

WALTHAM FOREST COMMUNITY SAFETY BOARD
18th November, 2009

Council Chamber, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road
Walthamstow E17 4JF

PRESENT:

Leyton and Whipps Cross CC	Steve Williams (Chair) SW
Race and Equality Group	Afzal Malik (Vice Chair) AK
MPA Representative	Maria Kaustrater MK
Beaumont Road Residents Assoc (BRA)	Brian Wilkes BW
Older Persons Representative	Edith Poulsen EP
Sth Chingford and Highams Park CC	Peter Jaggs PJ
Neighbourhood Watch Representative	Sue Hare SH
Borough Commander	Mark Benbow MB
MPS Representative	Chief Insp. Claire Wynnck CW
LBWF Representative	Councillor Richard Sweden RS
LBWF Representative	Councillor Jane Morgan JM
LBWF Representative	Councillor Graham Sinclair GS
WALB Community Council	Mike Cave MC
SLADA	Phillip Dundon PD
Leytonstone Community Council (CC)	Jane Sterland JS
Community Group Representative	Roger Desouches RD
Voluntary Action Waltham Forest	Neil Collins NC
Victim Support Group	Nadia Ikramullah NI
Youth Representative	Matt Perry MP
Leytonstone CC - Deputy	Sue Burns SB

Apologies for Absence

LBWF	Robin Tuddenham
Community Safety Portfolio Lead Member	Afzal Akram
Community Group Representative	Bill Ravenscroft
Walthamstow West Community Council	Abid Hussain
MPA Link Member	Jeannette Arnold OBE
North Chingford Community Council	Kevin Wyatt-Lown*
Disability Group Representative	Ruth Bashall
ELOP	Teresa Sharpe

*Members noted that the date chosen for this meeting had clashed with the meeting of the North Chingford Community Council (NCCC). This had precluded the NCCC Chair from attending the CSB and had diminished the opportunity for proper representation at the Board.

Also Present

Chief Inspector Neil Sharman NS	MPS - CO19
David J Knight DJK	CSB - Administrator
Neil Murphy NM	CSB - Clerk
Sylvia Poulsen	Resident
Sandra Da Costa SD	WF Stop and Search Group

Joachim Bridet JB
Emma Stroud ES
R Ramsey RR
Margaret Wilkes MW
Sylvia Sullivan SS

Resident
MPS
Resident
BRA
WF Stop and Search Group

1. Introductions and Welcome

The Chair, Steve Williams, welcomed all those attending and reported that there were a number of issues to be addressed before the beginning of the meeting.

He reported that since our last meeting Mr Eddie Gold, who attended the Board as a resident and who had stood for election as a Board Member, had died. The Board observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Mr Gold.

Secondly, the Chair reported that this would be the final occasion the Mr Benbow would be attending the Board meeting. Mr Benbow was retiring from the MPS after 30 years service. He had been the Borough Commander for the past 4 years. The Chair presented Mr Benbow with a small token in appreciation for his work on the Board and for his work as Borough Commander generally.

Lastly, the Chair reported that Robin Tuddenham, the Director for Safe and Strong Communities, was leaving Waltham Forest to join Calderdale District Council in a similar role. Board Members asked that their thanks and appreciation for his work be conveyed to Mr Tuddenham.

2. Central Operations Specialist Firearms Command

The Board received a presentation from Chief Inspector Neil Sharman of CO19 - the MPS specialist firearms unit. Chief Inspector Sharman explained the purpose of CO19 and the ways in which it provides armed support to allow the vast majority of policing activities throughout London to be conducted in the traditional manner by unarmed officers.

He explained that CO19 were a pan London unit that responded to requests for assistance where gun related crime was reported. His Unit was equipped with firearms and a number of other less lethal weapons and patrolled London in a number of specially equipped vehicles (Armed Response Vehicles - ARV).

In addition to their usual patrol and response duties CO19 has identified a dedicated team of Officers who carry out specific sweeps in particular areas, at the invitation of local Borough Officers.

Chief Inspector Sharman also gave details of the single occasion where such an operation was carried out in the borough, on 26 July 2009 on the Cathall and Priory court Estates.

The following questions were asked

- Comment JM** I am obviously pleased that you do not have to visit Waltham Forest on a regular basis, and am reassured by your explanations of the way your Unit operates.
- Question SB** What kind of success rate do you have in prosecutions following sweep operations?
- Answer NS** I am not actually aware; as we operate across London any prosecutions are left with local officers.
- Comment PD** We must recognize that street crime and gun violence are much more prevalent than before and that accordingly measures taken to counteract these are very necessary.
- Question JS** Can you tell us how many reports of gun crime there are in the borough?
- Answer NS** I am sure that Chief Inspector Wynnick can provide such details but one has to be clear that great numbers of reported incidents are false alarms - especially at this time of year with fireworks often being mistaken for weapons fire.
- Comment MB** It cannot be ignored however that there has been an increase in gun crime over the years.
- Question SH** What level of gun finds would merit a sweep approach by CO19?
- Answer NS** There is no real correlation between the two. Gun sweeps tend to be intelligence led and are not triggered by numbers of gun finds.
- Question PJ** Would detection and prosecution improve if each borough had a dedicated ARV?
- Answer NS** This is an old concept, we would much rather have a small highly trained team to deal with issues when they arise. Additionally it must be recognized that there are other armed officers who are available if circumstances demand. The MPS Diplomatic Protection Group and Aviation Security from Heathrow Airport and London City Airports both carry weapons and can be called upon.
- Question NC** You mentioned the use of non lethal weapons - can you expand on this?
- Answer NS** Our vehicles carry TASAR and guns to fire baton rounds, Officers are also equipped with chemical deterrents such as pepper spray which provide a non lethal alternative in stress situations. The TASAR weapon our officers use is less powerful than in other countries and has been a big success. Baton rounds have evolved since early types, and the new designs coupled with differing training methods has made them more effective and less dangerous.
- Question NC** Have the MPS moved away from the "shoot to kill" policy adopted when dealing with suspected terrorists?
- Answer NS** There has never been a "shoot to kill" policy, - the yardstick is "shoot to stop" and this may on occasion necessitate extreme

- measures.
- Question NC** Is there forensic investigation undertaken on seized weapons and what is being done to counter that growth in use of air weapons?
- Answer NS** The forensic evaluation of seized weapons is undertaken by the relevant borough officers. I agree that air weapons are problematic they can inflict nasty wounds if not actually being lethal, and we try to encourage retailers to comply with the law when selling these. However it is very difficult to control their use.
- Question SD** Can you tell us if there are ARV operating in the Borough, and give us an idea on the number of shootings that have taken place in the borough this year?
- Answer NS** Armed response vehicles are on patrol across London at all times and offer support to local officers where gun crime is reported. The Trojan Police Unit operates on a request only basis, and conducts sweeps at the request of local officers, based on intelligence.
- Answer MB** There have been only 5 shootings in the borough this year, but I feel that the gun related crime figures are more revealing as this shows a 17% increase on last year.
- Question SB** Do you feel that Waltham Forest has become a safer place in the time since you started as Borough Commander?
- Response MB** Certainly.
- Question SW** Can you say what has been the cause of the increase of reported gun crime?
- Answer MB** This can be linked to the switch to centralized 999 call centres.

The discussion closed at this point

3. Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) Report

In the absence of Jennette Arnold OBE, the MPA link member, a report was presented by Maria Kaustrater the MPA Engagement and Partnerships Officer.

The report highlighted actions taken to address a number of issues details of which are set out below.

Civil Liberties Panel

As part of a review of the events surrounding the G20 demonstrations the MPA held an open meeting on 5 November 2009 as it was keen to engage with as many individuals and groups as possible who wished to comment on the events which took place on 1 and 2 April 2009.

It was reported that comments, submissions received and points raised in the discussion would be used to inform the report of the Panel to the Metropolitan Police in the New Year as the MPA felt that it was

important that the public have their say in shaping how protests/demonstrations are policed in the future;

Homophobic crime

The MPA has sought re-assurance from the MPS Commissioner that, given the recent rise in homophobic attacks in the capital, all is being done to tackle this heinous hate crime.

Armed Police Patrols

Following concerns raised by MPA Members the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis, Sir Paul Stephenson, has confirmed there was no intention at all of introducing routine armed patrols on London's streets and there will be no change to the Police current strategy. He also insisted that any such change in strategy would necessitate consultation with the Authority and the Mayor, as well as London's communities.

Gang Rape

It was reported that the MPA has commissioned a report on the incidence of gang rape across London. The report has showed that the average age of victims has fallen and that thirty-six per cent of victims were 15 or younger. Ages of suspects have dropped as well with some forty-two per cent being 19 and under.

It was also reported that gang rape is less likely to be reported than other offences because there are often social links between victims and suspects.

On Line Crime Mapping

It was reported that a new interactive national map giving the public access to local statistics and details on neighbourhood policing in their area was launched on 9th Oct 2009. The map will allow residents to view figures for all crime as well as burglary, robbery, violence, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour in their area at the touch of a button.

For the first time people can compare one police area with another, compare figures over a three-month period against the same period for the previous year and see annual crime rates. The public will also be able to see details of their neighbourhood police team, local policing priorities and information about forthcoming local events such as crime prevention meetings and local surgeries.

The MPA's Race and Faith Inquiry - Emerging Findings

The Race and Faith Inquiry has undertaken to examine the way in which race and faith issues are managed in the Metropolitan Police Service and

have examined the experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic officers and staff within the MPS.

The inquiry also heard testimony regarding the leadership of the organisation, its operating culture and a wealth of other issues. The Inquiry was also tasked with examining the MPA and its oversight responsibilities as they relate to equality and diversity.

The report emerging is based upon the evidence heard during and has been arranged under five headings; recruitment, retention and progression, leadership, faith and the role of the MPA. This can be found at <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/scrutinies/race-faith/emergingfindings/>

Policing in London - Policing Plans

The Board was reminded that they and others have been invited to comment on the Capital's policing plans for 2011/12, by completion of a short questionnaire, and that the closing date for submissions was 30 November 2009

The following questions were asked

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| Comment GS | I believe that we should not be placing so much emphasis on information and responses being via the internet. We must realize that not everybody can access the web nor do they want to. |
| Question JM | It is apparent that the ethnic make up of the MPS does not reflect the community it serves. What steps are being taken to remedy this imbalance? |
| Answer MK | The MPS has taken huge steps to get the balance right, but recognizes that it is still some way from achieving this. |
| Response MB | It is true that recruitment of BME candidates is not achieving the right balance, however if one considers the recruitment of PCSO (who now are a major source of recruitment into the Service) then a much better balance can be seen. |
| Question RR | Is there evidence to suggest that BME Officers and PCSO suffer from greater disciplinary problems than other Officers? |
| Response MB | As far as I am aware this is not the case - I deal directly with any dismissals of PCSO and there do not seem to be higher numbers from any particular group. |
| Question SB | What can be done to improve MPS links with local schools and colleges? |
| Response MB | There has been a large investment in this area already by both the MPS and Waltham Forest, both in financial terms and in the way that individual schools and colleges have dedicated liaison officers. |
| Question NC | Do we have sufficient female police Officers? |
| Answer CW | Recruitment in this area is strong and we have currently |

30% female officers.

The discussion terminated at this point.

5. Borough Commander's Report

Mr Benbow reported on the performance of the MPS since the last Board meeting and updated Members on significant issues in the borough that have occurred.

Performance Data

It was noted that the data below has been extracted from the Performance Information Bureau (PIB) statistics and related to figures from the beginning of the 2009/10 financial year until the first of November 2009.

Confidence and Public Perceptions	%	Change %
Confidence in Police and Local Council	31	na
Police are dealing with things that matter	78	14
Police are doing a good job	69	0
Level of perceived ASB	7	2
Drunk or Rowdy Behaviour is a problem	10	10
Drug Use or Dealing is a problem	15	-8
Satisfaction	%	
Overall satisfaction	76	0
Satisfaction with action taken	73	-1
Being kept informed	63	1
Treatment	84	5
Policing Pledge	%	Target
Safer Neighbourhood on Core duties	94.2	80
I call response	60.4	75
S call response	57.9	75

Most Serious Violence and serious Sexual Assault	This Year	Last Year	Change %	SD %	Target %
Most serious Violence	222	218	-1.8%	33	32
Rape	24	61	154.2%	19.7	40
Serious Acquisitive Crime					
Residential Burglary	1239	1380	11.4	16	7.1
Personal Robbery	792	921	16.3%	na	na
All Robbery	855	1005	17.5%	11.4	19
Theft of MV	671	580	-13.6	2.3	7
Theft from MV	1715	1894	10.4		

Domestic Violence, Hate, Youth & Weapon Crime					
DV Offences	1103	1157	4.9	41.4	44
DV Arrest Rate	na	na	na	68.5	70
Racist Offences	194	191	-1.5	36.6	40
Homophobic Offences	8	24	200	41.7	44
Gun Enabled Crime	71	90	26.8	na	na
Knife Crime	341	368	7.9	16.8	Na
Serious Youth Violence	168	190	13.1	na	na

Critical Incidents

Coronation Gardens E10

On Sunday 25th October a 15year old Male was stabbed in the head and abdomen whilst in Coronation Gardens, E10. The victim ran from the park where a police patrol saw him and gave first aid. Paramedics were concerned about the level of injury and the victim was taken by Helicopter to the Royal London hospital.

Homophobic assaults/robbery, Hollow Ponds.

Four suspects have been charged with offences relating to robbery in this area. One further offence of robbery has been reported in the area and a separate suspect has been charged. Officers have conducted additional patrols with whereby Forest SNT members, Epping Forest Rangers and a local community leader approaching those using the area for cruising purposes, and are distributing a "Cruising safely leaflet" and a leaflet created by the SN team to promote safety and the reporting of all types of crime.

Operational News

A four week campaign has resulted in the arrests of 42 known robbers or burglars for reported offences or of suspects that were wanted for questioning or who have failed to appear at court. Over two thirds of these suspects have been charged with burglary or robbery. Prevention work has also taken place with every burglary victim and their neighbours receiving a visit for crime prevention advice.

On five nights over Halloween and Bonfire night, additional patrols were carried out on foot, in vehicles or cycle across the borough. Safer Neighbourhoods, Schools and Safer Transport PCs and PCSOs were joined by Special Constables and volunteer cadets to carry out a range of enforcement and preventative work.

On Friday 23rd October 2009 at 5pm in Larkwood playing fields a woman was bitten in an incident involving 2 dogs. The female victim received a serious injury, losing her left thumb. Police attended within 10 minutes of

being notified, liaised with the London Ambulance Service and attended Whipps Cross Hospital and Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford with the victim.

Safer Neighbourhoods

Youth Work

In late September 150 children from Waltham Forest and Haringay enjoyed a tournament to celebrate London Week of Peace Week.

17 Volunteer cadets are working towards Duke of Edinburgh award at a camp run by police including a night walk to teach them map and compass work towards their D of E expedition.

10 Waltham Forest Cadets took part in a competition against 16 other teams from across the MPS in a range of events including a log run, raft building etc. The cadets had a great weekend & showed determination and commitment.

Reducing alcohol related violence pre-Christmas

High priority venues for violence and anti-social behaviour have been identified and will be visited over the next four weeks on Friday/Saturday evenings in partnership with licensing officers.

Civilianisation

On the 21st of October staff and activity relating to management of finance and physical resources will transfer to a central team for east London based at Barking. This will allow the MPS to make efficiency savings by aligning two boroughs under one senior manager. A similar process is taking place to move HR services to a central location and the IT aspects are already in place

The following questions were asked

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| Question SH | It is apparent that gang culture thrives in the south of the Borough. Are we going to get additional Officers to counter this? |
| Answer MB | We have used additional resources for the Territorial Support Group, and from the BLUNT task force, but as ever I need additional Officers that I just do not have. However that is not to say that we are not making every effort to control street problems and will continue to so do. |
| Comment PD | I applaud the work being undertaken by the MPS but feel that some issues require measures by other partners. The issue of dangerous dogs in social housing is of particular relevance - social landlords must enforce their own rules regarding such issues. |

Comment PJ I would wish to offer my congratulations on the recent apprehension of the serial robber and rapist.

Comment SB I understand that Officers are being moved away from the Coronation Gardens area despite the recent problems there. Why is this?

Response MB I am unaware of any reductions in manning levels in this area indeed we have been seeking additional resources from neighbouring wards and are liaising with Officers from Newham to reduce crime levels in the area.

Comment SD I understand that there is a Dispersal Order operating in the area and that current problems relate to an ongoing feud between two gangs. Can you explain the current situation relating to project Trident as I have received conflicting messages regarding this?

Response MB You are correct that there is a Dispersal Order in place and as far as I am concerned my Officers are enforcing it. We do know about the feud, and Officers are trying to address the issues that this is causing. Finally a decision has been taken not to adopt the Trident name as it attracts a certain notoriety, however we do attract support from the initiative.

Question GS How much of your success in Waltham Forest can be attributable to your longer than normal tenure in office and are the MPS looking to repeat this for the future.

Answer MB I certainly agree that being in post for four years has enabled me to build up knowledge and relationships that has led to a number of achievements. However I cannot say whether a long term appointment will be made, indeed the internal MPS promotion cycle tend to militate against this.

Comments MC I have a number of issues relating to a burglary in my locality, and the collection of evidence.

Response MB This is best discussed outside the meeting with a senior Officer.

Question MC Is there any progress on the Michelle Samaraweera Walthamstow murder inquiry?

Answer MB I have no new leads on this but we are pressing on with the investigation, I feel that this could be a long investigation.

Question RD I understand that there have been a number of operations by the Safer Neighbourhoods Team in the Hollow Ponds area, where a leaflet was made available to users of the area. Would it be possible to have copies of the leaflet as they are of relevance to some of my client groups?

Response CW I will provide these for you.

Response SW I will also contact the SNT and ask that they contact you direct.

Question MP You have obviously collaborated with other partners on gang related issues and this partnership working is seen as being essential in combating gang crime. Do you know

Answer MB	how this will continue under your successor? The Chief Executive of Waltham Forest has taken over the lead for partnership working on youth issues, and I expect that he will continue the good work.
Question JB	Can you say what the MPS are doing to combat youth disturbance and violence in the Borough?
Response JM	In my ward the PCSO are working very hard to engage youth, and I believe that youth facilities are important.
Comment GS	It must be realized that a very small minority of youths cause problems, the vast majority need things to do though.
Comment SW	I have a couple of things to report

- my local SNT caught a group of burglars in the act recently,
- with regard to dangerous dogs - there is currently a micro chipping initiative, but I believe that there is an issue with the local dog warden service,
- I believe that the Community Council's need to receive a presentation from the MPS on the features of the new detention centre as there is much misinformation in circulation currently.

The discussion closed at that point.

6. Minutes

The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2009. Arising from this it was noted that proposals to fill the vacant post of Treasurer were to be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

7. Response Sheet

David Knight (DJK), the Boards Administrator, gave a brief summary of a list of responses to issues raised at past meetings by Brian Whyte included in the agenda papers

8. Community Feedback

There were no issues raised by those Community Members present at the meeting.

9 Community Safety Board Work Plan

The Board noted the proposed work plan for the remainder of the year. It was also reported that it was planned to hold a number of additional themed meetings throughout the forthcoming year in order that topic can be addressed in an in depth fashion.

10 Future Board Meeting Dates

Members noted that the dates of Board meetings up until 24th March, 2010 were as follows:

20th January, 2010

24th March, 2010

11. Votes of Thanks

Councillor Sinclair asked that a vote of thanks be formally recorded to Chief Superintendent Mark Benbow for all his hard work during his tenure as Borough Commander. It was noted that Mr Benbow was to join the London Borough of Camden.

Neil Collins asked that a similar vote be recorded for the Boards Administrator and Clerk to the meeting.