

**Minutes of a Meeting of the External
Partnerships Select Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath
House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15
3HD on 13 November 2018**

+ Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans (Chairman)

- Max Nelson (Vice Chairman)

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|------------------------|-----------------------|
| - Cllr Bill Chapman | + Cllr Robin Perry |
| Cllr Ian Cullen | + Cllr Chris Pitt |
| - Cllr Ruth Hutchinson | + Cllr Nic Price |
| + Cllr David Lewis | Cllr Wynne Price |
| - Cllr Oliver Lewis | + Cllr Joanne Potter |
| + Cllr Jonathan Lytle | + Cllr Darryl Ratiram |
| | + Cllr Ian Sams |

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Valerie White (in place of Cllr Bill Chapman)

In attendance: Jayne Boitout, Community Development Officer
Inspector Bob Darkens, Surrey Police
Louise Livingston, Executive Head: Transformation
Mr David Munro, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

11/EP Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

12/EP Surrey Police

Inspector Bob Darkens, Surrey Heath Borough commander, gave a presentation in respect of Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) taking place in Surrey Heath.

Surrey Heath had been a target for SOC due to its high affluence and easy access to major cities such as Southampton, Reading and London via the motorway and railway network. Offenders of SOC often preyed on the most vulnerable in society such as drug and alcohol addicts, those with mental health problems and disabilities, the homeless, the elderly and vulnerable children.

Surrey Heath, like many areas across the country, had a known drug problem which was serviced by county line networks and had been a common thread in SOC cases. County line drug suppliers typically travelled from areas of high densities and often conducted exchange of illegal substances in the Borough for only a few hours at a time.

In addition to the trafficking and selling of illegal substances, Surrey Heath also experienced the following SOC:

- Typically, elderly Surrey Heath residents were most vulnerable to fraudulent activities.
- Fly tipping was often linked to other SOC's such as fraud. Surrey Police targeted and aimed to prosecute culprits via multiple convictions, as it was appreciated criminals, such as fraudulent tradesmen, were also likely to be those who dump waste materials.
- Child exploitation was often allied to county lines and children in care were more likely to be victims of child exploitation.
- The police had been challenged to find innovative ways to deal with cybercrime and had specialist units, such as the Surrey and Sussex Economic Crime Unit in order to tackle it.

There were several signs which indicated SOC maybe taking place.

- A dilapidated, dirty, badly kept home or business premises may indicate criminal behaviour. In contrast the arrival of expensive goods or products in a home, without a proportionate change in circumstances may also indicate SOC.
- People involved in SOC may have several mobile phones, known as "burner phones".
- The possession of fake or false documents may suggest involvement in larger criminal activity.
- Cash only businesses had often acted as a front for money laundering.
- Excessive amounts of beds and mattresses and poor appearance or health of residents had often been signs of human trafficking.

Whilst the police led processes to reduce and stop SOC, it could not be tackled by one agency alone.

In most cases, it was not police officers who found the crucial signals or links which indicated the occurrence of SOC, but often key members of the community and staff of key services, such as mental health practitioners, cleaners and meals at home or adult social care staff. Surrey Police aimed to encourage informants of SOC by the reassurance of the sanitisation of information. Information was treated at Surrey Police Guildford headquarters to ensure the given information remains anonymous and unattributable.

Partnership working also strived to shield vulnerable adults from SOC. In Surrey Heath the Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting Forum (CHARMM), made up of multi-agency professions, worked together to identify and protect those at particular risk. The forum included representatives from the Council, Police, NHS, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Alpha Extreme, Housing, and Mental Health support providers.

Successful direct action at SOC in 2017 included:

- The closure of 11 properties within Surrey Heath via the use of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Crime and Policing legislation. The properties had acted as bases for drug trafficking and hubs of anti-social behaviour. The effect of

such closures had been exemplified by a report which had recently asserted that Surrey Heath was a hostile place for drug dealers.

- The closure of a number of local brothels in 2017. Whilst it was underlined that prostitution was an illegal activity, there was acknowledgement that the police had limited resources and focussed on escort agencies, where human trafficking or other SOC might have also been taking place.
- The carrying out of Joint Enforcement Days in conjunction with the Surrey Heath enforcement team against scrap metal dealers. Whilst only 2-3 businesses in Surrey Heath had licenses for scrap metal dealing, a number of other traders had been illegally trading and collecting scrap metal.
- Working collaboratively with organisations such as Accent Housing and Adult Social Care had resulted in a number of Criminal Behaviour Orders being imposed.
- Whilst Surrey Police had tended not to exact significant numbers of Dispersal Orders, it was recognised they could be a valuable tool when there were indications that Anti-Social behaviour could be linked to drug dealing.

Arising from the Committee's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Surrey Heath had the lowest rates of crime in the Surrey Police western division and the second lowest crime rate in the County. The crime resolution rate in the western division was 18%. Noting national crime survey statistics, in the past year crime nationally had risen slightly from a low base.

Surrey had also experienced a rise in reported crime. Whilst particular categories of crimes had high reporting rates such as burglaries, it was noted reporting rates for crimes such as domestic abuse and rape were significantly lower. As a result it was opined that the rise in reported crime should be positively perceived as it indicated higher reporting rates in the latter categories.

Despite this it was acknowledged incidents of Surrey-wide burglaries had spiked.

- It was noted as a result of limited resources, illustrated by fewer visible police officers on the beat, greater emphasis was paid to working with neighbourhood watch groups and wider society. Members praised the informative social media bulletins from Surrey Heath Police, which formed part of the engagement with the local community.
- It was suggested that Surrey Police may have withdrawn too many resources from engaging with local schools. It was appreciated that officer engagement with pupils in local schools was a valuable tool in order to reduce instances of youth anti-social behaviour, as exemplified by recent cases in Heatherside and the Old Dean.
- Even though there was always slight potential for Greater London's gang-culture and knife-crime problems to permeate into the neighbouring counties, there had been no sign of gang-related criminal activities in Surrey Heath. However it had been observed there were certain "social

groups” who committed crimes. These crimes were often drug related and on very rare occasions could culminate in drug related violence.

- Surrey Police currently worked in partnership with the Victim Support to keep in contact with victims. There were plans to move the provision in house following a combined Police and Crime Commissioner Victim Support Service model; which had been followed by several police forces nationally. The in house Victim Care Unit would aim to deliver a seamless, coordinated journey of support, which would run from an initial assessment to rehabilitation services such as counselling support. It was estimated that the unit would be running from April 2019 at an initial Surrey-wide cost of approximately £1.4 million a year.
- One of Surrey Police’s best non-material assets was its intelligence gained by its 10 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). PCSOs had been best placed to pick up crucial information in relation to SOC which led to various cases being transferred to the National Crime Agency.
- Offences against people would always take priority over offences against property. Reflecting this, as a product of greater training and a more interventionist mentality, Surrey Police was better equipped to deal with cases of domestic violence than ever before. Whilst the reporting of domestic abuse cases had increased, the number of actual incidents per year had remained at roughly the same.
- An equivalent proportion of the Surrey Police precept was reinvested to pay for police services in Surrey Police.

The Committee thanked Inspector Bob Darkens for his informative update.

13/EP Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner

The Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr David Munro, gave a presentation in respect of Surrey-Wide Policing issues.

The Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was responsible and held a democratic mandate for a wide range of duties. These included:

- The appointment of the Chief Constable and hold them to account for running the force.
- Setting police and crime objectives for the area through a Police and Crime Plan and the management of local priorities.
- Setting the Surrey Police force budget and the determination of the Surrey Police precept.
- Bringing together community safety and criminal justice partners.
- Contributing to the national and international policing capabilities as set out by the Home Secretary.

Police-worn body cameras had transformed Policing in Surrey. The cameras gave added security to the police officer, sent a strong message to criminals, and promoted efficiency in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, whilst there had been preconceptions that the police would not have welcomed the introduction of body-worn cameras, they had been embraced by Surrey Police. Looking to the

future, Surrey Police were looking at other new technology to increase efficiency and better police performance.

The PCC was in the process of setting the annual budget for Surrey Police. Whilst it was imperative to keep policing standards high, there was a need to set a sustainable budget, which would require deep-cutting savings Surrey Police currently employed 1,900 Police Officers and 1,300 police staff, and had recently experienced a good officer and staff retention rate. Currently approximately 80% of the Surrey Police budget was allocated for staffing costs.

Some of Surrey Police's key focusses in regard to crime were highlighted for particular attention:

- Anti-Social behaviour cases evoked the highest levels of engagements by residents. Improved relations and greater partnership working with other Public Sector bodies had improved Surrey Police's ability to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- Surrey had recently experienced a rise in burglaries. Whilst tackling organised burglaries was still a high priority, burglary rates were not as high as their peak 18 months ago. It was noted the burglaries of highest propensity were undertaken by highly skilled, organised groups, which were hard to trace and crack-down upon.
- Whilst there was a need to actively tackle drugs related crime, there needed to be greater emphasis paid on reducing the demand for illicit drugs including particular focus to cutting middle class demand for drugs.
- Typically victims of modern slavery were illegal immigrants who had few perceived defensible rights and were terrified of being reported to the authorities. It was important to remind businesses to check that their subcontractors and partners were not perpetrators of illegal employment practises.
- In recent years, unauthorised encampments had been the biggest cause of tension in communities and had taken up significant Police resources. Whilst trespassing by travellers was a civil offence, more attention had to be paid to the criminality surrounding unauthorised encampments. Common residents' complaints claimed a different implementation of the law for the Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (GRT) community in comparison to the majority population. Whilst perhaps unpopular, transit sites in Surrey would aid the police with extra powers to deal with illegal encampments. By having the ability to ask GRT members to move to a specific transit site would enable Police Officers to better implement their powers to move GRT communities on.

Arising from the Members' comments and questions the following points were noted:

- Surrey County Councillors had previously conducted research into the feasibility of transit camps. After informal consultation with the GRT community, it was found there was little support towards the provision of transit camps. In addition, whilst there had been significant money invested into the provision of transit camps in Southampton, there had been little use of the sites by the traveller community.

- Even though the provision of transit camps was not the panacea to the problem of unauthorised encampments, statistics have shown where transit camps were in close proximity, unauthorised incursions had plummeted. In addition, there had been discussions amongst senior officers in Surrey Police to revise protocols in regard to dealing with unauthorised traveller incursions. It was underlined that Surrey Police were keen to work collaboratively to move authorised encampments on shown by the recent incursion in Windlesham where the travellers were moved on within 24 hours.
- A few years ago the Stop and Search facility was overly used, and an abused tool. The regulation system for stop and search was now properly enforced, and the recording of stop and searches by Officers allowed in-depth analysis of its use. Mr Munro asserted when there were good grounds to use the tool, Officers should not hesitate in using stop and search; despite the wider debate on the issue. Latest figures in Surrey had indicated that Officers were not afraid to use the Stop and Search facility. Last year there were 12,000 stops carried out, which had increased 16% from the previous year.

Furthermore the Home Secretary was in talks with Senior Police Officers in regard to the relaxation of the 'reasonable grounds' criteria in regard to Stop and Search. The proposals entailed an overall strengthening and widening of the Stop and Search powers and would update criteria; which was currently based on the 1984, Criminal Evidence Act.

- Body-worn cameras provided significant evidence as to whether there were grounds for a complaint against a Police Officer. Duty Officers were able to easily review Officer-public interactions and ensure Stop and Search powers were being used proportionately. In addition the Independent Office for Police Conduct were aiming to shorten the investigation process against officers and the process for deciding whether a case should go to a disciplinary hearing.
- The latest legal advice given to Surrey Police was that the Chief Constable could not delegate Police Parking Enforcement powers to Council led Joint Enforcement Teams. Whilst Surrey Police still held the powers to remove obstructing vehicles from the middle of the road; Surrey County Council held the powers to remove obstructing vehicles from the pavements. It was noted by the Committee that locally these powers had been delegated by Surrey County Council to the neighbourhood policing team.

The Committee thanked Mr Munro for his informative update.

14/EP Committee Work Programme

The Committee received a report setting out its proposed work programme for the rest of the 2018/19 municipal year.

The Committee agreed to change the external partners presenting at the 19 February 2019 Committee Meeting.

The Committee would now receive a presentation from Accent Housing instead of presentations on the Surrey Heath Lottery and Camberley Alzheimer's Café .

Chairman