

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

9 APRIL 2019

Chair:	* Councillor Jeff Anderson	
Councillors:	* Richard Almond * Dan Anderson * Peymana Assad * Honey Jamie	* Jean Lammiman * Jerry Miles * Kanti Rabadia * Stephen Wright (2)
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided)	(Parent Governors)
	† Mr N Ransley Reverend P Reece	Vacancy Vacancy
Non-voting Co-opted:	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
In attendance: (Councillors)	Varsha Parmar Krishna Suresh	Minute 54 Minute 55

- * Denotes Member present
- (2) Denotes category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

48. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Chris Mote

Councillor Stephen Wright

49. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 9 – Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2019

Councillor Peymaana Assad declared a Non-Pecuniary interest in that she was Portfolio Holder Assistant for Community Cohesion and Crime. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

50. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2019 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

A Member stated that the following actions from the previous meeting were still outstanding and requested relevant officers forward this information to Members after the meeting:

- data relating to incidences of fly tipping by Ward;
- the affordable housing list.

51. Public Questions & Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that there were none.

52. References from Council/Cabinet

RESOLVED: To note that there were none.

RESOLVED ITEMS

53. Scrutiny Annual Report 2018-19

The Committee considered the Scrutiny annual report 2018/19.

The Chair advised that the meeting statistics for Overview & Scrutiny Committee had omitted to mention that the Leader of the Council had attended two meetings of the Committee.

Members made the following comments regarding the report:

- the report did not set out achievements and actions undertaken and that this information should be included in any future reports;
- it might be useful to link achievements to Performance Board data in future such reports.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

54. Technology in waste collections

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director Community which set out an overview of the waste technology currently utilised as part of the waste and recycling collection service operating within Harrow.

Members asked the following questions and officers provided the following responses:

- What was the rate of contamination of dry recycling?

An officer advised that for Harrow, this figure was between 9-10%, whereas the industry average was 15%.

- Was the Bartec waste collector system compatible with the Council's other packages such as SAP, CRM and CCP?

The officer stated that Bartec had first been introduced in 2009. It was possible to upload real-time information via CRM (which meant back office staff could access this immediately), as well as link this data into the Council website. It was therefore not necessary to use SAP

- How was data collected by the waste teams? Was it input manually? Were Harrow's refuse bins micro chipped?

The officer advised that the LLPG (Local Land and Property Gazetteer) data set was updated regularly. Harrow's bins were not chipped and data was entered manually into the system by the waste teams, who reported incidents by exception rather than by property. Therefore, if there were no issues on a particular street, the entire street could be closed off on the system.

- Were there any savings associated with the new fleet of waste trucks?

The officer stated that in line with the Mayor of London's Environment Strategy, the new vehicles complied with emissions standards required by the Euro 6 standard. She added that Harrow was ahead of other London Authorities in this area. Additionally, vehicles in the old fleet which had been on lease, often broke down and were more expensive to maintain. The new fleet of vehicles was Council-owned and there were procurement savings associated with its purchase. There had been some teething problems while the new system was embedded, nevertheless, the crews had been well trained and were happy with the new fleet as they found it simpler and quicker to resolve any issues.

- Why were some of the new vehicles white without any Council branding?

The officer advised that the unbranded, white vehicles were interim use for the period between the ending of the previous contract and the acquisition of the new vehicles. The new fleet would be branded.

- What was the cost benefit of the new route optimisation technology? This information should have been included in the officer report.

The officer stated that the Bartec system had been in place since 2009. The new system enable more immediate reporting and response. It would be difficult to quantify the cost benefit of this.

- What savings had been made under the new contract? He gave the example of a resident who owned two brown bins, and had paid for both to be collected, however, only if the bins had the necessary sticker to indicate it should be collected. Nevertheless, waste crews had collected both bins for several months before they realised their error – how had this been possible?

The officer advised that the new fleet had been in place since January 2019. Previous to this, vehicles regularly broke down and crews were obliged to used manual sheets which could have contributed to the above situation. Since the introduction of the new fleet and additional training for the crews, the entire processes had been finely tuned. Although, some of the interim vehicles continued to be paper-based, the new fleet was fully automated.

- Which member of a team would typically input the data into the Bartec?

The officer stated that this was the driver's role. She encouraged Members to take part in a ride-along with one of the waste crews in order to gain a better understanding of the process.

- What contingency was there for technical failure of the system? What were the processes to be followed in such cases?

The officer stated that paper copies of routes were available in case of a systems crash. The crews were very familiar with their routes and would manage to complete routes successfully. She confirmed that to date there had been no complete crashes.

- Was it the case that residents could now report missed bins for up to 48 hours after the event?

The officer advised that this had been implemented following a review.

- What provision was there for elderly or disabled residents who could not put their bins out for collection?

The officer stated that those residents could request an Assisted Collection, which would be collected by the crews.

- What about the issue of bins with unclosed lids?

The officer stated that the policy was that bins with raised lids would not be collected and this was communicated to residents. This was

because lids that were not fully closed could lead to spillages, could get caught in the lift mechanism of the waste trucks and break off and thereby cause damage to the vehicles as well as give rise to health and safety issues. Nevertheless, crews had some discretion in this area.

- Some residents were not online and preferred to contact the Council by telephone or in person. With regard to those residents who had not renewed their brown bin contracts, would the waste crews be able to flag these individuals up so that they could be followed up?

The officer stated that those residents who had contracted in to the garden waste service were sent either an email or postal reminder to renew their contracts in January each year. She added that it was also possible to sign up to the service online, at the one-stop-shops as well as at the kiosks.

- How were flats managed on the system?

The officer stated that the data for blocks of flats could take longer to input into the system.

- Had an equalities impact assessment been undertaken prior to the implementation of the Bartec system?

The officer advised that the system had been implemented in 2009 and she had been unable to find whether an Eqia had been undertaken.

- What feedback had been received from the crews with regard to the new reporting system?

The officer stated that crews had greater confidence in what they reported, with only genuine missed collections being entered into the system.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

55. Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2019

The Committee considered a report of the Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning, which set out the Strategic Assessment, which was an annual review of the patterns of crime and anti-social behaviour, thereby fulfilling partnership responsibility under relevant sections of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The findings of the Review would help inform the annual refresh of the Harrow's Community Safety and Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy.

Members asked the following questions and received the following responses.

- To what extent did social media have an impact of the rising fear of crime?

The Acting Borough Commander stated that this was difficult to assess. Social media could be a tool for both good and bad. Often stories of crimes were circulated without any context and could lead to a fear of crime.

- Had there been an increase in hate crimes, for example, Islamophobia?

The Acting Borough Commander advised that there had been an increase in the reporting of these types of crimes.

- What were the implications of the MOPAC funding for Harrow for 2019-2021?

An officer advised that there would be a slight reduction in funds in the later period which would need to be reflected in both the strategy and the delivery plan. The Council was in the process of accessing funding streams in related areas and had recently been awarded funding from MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) for a community engagement and cohesion project which would impact on community safety.

- The data in the report related to 2017/18 period and had been previously reviewed by Members. Members would prefer to see the most up-to-date information in future reports.

The officer advised that the report had been populated with data available at the end of December 2018 as there was a 3-month delay in receiving the verified published data. He pointed out that there were some typographical errors in the report which he apologised for.

- Should the header on page 51 state 2017 or 2018? There were a number of spelling errors throughout the report.

The officer advised that the header was incorrect and should state 2018. However, the data included was accurate.

The Chair expressed his disappointment in the lack of accuracy and the errors in the officer report.

- A Member made the point that because Harrow was considered to be a relatively safe borough, a large proportion of policing resources had been moved from Harrow to other boroughs. For example, in his Ward, Kenton West, there were no PCSOs allocated.
- How were targeted burglaries dealt with?

An officer advised that data regarding aggravated burglaries or targeted burglaries was not disaggregated from the overall data relating to burglaries. He added that overall, the data showed that the number of burglaries had reduced.

- Different communities were targeted by criminals for different reasons. Was there any data regarding this available?

The Acting Borough Commander undertook to look into the matter and feedback to the Committee.

- Residents wanted to know where the burglary hot-spots in the borough were. Burglary was increasingly classed as low priority. Often victims of burglary did not receive an immediate response from police and therefore some residents felt it was not worth reporting these to the police. The same went for ASBOs (Anti social behaviour orders). Was this lack of action by police due to resourcing and time pressures?

The Acting Borough Commander advised that the number of burglaries and other crimes were reducing and continued to reduce. Although the data in the report covered the period up to December 2018, it did not include the latest figures. He added that since the implementation of the BCU model (Basic Command Units), of which there were 12 covering London, response times in Harrow had fallen slightly. Nevertheless, there were advantages and positives coming out of the new BCU model, and risk was being managed differently.

- With regard to the under-reporting of Hate crime, specifically Islamophobic ones – were there any additional measures in place for Ramadan which would begin in May 2019?

The Acting Borough Commander advised that there were bespoke policing plans for large events, for example, football matches, bonfire night etc. However, past data indicated that hate crimes against particular faith groups did not increase during religious festivals.

- How would the Assessment document feed into the Strategy? What were the principal areas of concern and how would these feed into the Strategy document?

The Acting Borough Commander stated that violent crime was the most important area of concern.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Crime stated that it was important for both the Council and the Police to build relationships and trust with the community, to be better informed by keeping abreast of feedback from residents regarding the issue of crime and anti-social behaviour and to respond accordingly.

- Residents had indicated that it was increasingly difficult for them to report crimes to the Police via the 101 non-emergency number. The Member gave a personal example where the victim of a crime had been told that the Police would not be able to assist her unless she was able to locate corroborating CCTV images or witnesses.
- Was it true that victims of non violent crimes were being asked to help solve their cases, for example, being asked to find CCTV footage of the

incident or to obtain verifying statements from neighbours and witnesses? Was this official Police policy?

- What was being done to tackle the increase in sexual crimes?

The Acting Borough Commander stated that individuals could report crimes using the 999 emergency number, the 101 non-emergency number or via the website. Unfortunately, there was no protocol for calling back those who rang the 101 number and hung up if their call was not answered immediately or were held in a queue (although such a protocol was in place for those who rang the 999 emergency number). He added that DWO's (dedicated Ward Officer) had been instructed to liaise with and update their local Ward Councillors about local issues every two weeks. He added that officers were obliged to prioritise violent crime above non-violent ones and had to be smarter with the use of available resources. Officers would advise victims of crime to have realistic expectations in cases where there were no corroborating CCTV images or witnesses available. However, it was not official Police policy to expect victims to chase up CCTV or interview witnesses.

He added that the BCU model meant that Harrow now had in-house, dedicated specialist officers and specialist teams which dispensed with the need for farming out cases to specialist units elsewhere. For example, there was a dedicated team dealing with sex crimes and another dealing with violent crimes and therefore the service provision was more joined up which meant improved response and reaction times.

There was Member comment on the data and statistics that it would be helpful for comparison if they could all be for the same periods. There was officer comment that the periods for the table at page 51 on change in the level of crime should read 2017 and 2018, not 2016 and 2017.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.17 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JEFF ANDERSON
Chair