

Neighbourhood Watch Borough Association AGM

Thursday 9th May 2013

David Millar welcomed the meeting attendees to the AGM. He reported that NW in Hammersmith & Fulham now covers 265 roads, with nine new schemes starting since the last AGM in September.

He gave some brief feedback from a meeting he had attended on 8th May where residents from Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster heard from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner about the neighbourhood policing model. DM reported that although the commissioner stated that the model would enhance the policing of neighbourhoods, there was little clarity on how this would be achieved. We have been told to expect further information by June.

The Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Lucy D'Orsi of Hammersmith & Fulham Police, was welcomed to the AGM.

LDO gave a brief presentation on crime in the last year in Hammersmith & Fulham. She was happy to report significant reductions in burglary (-31%), robbery (-12.5%) and motor vehicle crime (-16.3%). She informed the meeting of the challenge set by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC); to reduce priority crimes by 20%, increase public confidence by 20% and reduce spend by 20% by 2016.

LDO then spoke about the impact of the new neighbourhood policing model in H&F. She reported that there would be 90 more officers dedicated to neighbourhood policing, plus 5 Sergeants. These would be managed by two area inspectors.

However, the model differs from the current model of 1 Sergeant, 2 PCs and 3 PCSOs per ward. There will be one named PC and one named PCSO for each ward, with the remaining neighbourhood officers being tasked to areas based on up to date crime data. There will be 23 neighbourhood constables on duty ever early, late and "late, late" shift.

DM then opened the meeting to questions from the floor.

Q. What measures will there be put in place to show that the new policing model is working?
--

A . The measurement of crime figures will be relatively easy and based upon recorded crime, as it is currently. The key indicator that will be most difficult to measure will be public satisfaction. This will be measured jointly with the local authority.

The model will have a neighbourhood panel, in some ways similar to a ward panel but covering a much larger area, which will act as a scrutiny panel for the policing model and challenge the police in a similar way that a board of governors might operate within a school.

Q. How will additional measures like CCTV fit into the new model?
--

A . CCTV is an extremely useful aid for reassurance and detection of crime. It often provides additional evidence in court. The police will continue to work with the council and feed into their CCTV strategy.
--

There are a number of major developments ongoing on the borough and we ensure

that these are integrated into the councils CCTV network. The network currently has over 800 cameras linked to it.

In addition it is often possible under the Planning Act to obtain funding from private developments to reinvest in the local area. This is often used to develop CCTV systems.

The police accepted that the traditional town centre CCTV systems were not always appropriate for residential streets (due to a number of factors such as lighting and sightlines) but there are some limited alternative overt and covert resources that can be used to solve particular local problems.

Q. If the police were not facing a cut in their budgets, would you as Borough Commander have kept to the current safer neighbourhood policing model?

A . I would still have changed the model in a similar way to what is being done currently, for example moving central CID resources to neighbourhoods. Even if we had an increase in budget I would still have supported the delivery of the totality of policing into neighbourhoods. What the new model will do will be to increase the number of officers on the streets and we will be judged by a reduction in the number of crimes committed on the borough and increasing the number of offenders detected and put before the courts.

Q. There still remains the issue of the move away from the safer neighbourhood model. Neighbourhood Watch groups and ward panels won't have the same connection. With the proposed borough wide neighbourhood panels, will ward panels still continue and how will they be supported?

A . Ward panels will still exist and will sit below neighbourhood panels. We will continue to work with ward panels to identify local priorities. The new policing model is still in development and there are significant challenges in local communications which we will need to look at to see how they can be developed effectively.

Q. The crime figures look good, but isn't it true that these only look at recorded crime?

A . The figures do look at recorded crime and they are a fair comparison as they are measured against recorded crime from previous years.
Recorded crimes are what decide where resources are allocated, and therefore it's very important that people report crime. We have had discussions about how we can record crime, for example from groups who don't want to engage with the police. We would consider looking at systems such as third party reporting, and I would be happy to discuss this matter further with Neighbourhood Watch coordinators or other interested parties.

Q. Will current ward panel chairs be invited to discussions about how the neighbourhood panel will be convened?

A . Yes

Before the close of the meeting David Millar presented the Douglas Hurd Cup. Rather than being won by a scheme this year, the award was presented to the outgoing Mayor of H&F, Councillor Belinda Donovan for her work over many years to support the growth of Neighbourhood Watch and the development of the Borough Association.

