

MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETING OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 8 September 2021
(7:05 - 8:45 pm)

Present: Cllr Jane Jones (Chair), Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah (Deputy Chair), Cllr Donna Lumsden, Cllr Olawale Martins, Cllr Fatuma Nalule, Cllr Simon Perry, Cllr Ingrid Robinson, Cllr Paul Robinson and Cllr Phil Waker

Also Present: Cllr Maureen Worby

Apologies: Cllr Toni Bankole

12. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

13. Minutes - To note the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July were noted.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration (CM) raised the issue of Early Help services, which was considered at the Committee's 7 July 2021 meeting (minute 9 refers), and the recommendations put forward by Members for consideration. An initial draft response to these had been shared with her; however, further time was needed before a final response could be provided to the Committee, as some of the recommendations were within the remit of other Cabinet Members, which would need to be coordinated, and she was also not fully satisfied with the initial response. The Strategic Director for Law and Governance stated that she would also follow this matter up, having recently taken over the role of Statutory Scrutiny Officer from the former Director of Strategy and Participation, who had recently left the Council.

14. East Area Borough Command Unit Update

Chief Inspector Chris Nixon (CI), representing the East Area Borough Command Unit (BCU) which provided policing across the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge and Havering on behalf of the Metropolitan Police Service, delivered an update as requested by the Committee at its 3 February 2021 meeting (minute 45 refers). The presentation covered the following areas:

- Update on Response Times;
- Potential reasons for the Borough's high missing people figures; and
- Engagement with the LGBT+ Community.

The CM highlighted the challenges of young people from other areas of London being placed in Barking and Dagenham care homes, such as these young people being reported as missing by their care homes when they went to visit friends in their home borough and the resulting higher missing people figure for the Borough. She referred to the BCU's ward level review, which showed a significantly higher volume of repeat missing persons from the Abbey, Whalebone and Longbridge

wards, which were all sites of children's care homes, and further sampling had also shown that the majority of these cases related to children living in care homes. LBB social services worked closely with the BCU to ensure that they were responding appropriately to any missing children's incidents. The CI also highlighted the complexities behind collating information when a young person was associated with multiple local authorities, as well as in ensuring that the right information was passed onto frontline care home staff from the first day that a young person arrived in their care.

In response to questions from Members, the CI stated that:

- Over the last year, the BCU had engaged with care homes to risk assess and prepare joint plans with providers to reduce repeat missing episodes, which had reduced the open missing investigations from a rolling 60 to a rolling 20.
- Part of this intervention was around the Philomena Protocol (a scheme that asks carers to identify children and young people who are at risk of going missing, and to record vital information about them that can be used to help find them quickly and safely) and making clear the expectation that care homes would carry out reasonable enquiries as to the whereabouts of a child, rather than immediately calling the Police. Part of this was also about better managing longer-term investigations, and ensuring that these were brought to a close, as well as speeding up investigations where a young person regularly went "missing" to the same location, such as a parent's house.
- The Barking and Dagenham Independent Advisory Group (IAG) had more than six members; however, the LGBTQ+ IAG which had been established following the Stephen Port murders to engage with the LGBTQ+ community, was looking to increase its membership. The BCU had also set up Police Encounter Panels (PEP), which had a larger rolling membership and looked to obtain the views of young people around policing.
- There were three sites for response team officers: Freshwharf, which was on the junction of the A406 and A13 in Barking; Ilford Police Station; and Jack Brown House, in Havering. The response teams worked as an overall team, and if one site was short of staff, officers from the other sites would be transported to it to ensure that the call demand was appropriately serviced.
- The BCU was part way through a DA related training package for response team officers. Many teams had now undertaken this training, with the BCU now using some broader powers more often, such as arrests for coercive and controlling behaviours.
- Staffing numbers in both Barking and Dagenham, and Redbridge were broadly in line with their demand levels.
- The Police actively sought staff feedback, such as through staff surveys, employment engagement plans and suggestion boxes, and responded accordingly, for example, through increased Senior Leadership team contact.

The Chair suggested that the BCU contact the Borough's Flipside group if it wished to expand its younger PEP membership, and stated that the CM and the Operational Director for Enforcement Services (OD) may be able to help with further recruitment for the LGBTQ+ IAG. The CM stated that herself and the

Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement had been liaising with the Greater London Authority and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, to feed learnings from the Council's Domestic Abuse Commission into Metropolitan Police training.

15. Air Quality Action Plan Update and Ambition 2020 Scrutiny Review Recommendations

The Operational Director for Enforcement Services, the Head of Sustainability and Climate Change (HS), the Service Manager for Environmental Health and the Environmental Protection Officer delivered an update on the Air Quality Action Plan, how the Council was managing the impact of development on air quality and the next steps for improving air quality and raising awareness within the Borough.

In response to questions from Members, officers stated that:

- They were not aware of any major survival issues in relation to trees that had been planted in the last three years; however, they would take this back to the Parks and Open Spaces team, to find out the schedule for tree check-up.
- The team were in discussions with Be First around ensuring that promises made by developers in terms of tree planting were actively pursued.
- Whilst air quality monitoring was newer in LBBDD, and it was therefore difficult to look at trends over the last few years, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels had been reducing across London. This was in part due to the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), trends to move to petrol rather than diesel and other policies implemented. Air quality concerns often centred more around localised hotspots, which was why monitoring was essential, and LBBDD would be able to collect more data through its diffusion tubes in coming years.
- It was very hard to compare year on year results, due to these being highly influenced by the weather and global patterns, such as climatic conditions and agricultural processes. Whilst less cars were used during Covid peaks, buses continued to operate, with large empty diesel buses emitting high pollution.
- The ULEZ would be expanding from 25 October 2021, with a key difference being buses operating inside and outside of this zone. Lobbying Transport for London (TfL) and positioning diffusion tubes appropriately would be critical in encouraging TfL to renew their fleet through an increased evidence base.
- Whilst the Member Champion for Climate Change had not seen this report, he met with the HS on a bi-monthly basis and had been involved in the Air Quality Action Plan from start to finish.
- The current local plan ensured that new buildings going forward aimed to meet net zero carbon standards; however, there would be a period of transition as LBBDD had very low land values in comparison to the rest of London, and there was a trade-off between S106 money going towards this, highways, education and the Community Infrastructure Levy, as the cost of making properties "net zero" was currently quite expensive.
- Most carbon emissions came from existing stock, as newer stock was generally much better in design and carbon intensity was quite low. Be First was designing a zero-carbon design guide, which the Council was going to

use with its own built properties, as an example to third party developers that they could design out carbon at a low cost. Retrofitting of existing buildings in the Borough was also in progress.

- The next Air Quality steering group meeting would look into a year-long communication strategy, focusing on public health issues. This would highlight problems, such as the consequences of burning wood and idling car engines, and offer solutions to residents to help them to make changes. The Communications team was also issuing a substantial 'greener and cleaner' communications package, setting out what the Council was doing in terms of the green agenda, and encouraging residents to get involved.
- A series of events would be running in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2021 (COP26) in Glasgow, such as a 'Big Great Green Week' for the public to engage in. Public events would also be run over the next 10 years, in line with national 2030 carbon emissions targets.
- Many often worried that repercussions would be felt outside of a ULEZ zone; however, this mostly resulted in cleaner vehicle usage from those who wanted to travel into London.
- Communications needed to focus more on the damaging effects of particulate matter in relation to diseases such as cancer.
- Enforcement in terms of larger vehicles and tonnage was the responsibility of TfL. Some authorities had CCTV on 7.5 tonne areas, which could be forwarded on to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to address through the industry, rather than legislatively. Discussions with satnav providers could also help to reroute cars away from problematic areas.
- Whilst the Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) Zone enforcement scheme had a voluntary sign-up for developers, Councils could enforce through the Environmental Protection Act for statutory nuisances for dust and noise; however, the Act was more difficult to enforce as the statutory nuisance had to impact someone in their premises, rather than just on the street generally.

The Chair suggested that officers ask ward councillors whether they would be willing to use a part of their budget for pollution-busting plants within the edges of school buildings, to reduce carbon emissions around schools. The HS stated that the team had already had conversations with Valence School about green grids, and that in the lead up to the COP26, communications kits would be sent to schools.

16. Work Programme

The Chair informed the Committee of the following change that had been made to the Work Programme since the last meeting, which was noted by the Committee:

- The 'Changes to Reside' item which had previously been scheduled for today's meeting, was now to be heard at the 6 October 2021 Committee as the service was facing some staffing changes and officers had therefore requested some additional time to compile their report.