

APPENDIX N

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 NOVEMBER 2011

EXECUTIVE - 29 NOVEMBER 2011

Title:

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF POLICING IN THE BOROUGH

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Carole King]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

At a meeting of Surrey County Council's Community Safety Select Committee on 14 July 2011, Councillor Carole King, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Chairman of the Safer Waverley Partnership, raised the concerns being expressed by victims and members of the public about the time taken by the Police Response Teams to respond to emergency calls, especially at night in the more rural communities and in communities on the border of the County.

Councillor King requested that the Select Committee to ask the Surrey Police Authority (SPA) to investigate the Police's response times, from notification of an incident to their arrival on the scene within the borough of Waverley, and specifically in Haslemere where recently there had been a spate of domestic and retail burglaries.

The purpose of this report, which was considered by the Community O&S Policing Review Sub-Committee at its meeting on 25 October 2011 and the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 November 2011, is to inform the Executive of the findings of the Surrey Police Authority's investigations and the Committee's observations and recommendations.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The level of crime in the borough is an important factor in how safe residents feel. A review of policing in Waverley will enable Councillors and residents to raise with the Police their fears about recent serious crimes and the response times to these, and gain a greater understanding of how the Police deal with crime, particularly at night.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no direct implications for equality and diversity arising from this report.

Climate Change Implications:

None

Resource/Value for Money implications:

None

Legal Implications:

The Police and Justice Act 2006, which came into force in England at the end of April 2009, gives local authorities the power to scrutinise the work of crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) to ensure they are effectively tackling local problems. Under this legislation overview and scrutiny committees which are designated the role of scrutinising their local CDRP have the power to:

- Scrutinise how the partnership members are discharging their crime and disorder function;
- Require information to be provided by partners, and require attendance at meetings; and
- Require partners to respond to reports and 'have regard' to recommendations.

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 5 July 2011 the Executive expressed growing concern about the level of police cover in the Borough, especially in regard to burglary, break-ins and malicious damage to property as well as response times to incidents, particularly at night. The Executive therefore agreed that the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee be commissioned to undertake an in-depth review of policing in the Borough and report back its findings in due course.
2. Shortly after the Executive's meeting, on 14 July 2011 Councillor Carole King, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, attended a meeting of Surrey County Council's Community Safety Select Committee when she asked the following question:

“Although statistics reveal a reduction in burglary across the county as a whole and notwithstanding the success of Neighbourhood Policing in the Borough, there has been a spate of domestic burglary and burglary from retail premises earlier this month (8 in as many days) in Haslemere (Waverley) which received some attention from the media resulting in concern being expressed by victims and the public about Police Response Team times especially at night in the more rural communities, particularly those on the borders of the County.

In order to restore confidence of residents in the County's more rural border communities could the Police Authority please investigate and advise the response times from notification of such incidents to arrival on the scene in the borough of Waverley, and in Haslemere specifically”.

Councillor King asked that the Surrey Police Authority's response to her question be reported back to a meeting of the Safer Waverley Partnership (SWP) Executive Group on 19 October 2011.

Surrey Police Authority Response presented to the SWP Executive Group on 19 October 2011

3. Sarah Haywood, Partnerships Policy Officer at the Surrey Police Authority, attended the SWP meeting on 19 October 2011 and reported the findings of the Police Authority's investigation. Councillor Isherwood and Councillor Holder, as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Community O&S, were invited to attend the meeting so that they could hear the Police Authority's response and ask questions.

(i) Response Times and Public Confidence.

4. Sarah Haywood informed the SWP Executive Group that following Carole King's request, Surrey Police had been asked to submit to the Police Authority's internal scrutiny panel (which reviews confidence, satisfaction and customer contact) a report on broad response times and customer contact performance data for the County as a whole, and a snap shot of Waverley.
5. Sarah Haywood asked the SWP Executive group to note that the Authority and Force set aspirations rather than rigid targets for response times. Nationally the Policing Pledge had been abolished and police forces no longer needed to report back to the Home Office. As a result, Surrey Police and neighbouring police forces no longer differentiated between urban and rural areas. However, response times fed into the Local Policing Plan targets for confidence, satisfaction and the reduction and detection of serious acquisitive crime.
6. Sarah Haywood reported that Total Notifiable Offences for Waverley for the financial year to date was 2,475, a 1.9% reduction on last year. For the financial year to date crimes per 1000 population in Waverley were 20.75 with Serious Acquisitive Crime being 2.71.
7. The performance data for Waverley showed that it has the highest confidence levels in local policing in Surrey with 92% (FYtD), with the highest point being June 2011 when confidence reached 94% for that quarter. The British Crime Survey had also identified Surrey Police as the top performing force in relation to confidence in local policing, with victim satisfaction for overall police service as at September 2011 rated as follows:
 - Anti-social behaviour – 77%
 - Burglary - 95%
 - Road Traffic incidents – 97%
 - Violent Crime - 91%
 - Vehicle Crime – 86%
8. Sarah Hayward confirmed that the Police Authority's Scrutiny Panel agreed that the response time performance data for Waverley and Haslemere had been below the aspiration with regard to Grade 1 (Grade 2 and 3 both being above the aspiration). However, they recognised the work that had been done

by the local Neighbourhood Teams and the Targeted Response Teams to address this. Given the concerns raised by Waverley Borough Council it had been agreed that the local member for Waverley (David Harmer) would meet with the Chief Superintendent for Neighbourhoods and Response to discuss these matters further.

9. For information:

- Grade 1 = '999' crimes – aspiration to respond within 15 minutes.
- Grade 2 = requires a crime response, but crime not taking place at time of call – aspiration to respond within 60 minutes
- Grade 3 = non emergency, response can be by appointment.

10. Figures for July 2011 were:

- Grade 1 – 74.4%
- Grade 2 – 85.9%
- Grade 3 – 96.8%

11. The Authority's Scrutiny Panel had acknowledged that the response times in the rural areas of Waverley, particularly Haslemere, were more difficult to achieve because of the nature of the borough. Therefore, it had been agreed that every grade 1 incident, where the attendance aspiration time is not achieved, would be reviewed.

12. Sarah Hayward emphasised that attendance times could be adversely affected by incidents where officers attend 'static points' in attempts to catch offenders who have fled the scene, and false alarms where officers never need to get to a scene but appear to have failed to get there. With the very small numbers of grade 1 incidents in areas such as Haslemere, just a few of these examples could have an adverse impact on apparent performance. Response times could also often be adversely affected by inaccurate locations of incidents, most often the case in rural areas.

13. The Surrey Police Authority and Surrey Police were looking at this area as a priority and had undertaken to make the following service improvements:

Within Targeted Patrol Team (TPT)

- Closer working between TPT and the Waverley Neighbourhood Police Teams, with the aim for Neighbourhood Officers to attend Grade 1 incidents if they are nearer than TPT.
- Assigning more TPT units to outlying areas and replacing them if they are drawn away.
- Use of early deployment units to provide cover at shift changeover times.

Within Force Control Room

- Moving focus from dispatch time to attendance times.
- Priority deployment of nearby units.

Force wide

- Ensuring as many officers as possible across the different strands of force activity are booked on and available for police duty and are deployed if necessary.
 - Better forward planning focussing on potential peak periods where there could be an increase in crime, for example, Halloween and antisocial behaviour related crime.
14. In the meantime the Authority's Scrutiny Panel had noted that Surrey Police achieved a satisfaction level of 100% from victims of burglary with regard to the time taken for the police to attend their incident.
15. Finally Sarah Hayward confirmed that a report on the review of performance and improvements to response times would be brought back to the Authority's internal scrutiny panel, and that the Police Authority would then report back to Safer Waverley Partnership Executive at their meeting in January 2012.

Questions to Sarah Hayward

16. Following Sarah Hayward's presentation, questions were put to Surrey Police Authority and Surrey Police.

1. Councillor Nick Holder – is it possible for there to be cross-border responses in Haslemere, for example from Fernhurst Police?

Answer: It would depend on the seriousness of the crime. It would not be possible on a routine basis but it would be possible if, for example, there was danger to someone's life.

2. Kelvin Mills, Head of Community Services – has the Surrey Police Authority requested more information on Haslemere because response times in Haslemere are below the aspiration times.

Answer: Yes, and are also looking at comparative situations across the County. The southern regions of the County are more remote and road networks do not assist in many rural locations.

Kelvin Mills – can a copy of the statistics referred to in Sarah Haywood's report be circulated to the Group?

Answer: Yes.

SWP Executive Group's response to Sarah Hayward's presentation

17. Members of the Safer Waverley Partnership Executive confirmed they were satisfied with the response from the Police Authority, which addressed the key questions to be addressed by the proposed in-depth review of policing in Waverley. It was agreed that the SPA had addressed the concerns expressed by Waverley's Executive earlier in the year, and had answered the question asked by Councillor Carole King at the Surrey County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Policing Review Sub-Committee

18. At its meeting on 25 October 2011, the Policing Review Sub-Committee received a report on Sarah Hayward's presentation to the SWP Executive Group and concluded that the information that had been provided by the SPA in response to Councillor King's question, answered all the key questions identified in the scoping report for the in-depth review. The sub-committee therefore agreed there was no need to proceed with the review at the present time.
19. However, discussion on the information provided by the Police Authority helped to highlight the need for Members to be more thoroughly briefed on policing matters. It was noted that the recent Member Training Session on community safety and policing matters – although attended by only a few Members - had provided a lot of useful information, and it was agreed that this training session should be repeated on 8 February 2011. The sub-committee asked that the session be widely publicised so that as many Members as possible attended. It was also agreed that Members should be encouraged to join the Surrey Police 'Active Citizens Scheme' which would enable them to receive regular email updates of Police activity in their area, which in turn would help them respond more effectively to concerns raised by local residents.
20. Finally, if having attended the training session in February next year, Members still had concerns about some aspects of policing in Waverley, the review sub-committee would be re-convened.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21. The Chairman of the Policing Review Sub-Committee reported that its members were unanimous in its view that the questions asked by Cllr Carole King, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety at the Surrey County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Police Authority answered all the key questions identified in the scoping report for the in-depth review.
22. The Chairman reported that in response to concerns raised over the Police response time to incidents, the Police Authority had taken steps to address this and other issues raised and will report to Cllr King in January on the results of new procedures already put in place and how other proposals are progressing.
23. Cllr King reminded members that it was a statutory duty of the Committee to dedicate at least one meeting in the Council year to Community Safety issues and it should be at that meeting that the work of the Safer Waverley Partnership, ie. the Police, Health Service, Fire Service, Probation Service Surrey County Council and Waverley BC could be scrutinized in Select Committee mode. At any other time that the Committee wished to discuss the work of the Police, as had been agreed at the meeting of the Committee on 9 November 2009, a member of the Police Authority should be invited to attend.

24. Cllr King also reminded members that it was only the Police Authority who had the authority to scrutinize the work of the Police and Cllr King was satisfied that, as Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Safer Waverley Partnership, all the concerns she raised on behalf of Waverley BC and Haslemere in particular, had been taken very seriously and measures had been put in place by the Police Authority to address them.
24. Cllr King confirmed that at the request of the Sub-Committee the Member Training Session on Community Safety and Policing Matters would be repeated on 8 February in an enhanced format to include the Health and Ambulance Services. All Members would be encouraged to attend this workshop.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. as the response from the Surrey Police Authority to the Safer Waverley Partnership Executive Group addressed the key questions in the scope of the review there was no need to proceed with the review at the present time;
2. the Community Safety Training session be repeated on 8 February 2012; and
3. should any issues arise from the training session another meeting of the Sub-Committee be convened.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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