

WALTHAM FOREST POLICE COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE GROUP

15TH March 2006

Chingford Foundation School
Nevin Drive LONDON E4 7LT

Representing

Chair – WFPCCG

Honorary Treasurer - WFPCCG

Members

Cann Hall Area Residents Association (CHARA)

Older Persons Forum

South Chingford Community Council

Waltham LBWF

Borough Commander - Metropolitan Police Service

Borough Crime Reduction Manager

Forest Homes

Walthamstow West Community Council

Forest Homes

WF Independent Custody Visitors Panel

Waltham LBWF

Waltham LBWF

Latchkey Club

Independent

W.F. Victim Support

Independent

Name

Steve Williams

M. A. Malik

Philip Dundon

Gwen Williams

Edward. Gold

Cllr S.A. Poulsen

Chief Supt. Mark Benbow

Chief Inspector Ian Larnder

Brian Wilks

Adam Gladstone

Margaret Wilks

P. Millington

Cllr. M. Jovcic

Cllr. R. Sweden

Jenny Richardson

Sasha White

Brian Whyte

Jane Welfare-Peck

M. Y. Qureshi

Also Present:

Alastair Currie, Graham Wren and Louise Lander

Residents Present:

There were approximately 22 residents at the meeting.

10. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Graham Sinclair (**Vice-Chair**), Councillor L. Finlayson; Councillor: N. Matharoo, Councillor R. Wheatley, Councillor B. Smith, Robin Tuddenham, A.K. Mian, A. Khundkar, N. A. Butt, S. V. Moorthy, Dr. A.Z. Hussein, Harpal Singh Sehmbi, Emma Gracey, Gulam Thakor, Bill Measure, Maiphy Richards, Barbara Allsop, Anita Carter, Sandra Da Costa and Jane Welfare-Peck.

11. COUNCILLOR PHILIPS

The Group placed on record its condolences to Councillor Liz Phillip on the recent loss of her husband.

12. MINUTES

Agreed.

13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Group received a presentation from the Police Representative on the implications of Freedom of Information Act as it relates to the Borough of Waltham Forest. The main points of the discussion are summarised as follows.

Question

How does it apply to Waltham Forest residents?

Answer

The Freedom of Information Act was passed on 30 November 2000. It created a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. It also set out exemptions from that right and placed a number of obligations on public authorities. The Act applies to the vast majority of public authorities in the United Kingdom, including the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA).

Question

What are our rights under the Act?

Answer

The rights of residents to information under the Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1 January 2005. From that date, subject to certain exemptions, the MPS we are required to:

- let residents know in writing whether they hold the information requested; and
- Provide any information they have within 20 working days.

Question

What about information concerning police investigations?

Answer:

Police investigations are conducted with due regard to the confidentiality and privacy of victims, witnesses and suspects. Such investigations may also frequently involve the use of policing tactics or techniques that, if widely known, would hinder the ability of the police service to prevent and detect crime. It is further recognised that the release of information concerning current investigations may compromise any subsequent court proceedings.

For these reasons the police service will, in most cases, seek to apply an exemption to prevent the release of information concerning investigations when requested under the Freedom of Information Act, 2000.

Whilst adopting this general position, there is full recognition that in some cases there will be significant and compelling issues of public interest that require the disclosure of

information. However, to override issues of personal privacy and possible harm to individuals involved in the investigation, this public interest must be significantly more than mere curiosity or interest in a particular investigation.

In order to ensure that these public interest issues are fully considered all applications for information concerning investigations will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Question: Where can we access further information about the scheme?

Answer: Further information with regard to your rights of access is available at www.met.police.uk/information.

Question: What advice or assistance can we expect from the MPS?

Answer: We have a duty to provide advice or assistance to you or anyone seeking information (e.g. to explain what information is available or to clarify what they wish to know).

14. BULLYING PREVENTION IN WALTHAM FOREST

The Group received a presentation on the work being undertaken in Waltham Forest in respect to the prevention of bullying. The main points of the discussion are summarised as follows.

Question Are there any courses for adults on bullying prevention?

Answer: Through ClaSS course are being developed on bullying prevention.

Question Why is it that in other nations people seem to be more respectful of each other?

Answer: There is a need to review how we treat each other both intentionally and unintentionally. We need to look at the way we interact with each other as children and adults. In particular the incidences of unintentional bullying are a matter for concern. We need to re-build our empathy towards each other it is not about imposing values upon people as people have to have ownership of the values that they live by.

Question Is there a workable definition of bullying?

Answer: That which makes you feel powerless; afraid and de-skilled. Often the bullies feel that they are only having a laugh which all contributes to the bullying.

Question What are we doing to help young people?

Answer: In the Borough we have created five "Chill Out Zones" where young people can relax in an informal yet controlled environment.

Question How have the schools responded?

Answer: It has been a good response, yet it needs to be driven from the senior management in the schools.

Question Where has the funding come from?

Answer: Funding has come from Single Regeneration Budget monies but this comes to an end on 23rd March 2006.

Question Have we got a true picture of the prevalence of bullying?

Answer: Within schools there is much under reporting of bullying by staff and pupils for fear of retribution so it is difficult to get a true

picture.

Question What help is offered to teaching staff?
Answer: Teachers are taught behavioural management and learn to know the value of respect within our families and communities.

Question How do you deal with bullies?
Answer: They are dealt with through interaction if a child reports an incident then a support group is set up to support the victim to give people a chance to deal with a situation. The aim is to change modes of behaviour by developing an emotionally literacy.

Question What about the groups of children intimidating local residents?
Answer: Through the use of the “Chill Out facilities” it is intended to manage any seriously violent persons. However we need to understand why people behave in the in the way that they do an if victims require protection.

Question What is the youngest age that you have to deal with bullying?
Answer: It can be from pre-school onwards and it is from that age that it is intended to teach children how to relate to each other.

15. POLICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In accordance with agreed procedures the Group received a presentation from the Police Representatives highlighting performance matters in general terms as they relate to the borough of Waltham Forest. The main points of the discussion are summarised as follows.

Question What is the position regarding the incidence of street crime?
Answer: The increasing availability of I-Pods and mobile phones has meant that street robbers have more to opportunity relieved people of high value consumer goods.

Question What is the position regarding the incidence of stop and search?
Answer: The use of stop and search is a good tactic against certain crime types although the figures presented to the Group at the last meeting are in need of revision.

Question It would be useful to review the incidence of stop and search?
Answer: Indeed a monitoring group is to be established to have an in depth debate on this subject.

Question There has been mention recently within the local press about the use of knives by schoolchildren.
Answer: The schools where these children attend have dealt with the situation effectively.

Question When will the launch of the next phase of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams take place?
Answer: On 3rd April to all Members of the Group are welcome to attend and support the event.

Question What is the situation regarding the development of the Third Party Reporting Sites?
Answer: There are 15-20 sites that are used to varying degree.

Question What can be reported at these sites?
Answer: The type of incidents that can be reported is limited by the agreed criteria as outlined by the MPS. However, Diane

Andrews within the Community Safety Team is keen to improve the service that is provided.

Question What would be the composition of the Stop and Search Group?

Answer: That has yet to be agreed but it would draw heavily upon community representatives.

Question What is the position regarding the under reporting of attacks against Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities.

Answer: We now have two officers' tasks specifically to deal with the LGBT communities. There is also now a dedicated phone line to deal with the report of crimes against LGBT communities.

Question Why are there no racist figures for February and March?

Answer: The figures for those months are still awaited.

Comment: The Safer Neighbourhood Teams are to be commended for their positive contributions to combating Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

Response: This is exactly the kind of issue that the teams are designed to deal with.

Question Would it be possible to have a debate on the incident of stop and searches once figures are available?

Answer: Indeed it would.

Question Concern has been expressed at the incidence of ASB in Highams Park Broadway.

Answer: Again the Safer Neighbourhood Teams will address this.

Question Are you aware that a retailer is selling anti-stab vests in Waltham Forest?

Answer: It is not illegal to sell them.

Comment: It would be better for people to treat each other respect than wear such vests.

Question Where do you get intelligence relating to criminal activity?

Answer: There is a wide range of intelligence available to us and we are reviewing the way in which people can contact us to maximise accessibility intelligence about various crimes.

Question When will Walthamstow Station re-open?

Answer: It is intended that the station will open in early May.

Question Is it a Tetra Mast that is to be erected on the roof of the station?

Answer: It is not a Tetra mast but a conventional mobile phone mast that is proposed

Question Is there any pattern to the sexual assaults?

Answer: No they appear to primarily arise as a result of issues around consent.

Question What is the ratio of arrests brought about by the stop and searches?

Answer: Stop and searches result in a ratio of 1 in 10 arrests.

Question The incidence of stop and talks referred to in the presentation seems rather low?

Answer: This is being addressed through officer training.

Question What is the situation regarding the illegal trading in cigarettes?

Answer: This is primarily a matter for trading standards and HM Custom and Excise unless they have been stolen.

16. TRAVEL SAFE

The Group will receive a presentation on the Travel Safe programme, which is aimed at increasing the safety of residents travelling on public transport. The main points of the discussion are summarised as follows.

Question How many of London's bus fleets have CCTV?

Answer: Eighty-five percent.

Question What has been done to improve safety at the new Walthamstow Bus Station?

Answer: The trees surrounding the site have been pruned back to enhance lighting. Also classical music is being played in the station as this deters younger residents loitering in the area. This will be rolled out to other transport hubs in the Borough in due course.

Question How many people use Walthamstow Central?

Answer: Currently about 35,000 use the station.

Question We welcome this scheme but would like to see more designing out of crime. We would also wish to see more activity on the buses to reduce the incidence of crime.

Answer: The Crime Prevention Team is looking at the designs of our transport hubs with the intention of reducing the opportunity for crime. Also Transport for London's own Revenue Inspectorate are looking as ways to deter criminal activity taking place on the buses.

Comment: It would be good to see activity undertaken to reduce the use of the buses by criminals travelling to and from their crimes.

Response: The Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be encouraged to use public transport to get to and from their wards and their will be a series of high visibility patrol days too.

Question Will the search arches be used on bus routes?

Answer: It is easier to use the arches on the railway platforms than at bus stops however both TfL and the MPS are keen to drive down the incidence of crimes.

Question Will the new teams cover Wood Street Station?

Answer: The Safer neighbourhood Teams will work in a proactive fashion to address issues such as the fear of crime.

Question What will be done to address the fear of crime at unstaffed railway stations?

Answer: Through the use of good intelligence and high visibility patrols such fears can be addressed.

Question What is being done to tackle the spread of unlicensed minicabs?

Answer: In the first instance the police will work in partnership with the licensed firms to identify and deal with the illegal operators.

17. FUTURE STRUCTURE

The Group was reminded that recent discussions within the Membership had recognised that the historical role and structure of the Group has been superseded by developments in the Safer Neighbourhoods programme and in a far greater emphasis on community consultation throughout the work of the Local Strategic Partnership and Community Councils. As a consequence during December 2006, the Chair of the

WFPCCG, the former Borough Commander Chief Superintendent George Clarke and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety Councillor Barry Smith meet with the MPA Link Member Jennette Arnold to look at ways to identify the best mechanism for the Group to evolve in order to fulfil its role in acting a strong and influential link between the communities of Waltham Forest and the Police.

At this meeting a report was considered that had been prepared by the Kingston Community & Police Consultative Group to provide the means of better communication between Safer Neighbourhoods Teams & Kingston Group, thus establishing a two-way communications and information conduit, at all levels, between the Police, Local Authority and Community. The main points of the discussion on this model and its relevance are:

- Any future structure in Waltham Forest needs to recognise that the Council is a significant stakeholder in community safety.
- Members should be required to communicate in between meetings with their respective communities of interest, identity or geography, to ensure as many people as possible are engaged, informed etc.
- Emphasis needs to be placed on capacity building, so that, whilst initial membership may feature some of the 'usual suspects', in the medium-term they will be encouraged to support their less experienced peers in taking over this representative function from them. This should include the engagement of both the established and those newly arrived Black Minority Ethnic Groups and local Faith Communities.
- Develop formal relationship with relevant bodies such as the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (Safety Net), Waltham Forest Faith Forum; Higher and Further Educational Institutions, Local Strategic Partnership, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Independent Custody Visitors Panel and Independent Advisory Group. As well an imaginative use of consultative activities such as e-panels; street meetings, engaging with members of local community councils and text consultations particularly with young people.
- The Group needs to adopt a pan-borough perspective and have a strategic focus. Including a review of the performance indicators used to measure the progress of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and to assist the Group develop its role as a critical friend to the Partnership. Therefore, it is proposed to replace the SafetyNet Board with the new WFPCCG. This Group would have a strategic role, with refined membership.
- The Chair of the Waltham Forest Police Community Consultative Group should have a seat on the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Executive.
- Support arrangements will be expanded to help members participate, e.g. childcare, transport and meetings at accessible community venues etc.
- Alternative funding streams should be investigated to support and develop work over and beyond the funding provided by the MPA.

18. FUTURE MEETINGS

12th July 2006

18. VOTE OF THANKS

As this was the last meeting of the Group in the current year Members offered their thanks to the Chair, Steve Williams, for the way he had executed the business of the Group.

In response Steve Williams thanked the Members for all their hard work in developing work of the Group.

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There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 10:00 p m.