

Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PUBLIC MEETING

**Minutes of the meeting held Monday 29 January 2018
At Small Hall, Kensington Town Hall, W8 7NX**

**Chaired by: Kim Howell
Minutes taken by: Ruth Scott**

Attendance list attached

1	Welcome from Chair	ACTION
	The Chair welcomed and thanked attendees, noting the good turnout.	
2	Community Weapons Sweeps Simon Blondell, Acting Inspector, Kensington Police Station	
	<p>Acting Inspector Simon Blondell (standing in for DI Sean Lyons of the Gangs Pro-Active Unit who had sent apologies) presented a slideshow giving an overview of flash sweeps planned in the Borough. The objective is to identify estates/areas where there are problems with gang violence and coordinate a search for hidden weapons with the buy-in and help of the community. Sweeps are speedy and organised by local safer neighbourhood teams. Community members who volunteer to help will receive a health and safety briefing and be made aware of potential forensic opportunities. Items might include knives of various kinds as well as bike chains and baseball bats – some items may appear to be rubbish to the casual observer.</p> <p>Attendees were invited to submit ideas of areas where they thought such sweeps could be beneficial.</p> <p>In response to the questions raised, the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was acknowledged that turnover was high at Kensington Police Station largely due to officers being promoted elsewhere; the Vice Chair noting that officers were encouraged to stay in post for at least two years. High turnover is challenging when local knowledge, engagement and continuity is so important. • One speaker asked about drugs fuelling violent crime, making users more aggressive. SB countered that the opposite is usually the case but following further discussion said he would look into what substances might be causing this. • In response to a question from the Chair, SB was unable to confirm 	SB

	<p>how many people would be engaged on a given sweep saying it was hard to specify but, in general terms, the more the better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a query and ensuing discussion about whether Brompton Cemetery would be a focus for a flash sweep, it was clarified by a police officer in attendance that drug paraphernalia is the issue at Brompton as opposed to weapons. If any members of the community had information suggesting there was gang activity in that location they were invited to let the police know so that they can look into it. • In response to the question from SB about who might be interested in participating in flash sweeps, approximately ten hands were raised. • Sean Lyons is the best contact for anyone who is interested to learn more or get involved. Contact details will be circulated. 	SB
3	<p>Chairman's Report Kim Howell, RBKC SNB Chair</p>	
	<p>Kim Howell (KH) reported that representations have been made to the London Mayor, MOPAC, and personally to Cressida Dick against the closing of the Notting Hill Police station. These have been unsuccessful to date. The proposal from MOPAC is part of a London-wide proposal to merge policing into 'Basic Command Units' comprising two or more Boroughs. This is has already been piloted in pathfinder projects in several London Boroughs. K&C is to be merged with H&F and Westminster. Emergency response will be a real challenge. There are concerns about the lack of local knowledge, and travel logistics. While H&F has similarities with K&C, Westminster has a very different profile and different policing needs (Parliament, 10 Downing Street, Buckingham Palace, theatre land all fall within Westminster). There are also concerns about the lack of consultation on the BCU proposal. KH proposed lodging a formal objection to MOPAC, outlining the challenges of the merging with Westminster but acknowledging that an H&F merger could work. This proposal was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>A questioner asked if a central traffic lane could be created to help response vehicles cover longer distances, KH replied yes in theory, but this alone would not resolve all the issues.</p>	KH
4	<p>Community Safety Programme Board Stuart Priestly</p>	
	<p>Stuart Priestly (SP) introduced this item by explaining that the community safety board was a statutory partnership for council, police, probation and fire brigade, focused on safety concerns. It meets four times a year and recent themes have been serious youth violence (which has declined in the past quarter) and knife crime (which has increased in the last quarter). The following recent activities were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the Met on operation Sceptre, which is the current knife crime initiative; this includes council trading standards colleagues and undertaking test purchases to identify where retailers are selling knives to under 16s. • Supporting parents in the above initiative including a knife crime event at St Charles College planned for 22 February. • Establishing a violence reduction network. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-agency serious youth violence forum meets monthly. • Working closely with opposite numbers in neighbouring Boroughs. • Learning event to review domestic homicide cases. • An additional 41 police officers have been appointed to tackle community safety. • 2200 arrests have been made as well as a range of actions to tackle some of the following: begging, and public order offences; 111 actions taken against sex workers' cards in telephone boxes which causes distress to residents; -96 criminal behaviour breaches; 37 street trading offences. • The four-year community policing team has been extended by one year. The Mayoral office is considering the future of the programme. <p>During the ensuing question and answer session, it was confirmed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) There is no set agenda, rather the team is tasked with the most pressing issues identified over the previous fortnight based on latest crime figures. b) Online crime/fraud is problematic to tackle because tactics of the scammers change all the time. A roadshow is planned for older residents helping them stay safe online. c) Sylvia Nissim from KCSC offered to cascade details once the data is available. d) The £1.2million cost of community policing is shared fifty fifty with MOPAC. e) There are fewer opportunities to volunteer with community safety compared to previously; anyone interested in volunteering should contact SP. 	SP/SN
5	<p>Neighbourhood Watch Kim Howell</p>	
	<p>KH briefly reported on Neighbourhood Watch in the absence of Caryl Harris (CH) who had sent apologies. CH is a new starter who is in the process of reviewing the NHW needs for the Borough and has attended most of the 18 ward panel meetings. There are different priorities, issues and concerns in different wards dependent on local issues and crime stats. KH flagged that OWL organizes NHW and is primarily used as a communications channel. It is not interactive which is something of a drawback. The Met website is a useful source of information and reporting of non-emergency crimes, however it is not well publicised.</p> <p>In the ensuing discussion it was reported that some neighbourhood watch members were receiving emails that were irrelevant to their local area which is unhelpful.</p> <p>A question was raised about whether acid attacks were being tackled via stop and search and KH replied that he did not have detailed information, but is aware that the Met is doing a lot of work on this area.</p>	
6	<p>Borough Commander's Report Neil Mahaffey</p>	

	<p>Neil Mahaffey [NM] presented the Borough Commander's report (in place of Raffaele D'Orsi who had sent apologies). It was noted that Rob Jones is in line to take the Borough Commander position though this is yet to be confirmed. The following crime stats were reported:</p> <p>Crime stats TNO (Total notifiable offences) – Increase - BS 7.1% MPS 8.2% Robbery – Increase - BS 31.3% MPS 39.4% Burglary – Increase - BS 33.2% (479 more offences) MPS 12.1% TOMV – Decrease - BS -23% MPS 17.4% TFMV – Increase - BS 20.8% MPS 15.2% Knife injury victims U25 BS 0% MPS 9.2%</p> <p>Stop and Search</p> <p>5th in the Met for volume with positive outcome rate of 31.2% and arrest rate of 16.4%</p> <p>Top five in MPS for weapons searches 23.8%</p> <p>Two complaints regarding S&S in the last 6 months</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Stop and search Kim Howell</p>	
	<p>KH briefly presented the item on stop and search in the absence of Lucy Smith Ryland who had sent apologies. There have only been twenty-four complaints received in relation to stop and search, which is a positive outcome. The quality of searches has improved and the body worn video will help greatly especially in relation to combating knife crime.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Independent Custody Visiting Panel Vassiliki Stavrou</p>	
	<p>Vassiliki Stavrou (VS) presented the item on independent custody visiting. Since August 2017 this scheme only relates to Charing Cross Police Station following the closure of the Belgravia custody suite. During the period 17 July 2017 to 31 December 2017, 40 visits were scheduled of which 34 took place. 137 detainees were spoken to by ICVs. This is of a total 285 people held in detention at times of visits. It is not possible to speak to a detainee if they are being booked or with their solicitor, sleeping or being interviewed. Some detainees decline and sometimes staff advise against on health and safety grounds.</p> <p>VS flagged the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Everyone is booked downstairs with 'quick' detainees sent upstairs while those presenting higher risk remaining downstairs. Some visitors had raised concerns over this new system and inconsistency of application, with VS observing that when the model is followed it works. ii) Some ICVs had trouble accessing custody due to phones not 	

	<p>working; the Custody Inspector has provided his work mobile to try to mitigate this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) On one occasion, the upper floor was closed due to staff absence. This led to delays in processing detainees. iv) There have been a couple of reports of cold showers and lack of showers. v) Location of phone does not allow for privacy. <p>The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most independent visitors expressed satisfaction with help received from escorting DDOs. • Charing Cross is now the busiest custody in the Met with 900 detainees per month. • There is a 24/7 custody nurse in place.. • There were no spitting incidents during the period. • A refurbishment is planned which will introduce more showers, intercom in cells and CCTV in cells. <p>VS flagged that she is currently the only K&C volunteer and asked about how the ICV opportunities are advertised. It was confirmed that two people are currently going through vetting and the panel will soon be at full strength.</p> <p>KH asked how the Borough provided appropriate adults. SP confirmed this is accessed via a private provider. There have been delays in accessing the service meaning vulnerable detainees can't be discharged if they have no safe place to stay. A questioner asked why not bring it back in-house using volunteers, as previously. SP replied it was more cost effective to outsource.</p>	
9	Discussion	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zara (surname) outlined a simple idea designed to encourage people to keep their personal and medical details on a standard form and in a common location – the fridge. The bottle is kept in the fridge, where the emergency services will be able to find it in the event of being called to your home. This is called the <i>Message in a Bottle</i> scheme and has been recently launched in the Borough with involvement of GPs and some pharmacies. 2. There were questions raised about when the bollards on Portobello Road are being introduced, to mitigate against a hostile vehicle scenario, with SP saying there is no more of an update since the previous meeting. He is engaging with Cllr Press re: the market. It was felt that this should be put in place sooner rather than later, with one speaker stating that the police shouldn't wait for a tragic incident to take action. 3. Positive feedback was received on the sensitive policing around Grenfell and the aftermath (marches etc). 4. Police were asked to be more circumspect when dealing with the small number of local residents who are frequently in the police station complaining and moaning and who do not necessarily represent the wider concerns of the area. 5. It was asked if police could go around on bicycles. The Commander felt this was an excellent point reporting there are a number of cycle trained 	

	<p>officers and that it can be a very good tactic, for instance for tackling moped enabled crime which is a pan London problem and spiking in South Kensington, albeit not a the level of some other Boroughs.</p> <p>6. Smart Water was flagged – a traceable liquid being piloted as part of an anti-burglary initiative. Further details of the pilot to be announced soon.</p>	
10	Date of next meeting TBA.	