned to utilise CCTV, whilst patrol patterns could be connected to trends. Safer Business Action Week would be taking place the following week that would have a strong focus on crime prevention.

The borough commander acknowledged that part of the issues around shoplifting was down to the cost of living, and some of the outcomes available would not criminalise people, whilst any root cause to offending would also attempt to be established and addressed. The borough commander would look into a breakdown of the types of items being stolen and whether they were considered basic essentials or the more commonly prevalent types of items being stolen such as meat and alcohol. In response to a member's question the borough commander advised that members of the public should not put themselves at risk in attempting to deal with an offender, particularly when CCTV footage is obtainable.

The borough commander confirmed to a member that the police had seen an increase in calls to mental health crises, including section 136 that gave police powers to take a person from a public place to a place of safety. Such incidents involve the police remaining with those concerned for an average of eight hours. It was hoped that the introduction of the Right Person Right Care model – not yet available in Surrey – would lessen the time police spend dealing with such cases.

The Committee thanked the borough commander for his attendance.

(The meeting ended at 8.02 pm.)

Chairman