

## **BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate on Thursday, 24 February 2022 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors G. Buttironi, Z. Cooper, M. Elbourne, J. C. S. Essex, P. Harp, N. D. Harrison (Chair), A. King, N. C. Moses, S. Parnall, S. Sinden, M. Tary, R. S. Turner, S. T. Walsh, R. Absalom (Substitute), V. H. Lewanski, R. Michalowski and R. H. Ashford

Also present: Councillors Ashford, Lewanski, Michalowski and Torra

#### **67. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting on 20 January 2022 were approved.

#### **68. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Whinney.

Councillor Blacker gave his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Absalom.

#### **69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **70. ANNUAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY 2021**

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor Ashford, Portfolio Holder for Community Partnerships, on the Community Safety Partnership giving an overview of work over the past year and challenges to come. Highlights from the past year included the success of the new Reigate and Banstead Community Safety Partnership. There had also been delivery and oversight of high number of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) as Reigate and Banstead had the highest number of DHRs in Surrey. The partnership was taking part in a research project to better understand the patterns of domestic abuse and suicide.

Visits and talks had taken place across the borough in partnership with other agencies such as the YMCA, tackling issues such as avoiding becoming a victim of fraud, low level Prevent briefings and arranging events to raise awareness. A joint approach had been taken to address several concerns through Joint Action Group, Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting (CHaRMM) and Community Action.

The Community Safety Plan, which is unique to the borough, has four key priorities:

- Empowering Communities to Feel safe
- Protect the Most Vulnerable from Harm
- Responding to Domestic Abuse
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Committee members asked how the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was funded and how value for money was measured. It was noted that there is no direct funding for the CSP; it is a partnership model, between the Council, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, and the Clinical Commissioning Group in terms of officer time. All parties shared responsibility and as a group can bid for additional funding. The partnership is chaired by the Head of Paid Service at RBBC, Mari Roberts-Wood and officer time to enable, facilitate and collaborate was the main resourcing for the CSP. Committee members recognised that the CSP is important in bringing information and learning together across agencies.

**Empowering communities to Feel Safe** – From a resident survey in 2021, results showed that 65% of residents felt safe after dark, an improvement on the 2020 result of 60%. Targeted work would be carried out to improve areas needing improvement.

Highlights included:

- Campaigns to raise awareness and outreach with communities.
- Responding successfully to Community Triggers such as verbal abuse, noise and feeling unsafe. It was also noted that Community Triggers could be used on places as well as people.

In development:

- A refresh of Get Connected with local partners who work with young people such as the YMCA with National Lottery funding.

Committee members asked what would happen to the Get Connected project when lottery funding comes to an end. Get Connected was currently in the second year of a three-year period of lottery funding; it is overseen by a steering group which facilitates ongoing review and further funding would be sought.

**Protect the Most Vulnerable from Harm** – A number of County Lines had been tackled.

Highlights included:

- Significant arrests resulting from the serious organised crime JAG.
- Prevent and modern day slavery awareness.

In development:

- Developing Safe and Well checks with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.

Members noted that 24 children under Surrey Risk Management Meetings seemed high as these were children where there were concerns around harm caused by criminal or sexual exploitation or 'cuckooed' victims. Members asked why this was happening in the borough as this was over 50 per cent of cases across the four boroughs in East Surrey. They asked for data to be presented in table form in order to compare figures to previous years and understand the bigger picture. Councillor Ashford, Portfolio Holder, noted that although tabled information provided data, the key was to understand how the Council was moving forward, identifying areas of deprivation. It was intended to provide additional information and more frequent updates and briefings for Members.

**Responding to Domestic Abuse** – RBBC has the highest rate of Domestic Violence in Surrey and the highest level of cases leading to Domestic Homicide Review (DHR). However, there was a robust response to domestic abuse and DHRs are responded to proactively. GP surgery staff in East Surrey CCG area have been trained by to identify signs of domestic abuse by East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS); this programme has been successful and will extend into the north of the borough thanks to further funding received from Surrey Downs Better Care Fund and the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner.

Highlights included:

- Hospital Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (HIDVA).
- Identification and Referral to Improve Safety programme (IRIS).

In development:

- DHR learning events.
- Implementing the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 by adapting homes to make them safer.

Members asked why the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was still only being implemented in 2022. Councillor Ashford explained that the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was published in August 2021 and contained a wealth of implications; different sections were being rolled out nationally gradually.

Members asked why lessons were still being learnt regarding DHRs. There had been a high number of DHRs, and lessons must be learnt from them to enable prevention in the future. It was noted that the cost of undertaking DHRs currently sat with the Council, and due to large number of cases the cost was increasing. From April 2022, a move to a Surrey-wide funding model would over the coming year significantly reduce the cost to the Council for undertaking a review. Councillors commented that support was provided for victims of Domestic Abuse at East Surrey Hospital, but asked what provision was made for victims in the north of the borough. It was reported that a hospital model for support was in existence at Epsom and St Helier Hospital, but that it was managed by a different service. Councillors asked for numbers of suicide cases. There were currently four cases of suicide relating

to domestic abuse. General statistics on suicide could be supplied to the Committee in a follow-up written answer. Learning from each DHR for different agencies was very important.

**Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour** – 29 reports of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) had been managed in the past year.

Highlights included:

- Impact of JAG and CHaRMM, supporting and coaching to solve problems rather than using enforcement.

In development:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Enforcement Policy.
- Review of Public Space Protection Order.

Committee Chair, Councillor Harrison, requested that Councillors were kept informed about the ASB Enforcement Policy.

Surrey Police Borough Commander for Reigate and Banstead, Inspector Alex Maguire, gave his presentation on policing in the borough. Points to note included a reduction in the numbers of assaults on emergency workers, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), drug offences (with a number of offenders in prison) and residential burglaries in 2021 compared to 2020 (with arrests for burglaries in the Merstham area). Reigate and Banstead achieved 3.65 out of 5 for customer satisfaction and a 90% satisfaction score for dealing with burglaries. However, business burglaries, violence in a public place and domestic abuse crimes had all increased.

Key priorities have been:

- Protecting the vulnerable
- Targeting prolific offenders
- High harm crimes and crimes which have a serious impact on the community

Significant successful cases had been brought in all of these areas, particularly in an operation to target county lines cases and bring offenders to justice.

Key words to consider were Prevent – prevent crime, Pursue – pursue offenders, Protect – protect our community. More community events and meeting the public events could take place following the end of the pandemic.

A focus moving forward would be dealing with Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which was a Police and Crime Commissioner priority. Strategies included overt and covert patrols in the town centres, town focus groups, STREETS SAFE (an app to report areas where people feel unsafe),

education in schools, identifying hotspots, Street Pastors and Community Safety Partnership.

Priorities for 2022 were:

- Reducing and tackling ASB
- Protecting the vulnerable by tackling drugs and reducing violence in the community.
- Reducing violence against Woman and Girls
- Building better relationships with community groups
- Maintaining the reduction in burglaries across the borough (and address the rise in catalytic converter thefts from cars.
- Improving the whole Domestic Abuse performance.

Members made further observations and asked questions on the following areas:

**Fraud and clear-up rates for offences** – Committee members noted that many residents had suffered from fraud and asked how Reigate and Banstead compared to other areas for cases with fraud and clear-up rates for other offences such as burglary. Insp Maguire said that Reigate and Banstead had a very favourable rate of clear-up for burglaries compared to other areas in East Surrey. He would provide burglary clear-up figures for the whole county in a follow-up written answer. Fraud cases were handled by Action Fraud in the first instance and then distributed locally. Victims were visited by the Safer Neighbourhood Team, who provide support and safeguarding against future instances of fraud. Insp Maguire said Members could raise any issues with him directly.

**Working with young people** – Committee Members asked what work was being undertaken with schools and colleges. Insp Maguire said there were two Youth Engagement Officers who work closely with schools, as well as the Junior Citizens' Scheme which runs in partnership with other agencies. There was constant work ongoing to break down barriers such as organising football and netball matches and attendance at school events. Guest speakers talking about the dangers of knife crime and drugs were being planned. Members praised the work of the Junior Citizens' project who had actively engaged with young people in local schools.

**Domestic abuse prosecution figures** – Members noted that Reigate and Banstead had the highest number of domestic abuse figures in Surrey and asked about the number of arrests and prosecution figures compared to previous years. The Borough Commander did not have the arrest rates to hand but could send these to the Committee after the meeting. East Surrey wide there was a prosecution rate of 15% but this reflected the difficulties the CPS faced in bringing domestic abuse cases to court. Domestic Violence Protection Notices or Orders can be used as alternative methods to work with the victim, provide further support and work towards prosecution.

**Party in Lower Kingswood** – Members asked what the outcome had been of the case involving a party in Lower Kingswood during lockdown and potential fines of up to £10,000. The owners of the address had been fined

on two separate occasions for parties held by two separate groups of people who were renting the property. As the court case was pending, the Borough Commander was unable to comment, but would try to obtain some information to share with residents.

**High profile incident in Redhill on 23/02/2022** – Committee members enquired about the high-profile case that had taken place in Redhill on 23/02/2022. The Borough Commander reported that the investigation was ongoing, that firearms officers had been in attendance, the risk to the public had been minimised and that someone was currently helping the police with their enquiries.

**Vehicle access in Redhill** – A Committee Member commented that takeaway food delivery drivers were driving in the precinct areas of Redhill and asked what is being done to combat this. The Borough Commander confirmed that police officers were patrolling these areas and the food delivery companies have been contacted and spoken to, with warnings given where necessary. This problem would continue to be addressed.

**Parking on pavements in shopping areas and Casualty Reduction Team** – Committee members reported that cars were parking on the pavements in local shopping areas such as Nork shopping parade and were keen for the police to tackle this matter. This problem would be reported back to the Casualty Reduction Officers, who deal with traffic matters. A Committee member asked the Borough Commander to provide more information on the work of the Casualty Reduction Team. The north and south of the borough each have their own Casualty Reduction Officer who identifies high risk areas, conducts speed surveys and accident spot surveys and works with Neighbourhood Watch groups to deter speeding. The officers visit the high risk areas every day. The Borough Commander invited residents to report specific areas to him.

**Graffiti** – Committee members asked whether tackling graffiti was a priority. Insp Maguire said that graffiti is in the category of anti-social behaviour and is therefore taken seriously, however, problems must be prioritised. If the problem grows and was causing problems for residents, then it would be dealt with.

**Wildlife crime** – Committee members asked whether there was a high level of wildlife crime. Wildlife crime was dealt with by a dedicated Rural Crime Police Community Support Officer. There were no specific numbers relating to wildlife crime, but it was something that the police were aware of, and a specialist team tackled this type of crime.

Committee members requested that key contacts for local teams be shared with all councillors. The Borough Commander said that he would send an updated list with photos and phone numbers of officers and staff.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Alex Mcguire, Councillor Ashford and his team for their presentations.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee:

1. Noted the presentations from the Portfolio Holder for Community Partnerships and the Borough Commander for Reigate and Banstead
2. Reviewed the work of the Reigate and Banstead Community Safety Partnership in 2021 and made observations for consideration by the Executive Member.

**71. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

The Committee received the Forward Work Programme 2021/22 which related to the final meeting of the Municipal Year in March.

The Chair, Councillor Harrison, drew Members' attention to the IT Strategy which would be discussed at the next meeting. Members of the Audit Committee were invited to attend as it included information on areas they were interested in. The report would be discussed in a Part 2 Exempt session.

At the March meeting, the Committee will look at the upcoming Forward Work Programme for the coming year 2022/23. Members were asked to submit any items to the Clerk to bring to the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Essex asked if the Companies Performance Update report could include information in Part 1 of the report that could be in the public domain rather than Part 2 Exempt session, for example, information that was published already on the Companies House public website.

There were no comments on the Action Tracker.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee:

- 1) Noted the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22 and Action Tracker.

**72. EXECUTIVE**

It was reported that there were no items arising from the Executive that might be subject to the 'call-in' procedure in accordance with the provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

**73. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

The Meeting closed at 9.44 pm