

Minutes of the meeting of the Ealing Safer Neighbourhood Board

Date: 2 October 2020
Time: 19:00
Venue: Virtual

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Sara Kumar (Chair); John Martin (Vice Chair and Projects Co-Ordinator); Sarah Constable (Youth Representative); George Maxwell (Independent Custody Visitor's Panel); William Hardman (London Chamber of Commerce); Andrew Rollings (Ealing Business Improvement District); Beata Felinczak (Victim Support); Don Tanswell (Acton Ward Panels Representative); James Guest (Ealing Ward Panels Representative); Jags Sanghera (Southall Ward Panels Representative); Martin Mallam (Greenford Ward Panels Representative); Andy Oliver (Community Member); Jamila Bibi-Sawar (Community Member); Anu Khela (Community Member and ESNB Social Media Manager); Mohamed Ali (Community Member); and Annemarie Braganza (Community Member)

COUNCILLORS

Councillor Seema Kumar (Member); and Councillor Joanna Camadoo-Rothwell (Member)

METROPOLITAN POLICE REPRESENTATIVES

Jill Horsfall (West Area BCU Superintendent); and Leigh Ballard (Inspector and Community Officer)

EALING COUNCIL OFFICERS

Jess Murray (Ealing Council Safer Communities); and Misha Jalil (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies from: Gita Langston (Community Member)

2. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3. Minutes

Resolved that: the minutes of the meeting on 4th August 2020 were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. COVID-19 Update

Jill Horsfall, West Area BCU Superintendent informed the board that extra resources will be allocated for enforcement in response to London moving into tier 2.

The Superintendent reported that crime is back to the pre-Covid levels and the police are issuing tickets where appropriate. During the height of the lockdown, West Area BCU issued the highest number of tickets in London.

The Superintendent reported that the slight gap in the legislation around business venues and gathering, particularly in relation to the £10,000 fines, posed a challenge to enforcement. However, where the rules were clear, the Metropolitan Police progressed with enforcement against venues that were non-compliant. The police will be in court on 23 October 2020 to seek interim orders to remove licenses for two non-compliant businesses.

The Police Representative reported that the Metropolitan Police were directed to move more towards enforcement. However, they are still going through engagement, explanation and encouragement in the first instance. She commented that enforcement was the most time-consuming option available to the police.

Resolved that: the board noted the update.

5. Halloween Update

Leigh Ballard, Inspector and Community Officer provided the Halloween update. He stated that historical data showed there is increased crime, particularly antisocial behaviour, on Halloween and Bonfire Night. This year all officers in the Safer Neighbourhood Team will patrol the streets on Halloween and Bonfire Night from 4pm to 2am. There will be 4 sergeants and 44 police constables. A further 16 police community support officers will work until midnight. In addition, there will be officers from the Gangs Unit, Violence Suppression Units and a 24/7 Response Team.

The Inspector reported that various officers have been tasked to specific locations to ensure the entire borough is covered. On the main roads, the officers will be on foot for high visibility to deter crime. There will also be officers on bikes and boat vehicles to cover the side roads.

In response to questions by the board:

- Leigh Ballard stated he will look at previous crime data from last year and speak to sergeants to determine if more officers are required at Pitshanger Lane, Ealing to prevent a high number of people from congregating at this site.
- Jill Horsfall stated she will speak with the Communications Unit to see if they can locally circulate guidance about discouraging trick-or-treating during Halloween.
- Jess Murray, Ealing Council Safer Communities stated that he will ask the Council's Communication Team to amplify the message from Public Health England which discouraged trick-or-treating this Halloween by circulating it to the Metropolitan Police and local schools.

Resolved that: the board noted the update.

6. Police Report

Jill Horsfall reported on this item. She informed the board that, data rolling over the last 12 months showed knife crime decreased by 15%; knife crime under 25 decreased by 34%; violence with injury decreased by 6%. The total notifiable offences were down by 4%. However, antisocial behaviour increased by 40%. The Superintendent explained that Covid-19 related complaints led to an inflated figure for antisocial behaviour. The crime rates are at expected levels after the 2-4 month Covid-19 dip.

The Superintendent reported that over the last few months, Ealing borough experienced a high number of domestic offense incident reports. However, this borough had the lowest number of domestic offences. In September 2020, 513 incidents were reported which translated to 255 domestic offences. The September 2020 domestic figure was lower than the 351 offences in August 2020. The number of domestic offences decreased on a monthly basis and it is currently at the March 2020 level.

The Superintendent reported that in the West Area there is a 19% rate of charging caution for domestic offences which is the second highest in the Metropolitan Police. The highest BCU has a 21% rate of charging caution for domestic abuse. She reported that the aspiration for West Area is to reach a rate of 30% and the main hindrance is the lack of evidence or lack of victims willing to substantiate. Although they do proceed with victimless prosecution where appropriate.

The Superintendent reported that from November 2020 there will be a Perpetrators Unit which will be staffed with a sergeant and a mix of 8 detective and/or police constables. The Unit will work in partnership with relevant local authorities and third parties to specifically deal with domestic matters and it will target high harm offenders, including repeat offenders.

Leigh Ballard reported that in early September 2020 they noticed an increase in robberies by approximately 13%. This was predominantly around the Ealing Broadway

area itself and towards the tube station and surrounding roads. He informed the board that they are working alongside the British Transport Police to address this issue. Significant resources were allocated to the area over the last 4 weeks, leading to 21 arrests with no alternative outcome available. They issued 16 fines; stop and searched 33 people; and recorded 59 pieces of intelligent information. They utilised their Merlin system to record 23 instances of police interaction with children under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults so that other services can take note of what had been said and done and react to help them if required. He reported that they had recovered 5 bladed articles and knives during the stop and searches. The stop and searches will continue for another 2 weeks, after which Leigh Ballard will look at results and decide on the next action.

In response to questions by the board, Jill Horsfall responded that violent crime is down. She was aware of recent serious incidents, such as the fatality in Hillingdon and shooting in Brentford which are areas close to Ealing borough. She stated that there are ongoing investigations for those two incidents. She stated that the figures detailing the breakdown of violent crime by wards are in the public domain on the MOPAC website.

The Chair informed the board that the Police Update Report was not received from Vlod Barchuk, Stop and Search Officer. Therefore she replaced this item with a METCC Update which was provided by Andy Oliver, Community Member.

Andy Oliver informed the board that he attends 2-3 METCC meetings on a yearly basis to review: how quickly 999 and 101 calls are answered; whether the speed in which calls are answered are within target; and whether vehicles are being dispatched within the target timeframe.

The Community Member reported that the METCC target is for agents to answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds. On average 83% of 999 calls were answered within target. Although the average fell short of the target, it was the highest rate within the last 4 years. A challenge for METCC over the last few years was the lack of staff but their recruitment levels have improved which lead to the increased percentage of calls being answered within 10 seconds. Andy Oliver further reported that the target was for 90% of units to get to a location within 15 minutes in situations that require immediate attention. It was reported that on average 85% of units get to the location within the target timeframe in urgent situations. The response to domestic assault was slower than for other types of crime and the reasons were unknown. Nationally, 80% of units reach the location within 15 minutes but in the West Area, including Ealing, 75% of units reach the location within 15 minutes.

The Community Member reported that over the last few months the Metropolitan Police have been investing in online reporting of non-urgent crime to take the pressure off 999 and 101 calls, especially as police stations closed during the pandemic. The public can also live chat and contact the Metropolitan Police Twitter account to report non-urgent crime.

The Community Member reported that there are 3 main call centres in Lambeth, Bow and Hendon which manage dispatch of units across London. At the last METCC

meeting, there was discussion to bring dispatch of unit from these call centres to within the geographic police area. The view was that localised dispatch of units may improve service.

In response to questions by the board:

- Andy Oliver responded that the METCC are aware of hoax calls. Calls from specific individuals who repeatedly waste service time must be answered to avoid the risk of ignoring genuine calls. However, action is taken against individuals that abuse the system. He clarified that there are a minority of individuals that abuse the system with the majority of calls being genuine. He stated that he will raise this issue at the next METCC meeting and report the discussion at the next ESNB meeting. Jill Horsfall confirmed that the METCC takes enforcement action against repeated time wasters and they provide boroughs with data on repeat offenders and repeat venues. Jess Murray stated that there are national campaigns that promote calling 999 for real emergencies and media campaigns highlight prosecution of time wasters. He also stated that repeated hoax callers sometimes have an underlying vulnerability, mental health or other issues and the Council works with them to provide assistance.
- Jill Horsfall commented that the 15-minute target timeframe for a unit to reach a location begins when the phone operator picks up the phone. The time can be split into three portions. The first part of the call will be the phone operator writing down details of the incident; then time will be spent trying to find a unit; and lastly travel time for the assigned unit to reach the location. The Police Representative stated that the phone operator may be spending more time writing down details of the incident for domestic abuse calls to obtain as much information as possible. The dispatch is then generally quick but travelling to the location can take time, particularly in large geographical areas. She reassured the board that they are working to decrease the time taken to respond to domestic abuse calls.
- Jill Horsfall stated that she will seek feedback from the Response Superintendent on responses to calls from low traffic neighbourhoods and she will email the feedback to Misha Jalil, Democratic Services Officer.

Resolved that:

1. the board members noted the update
2. Andy Oliver will raise the issue of hoax calls at the next METCC meeting and report on the discussions at the next ESNB meeting.

7. Twitter Forum

The Chair read out questions which were tweeted to her by the public for the police to answer. She informed the board that Anu Khela, Community Member helped with running the Twitter Forum for this meeting.

Jill Horsfall stated that it is difficult to provide concrete rules to officers regarding PPE. Officers were provided guidance on when they should and should not be wearing face masks. However, in most cases officers have discretion on whether to use PPE based on the dynamics of the situation. For example, during an arrest they must wear a face mask but if an arrest needs to occur quickly then the police cannot stop to put on their face mask due to the urgency of the situation.

Jill Horsfall stated that schools and colleges should advise their pupils regarding social distancing and this is not a policing matter. Jess Murray stated that there is perception that people must keep 2 metres away from each other when walking on the pavement. He informed the board that police do not have the power to enforce this and that there are rules against congregation but there are no rules for social distancing in public.

Leigh Ballard stated that in the last month there was a significant issue with street drinking around the Hanwell Clock Tower. They set up an operation with the entire West Ealing Safer Neighbourhood Team and they are working in partnership with the Council for the CCTV. The issue with this area is seasonal and is generally worse during the warmer summer evenings. Police have been issuing people with fines and community protection notices (CPN). The CPN allows police to arrest people if they return to the area. He also reported that 2 people were arrested in this location. The Inspector stated that the area around the Hanwell Clock Tower is not a problem at the moment. However, there are Design Out Crime Officers who are looking at ways to change the area structurally to reduce crime. Jess Murray stated that the problems with this area was addressed at the end of last year but the issues have recently resurfaced.

Jess Murray stated that there are different types of begging. Passive begging is where people sit with signs and it is a civil matter. Aggressive begging is where people actively approach other to follow and harass them for money and it is a criminal matter. Some begging is organised which makes it more of a challenge to enforce. Jill Horsfall stated that passive begging is harder to deal with as people may take offence to responses to this type of begging. It is also difficult to build evidence around passive begging and civil powers are difficult to apply as perpetrators are part of a network and get moved around frequently. They do not stay in one location for any length of time and it is sometimes difficult to identify them. Leigh Ballard reported that his team have dealt with passive begging and a few instances of aggressive begging. They used CCTV evidence to make arrests. However, the Inspector informed the board that often the offenders are sentenced to only one night in custody as the court takes into account their low income. The sentence does not deter them from committing the same offence. The Inspector commented that this is a national problem and not just an issue seen in the Ealing borough.

Jill Horsfall stated that shoplifting is a huge demand generator for her team. They try to encourage businesses to take responsibility to reduce the opportunity for shoplifting where possible so that it does not become police issue. However, she also stated that if any business has a problem with abuse and/or aggressive behaviour then they should get service from her team by calling 999. She stated that if there are specific incidents where businesses did not receive service after calling 999 then this should be raised at the time.

In response to concerns from a community member that aggressive shoplifting problems in the Sainsbury's in Ealing Broadway have not been addressed, Leigh Ballard stated that he will send an officer to this business to build their confidence in the police and resolve any issues.

Jill Horsfall stated that catalytic converters are valuable for criminals. The Inspector stated that it is hard to prevent theft of catalytic converters and they advise people to park in a way so that the catalytic converter is hard to access. The Inspector reported that at a nationwide level, they are speaking with manufacturers to change the design in a way to make catalytic converters less accessible. She reported that some people were arrested and charged in Hounslow a few months ago for catalytic converter thefts.

Jill Horsfall reported that hate crime increased since the beginning of the pandemic but data on hate crime is reviewed daily so that work can be done to reduce it.

In response to a question by a concerned Acton resident, Jill Horsfall stated that she was unaware of any drug dealing near a pub in Acton which is opposite Acton Police Station. She stated that residents sometimes assume police have information that they may not have. She further commented that any drug dealing should be reported as intelligence is the biggest resource for the police. Leigh Ballard stated that 3 weeks ago, 2 sergeants immediately arrested a person near Acton Police Station for offering them drugs. He stated that he is not sure if the person they arrested is the same person seen by the Acton resident concerned about drug dealing in the area. He advised residents to report any crime they witness to ensure that it is dealt with by the police.

Resolved that: the board noted the responses by the police representatives to questions asked by the public via Twitter.

8. Projects Update

Sara Kumar, Chair of the meeting reminded the board that she handed the Projects Co-Ordinator role to John Martin, Vice Chair at the last meeting.

The Chair informed the board that the projects that were submitted after the deadline were refused by MOPAC as they faced increased pressure on their budget and time due to the pandemic. Therefore, the current funds will be moved into next year. A total

of £11,714 pounds will be moved forward and MOPAC will cover the £5,200 admin support for this year's projects.

The Chair informed the board that they can start sending in projects in readiness for next year. She stated that the deadline for submission has not been announced yet but from previous experience it may be April 2021. Some applications have already been received, for example a self defence training course.

The Chair asked board members to reach out to various members of the community to raise awareness about this initiative so that they receive more applications to sponsor projects that reduce crime.

John Martin stated that as a result of the pandemic there are a number of charities going through trying times and this initiative can help provide them with necessary funding.

9. Any Other Business

Jill Horsfall responded to a question by the board regarding the Southall Police Station building. She stated that the decision on whether or not the police will keep that building lies with MOPAC and they are still waiting for MOPAC to give them a decision on this matter.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 11 January 2021.

This meeting concluded at 8:30pm.