

SAFER CITY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY BOARD

Monday, 29 November 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Safer City Partnership Strategy Board held virtually and available to view at www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fstyiktago.

Present

Ruby Sayed (Chair)
William Duffy (City of London Police)
Don Randall (City of London Crime Prevention Association)
Patrick Brooks (London Ambulance Service)

Gavin Stedman	- Port Health and Public Protection Director
Alex Orme	- Town Clerk's Department
Simon Cribbens	- Community & Children's Services Department
Jillian Reid	- Community and Children's Services Department
Gemma Stokley	- Town Clerk's Department
Polly Dunn, Clerk	- Town Clerk's Department
Andrew Issitt	- Parkguard
Valeria Cadena	- Community Safety Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Tijs Broeke, Karla Day, Bob Benton, Randal Anderson and Renu Gupta.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Safer City Partnership Strategy Board meeting on 27th September 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Board received a report of Town Clerk providing Partners with a summary of outstanding actions from previous meetings.

The Community Safety Manager referred to the Strategic Assessment presented at that last meeting and stressed the importance of ongoing support of the Corporate Strategy and Performance Team in order to achieve a 2022 assessment. The Chair agreed to consider offline what can be done to ensure the City Corporation's continued support in this area of work.

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5. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE - POLICE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2021**

The Board received a report of the Commissioner providing an overview of crime and anti-social behaviour recorded in the City of London during the reporting period.

The Chair referred to information and data on anti-social behaviour that offered a narrative and explanation, but with facts and figures relating to sexual offences there being very little information by way of explanation other than showing a significant increase during the period. The Chair suggested it would be helpful to understand how the figures compare to pre-lockdown. It would help by way of re-assurance to Partners and members of the public to understand what was being done to address the issue, with data demonstrating over a year that figures appeared to have quadrupled.

The Commissioner responded and confirmed they would gather additional data and come back with more detail on sexual offences reporting. The Commissioner referred to crime trends over five years, whilst having seen an increase overall in crimes during this period, the figure still remained lower than pre-covid.

The City was now seeing a return to life resulting in an increase in footfall, increased use of the transport network and therefore certain crime types coming back. These were mainly violence with injury, common assault with links to domestic violence offences, offences at licensed premises and in retail units.

Incidents of rape had seen an increase over the period and further data behind this would be obtained for the next meeting. The Board noted burglary and shoplifting had seen a decrease along with incidents of bike theft and anti-social behaviour.

It was explained that in response to Violence Against Women and Girls, City of London Police had changed its posture on the nighttime economy through an increase in resourcing, launched an Ask Angela campaign and there was now a Chief Superintendent leading in this area. The Board noted that another area of crime that had seen an increase was drink spiking with a response having been to put a bid in to allow testing and also teams having been briefed and the Licensing Team working with the licensing trade to increase awareness, with a weekly review of incidents taking place to ensure these do not escalate any further.

In conclusion, the Commissioner acknowledged crime had seen an increase, but that the number of incidents does still not compare to figures pre-covid.

The Chair referred to footfall still not being at the levels they used to be and that she would like to understand the levels on a percentage basis. This would be helpful moving forward in considering what preventative measures were being taken. The Chair welcomed the Ask Angela initiative, which had received a

very positive response. It was stressed how capturing data would be crucial in reviewing its success.

The Chair commented on the increase in spiking incidents being of significant concern and suggested there was a need to understand what immediate support would be available to deal with this through either street triage, medical services and considering appropriate training for the licensing team and licensed premises.

The Commissioner agreed with the points raised and suggested the bid relating to testing would look to address a number of these.

The Commissioner explained more data had been requested to allow a review of offences. An initial review of the offences had indicated that the suspect had been recorded as a stranger or not seen by the victim. To date, incidents had been seeing late reporting, thereby reducing an opportunity for forensic and CCTV evidence being gathered. More work was now being put into this area of crime to increase officers on the street and through linking into the Licensing Team and offering increased opportunity to capture evidence early.

It was agreed that training of venues and increased use of CCTV were crucial areas in addressing incidents of spiking.

The Board received the report and noted its content.

At this point in the meeting, it was noted there were not a sufficient number of Responsible Authorities to achieve a quorum and that any items requiring a decision would need to be taken outside of the meeting. The Board continued to consider items on an informal basis. It was proposed seeking an urgent decision following the meeting on any items requiring a decision.

6. PROCEEDS OF CRIME ACT FUNDING BIDS

a) Addressing vulnerability in the Night-time Economy

The Community Safety Manager referred to the importance of this area of work, with there being a need for it within the night-time economy and funding of kit in support of it. This would go towards helping people immediately and offer an opportunity to test people as soon as possible, thereby allowing an opportunity to respond in a shorter period of time than was currently the case.

c) Additional counselling for people who have experienced domestic or sexual abuse

The Community Safety Manager referred to women in the City who were in need of a service at this moment in time from counselling, with the reality of what can be provided by the National Health Service often taking a long time and victims really needing this service at the earliest opportunity.

The Community Safety Manager confirmed both Proceeds of Crime Act Funding Bids came forward with her full support.

The Commissioner offered his full support for both Proceeds of Crime Act Fund bids. The Commissioner stressed the importance of establishing early evidence in building a picture of where people were being spiked, establishing whether it was a spiking offence and getting in early in looking to address the issue. The second bid was about vulnerability of specific groups and ensuring support through the services that were in place. It was confirmed that both bids were fully supported by City of London Police.

The Chair referred to counselling and capacity of the current provider and what they were able to provide and questioned what was being done to ensure culturally available counselling for all domestic abuse victims within the City from all backgrounds. The Community Safety Manager responded confirming to increase capacity on offer there would need to be a clearer offering on funding and a greater level of certainty of funding to be able to put in place an increased level of resourcing.

The Chair asked that capacity issues be reviewed to make sure a full, effective and efficient service can be provided to all those in need within the City.

The Chair expressed concern at what appeared to be a lack of data being captured of those having been turned away from a service, with it not being known what these numbers were. This would in turn impact the level of funding and it was suggested this was something that would need addressing going forward by way of a monitoring form for service providers to complete, which could then be scrutinised fully. The Community Safety Manager agreed to continue working with agencies to capture relevant data, with this remaining an important and ongoing piece of work to ensure a response was being offered as needed.

The Chair proposed the Proceeds of Crime Act Funding Bids be dealt with outside of the meeting and a formal decision obtained on these as appropriate.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services updating them on Community Safety activity not otherwise addressed on the agenda.

The Community Safety Manager confirmed the report provided an update on all the different areas of work of the Community Safety Team since the last Board meeting.

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8. PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE (ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, LICENSING AND TRADING STANDARDS) UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Executive Director of Environment providing an update on the work of the Public Protection Service, which comprises Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards that relates to the Safer City Partnership.

The Port Health and Public Protection Director introduced the report and highlighted key points. It was explained how the report was looking back and covered the period of July-September as restrictions of Covid were being lifted and increased freedoms were being seen in the City, which was reflected by some of the information included within the report.

The Director referred to teams having continued to operate throughout the various lockdowns in an effort to ensure compliance with the changing regulations and helping businesses with the process. That was continuing as businesses started to return to the City, with not all operating in the same way as they may have done pre-covid, with a slightly different offering and restricting what they were doing in certain areas. The team would be continuing with a process of offering assistance through into the next year.

The Director referred to illegal street trading having seen an increase as people were starting to return the City. It was confirmed the Public Protection Team have targeted this immediately in an effort at reducing incidents in the City, with this seeing positive results.

Noise complaints have seen an increase with reporting back up to pre-covid levels, which highlights the City livening up again and the noise culture. A noise service runs 24/7 and any Partners or Members can call through to this service to report an incident and the team would look to address any issues that may be found.

The Chair questioned whether noise complaints related specifically to licensed premises, or if it related to other areas also e.g., building works and the Director confirmed it included all noise complaints. The Director further clarified that there was currently no breakdown of noise complaint by age demographic with the data focussing on premises.

The Board received the report and noted its content.

9. **LONDON FIRE BRIGADE**

The Board noted that a London Fire Brigade representative was not in attendance at the meeting today and that no update would be given.

10. **OTHER PARTNER UPDATES**

London Ambulance Service (LAS) - The Board received an update on winter preparedness and pressures, the evolving situation with the Covid pandemic, general respiratory illnesses that were in circulation at this time of year that were applying significant pressures to health services.

A question was raised regarding potential LAS closures and whether there would be any impact in the City. The LAS representative explained recent media coverage had not been entirely accurate and it was explained that LAS were looking at options to create a hub and spoke strategy moving forward. It was stressed that the majority of calls were often issued once ambulances were already out on service or from hospitals once a patient had been delivered

safely. Ambulance stations themselves did not have a major relationship to where ambulances were dispatched from. Work was taking place to identify sites for ambulance stations that were fit for purpose for a modern ambulance service and that would support ambulance crews in preparing for their day. It was stressed that any proposed plans would have no impact on response times, but with consultation taking with all relevant partners in advance of any changes being introduced.

The Chair questioned LAS's strategy, plans and programme in relation to discharging its duty in relation to environmental issues e.g., upgrading of vehicles and to understand its plans in this regard. The LAS Representative responded explaining an approach of managing patients through 111 service or remote clinicians initially and to avoid despatch of an ambulance. Beyond this, a new generation of ambulances was currently be reviewed with the aim of modernising the fleet through different models that can work on hybrid power, whilst having to be mindful of reliability as well as environmental issues. A Paramedic response can also be provided on push bike where appropriate.

Crime Prevention Association – The Board noted the Association had been meeting virtually throughout the year with most of its recent activity having been around responding to Covid-19, there being a number of articles in the planning as well as programming for next year. Members noted the Association's membership remained strong, and that it had remained very active and with a full programme planned for next year.

The Chair referred to the City Security Magazine and the way people were now working and questioned what other channels of communication were being used to get the magazine to people and the Crime Prevention Association representative explained a digital version was in circulation, with a large following. The Association was also active through use of social media where possible, and its website also being refreshed. The Chair suggested talking with the City Corporation's Communications Teams to consider options in relation to taking forward any urgent communications though use of digital platforms.

11. **PARKGUARD LTD CITY-WIDE PATROL**

The Board received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services that provided an update on the mobile patrol services to City estates and begging patrols through a commissioned provider – Parkguard Ltd.

The Chair questioned whether the item was being taken to Police Authority Board and it was confirmed this would be done. It was explained that a proposal for City Parkguard Ltd receiving CCAS accreditation from City of London Board would need to be taken to Police Authority Board for a decision, which would be based on an evidence-based approach.

The Commissioner remarked on their understanding that CCAS authority had already been granted by City of London Police. It was agreed to take this offline to review the position further and understand the powers that have been granted. The Parkguard representative stressed their approach would always be one of education before enforcement. The Chair suggested it would be

helpful to understand the powers that have been granted to Parkguard so that Partners can be aware of these and by way of information sharing.

The board received the report and noted its content.

12. **DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

The Board received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services providing them with an update on current service delivery, actions and provision around Domestic Abuse (DA) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The Board received the report and noted its content.

13. **SAFER CITY PARTNERSHIP REVIEW**

The Board received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services setting out proposals to undertake a review of the Safer City Partnership to ensure public authorities that were partners continued to fulfil the duties expected of the partnership.

Given the issues with quorum at the meeting, it was proposed taking the review offline to engage with Members of the group on initial thinking in relation to the review and to allow work in this area to progress. It was stressed that no changes to terms of reference or composition of the Board would be taken without it coming back to Board Members for a decision at an appropriate point.

The Chair suggested that it would be helpful if discussions could take place with all relevant partners to allow the framework and governance of the Group to be reviewed and get everyone on board with this.

It was proposed holding this item over to the next meeting, with work to take place to engage with relevant partners in the interim and an update to be provided at the next meeting.

14. **QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE GROUP**

There were no questions.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no additional items of business.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm.

Chairman

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