

CROYDON SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD (SNB)

MINUTES OF 9 MARCH 2016 MEETING

Monique Rebeiro	Lives not Knives
Cllr Richard Chatterjee	Croydon Council
Cllr Matthew Kyeremeh	Croydon Council
Andy Opie	Director of Safety
Marion Burchell	IAG
Yvonne Traynor	RASASC
David Palmer	Aurora LGBT
Marzia Nicodemi	Croydon Community S&S monitoring group
Brian Barnes	Neighbourhood Watch
James Stremes	Central Neighbourhood Panel
Ilona Kytomaa	SNB administrator
Chief Supt. Andy Tarrant	Croydon Police
Inspector Jack Ioannou	British Transport Police
Karandeep Garcha	MOPAC

Also in attendance: Elizabeth Ash, Bushra Ahmed, Anne Giles, Paul Whiston, Inspector Alex Adams and police cadets.

1	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS The Chair welcomed all present.
2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were given by Cllr Steve O'Connell, Jean Pikett, Tina Salter and for lateness by Cllr Matthew Kyeremeh.
3	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2016 The minutes were approved by all present.
4	BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE UPDATE Inspector Ioannou reported an increase in crime after a year on year fall, rising from 37.4 crime per million passengers to 40 crimes per million passengers. He stated it was likely that the major drivers behind this increase were the regeneration of London Bridge station and works at East Croydon station, leading to significant frustration and attacks on staff. He added that the most worrying trend was the rise in violence against the person, and explained that measures were being put in place in Croydon and elsewhere to address that. Inspector Ioannou also reported increases in the reporting of sexual offences and hate crime and stated that this might be due in part to increased social awareness.

SNB members were advised that the British Transport Police had recently undergone a significant restructure, and that Croydon would be getting additional BTP officers as a result of it. He added that body cameras were due to be introduced this year, hopefully contributing to increased confidence in the police and less aggressive behaviour from offenders.

Inspector Ioannou encouraged SNB members to text the British Transport Police on **61016** or ring on **0800 40 50 40** to report any offences on the trains or trams.

Inspector Ioannou was questioned about an incident where someone had been pushed onto the railway tracks. He stated that there had been an altercation leading to the accident, and that an individual had been arrested. He was also asked questions about suicides on railways and explained that the British Transport Police did not label these deaths in such a way, leaving the Coroner to make an assessment as to the cause of death. He added that there had been an increase in the number of vulnerable people coming to the notice of the police and that a big team now dealt with suicide mitigation plans to prevent such deaths. Inspector Ioannou commented that mental health issues had become an increasingly important part of his job. He explained that officers received a lot of training on mental health issues, including bespoke suicide prevention training with the Samaritans.

Inspector Ioannou highlighted the fact that the IPCC had criticised the practice of keeping individuals with acute mental health issues in police cells, as this was a totally inappropriate approach to dealing with the needs of these individuals. The Borough Commander echoed this view and added that there was a significant shortage of secure hospital beds - sometimes the nearest available beds were as far away as Hertfordshire. Inspector Ioannou explained that a protocol on how to handle such cases had been agreed with mental health services but that this could mean one officer having to spend 4-5 hours with the vulnerable individual before relevant help arrived.

The SNB membership thanked Inspector Ioannou warmly for his report as well as for his contribution to the SNB and its precursor the CCPCG over the years. He announced that he was to retire soon and said that the most rewarding part of his job had been to meet and work with people who were passionate about making the borough safer.

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PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE

The Borough Commander gave a presentation on public confidence in the police, which has been very low in this borough.

The presentation covered the following points:

- **How confidence is measured**

The Borough explained that this had been a MOPAC objective for three years as part of the “20 20 20” challenge (20% reduction in MOPAC 7 crimes, 20% increase in public confidence and 20% reduction in cost)

- **The drivers of confidence**

SNB members were advised that the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) had identified four drivers that should improve confidence (fair treatment, alleviating ASB, reducing crime and engagement with the public)

- **The challenge in Croydon**

'Confidence in the police is linked to confidence in Croydon'. There was agreement that Croydon's reputation was probably impacting on people's responses. In addition, there was concern that basing the assessment on no more than 100 responses could not be representative of the whole population. However, the Borough Commander stated that figures had improved slightly of late.

- **Action taken and planned**

The Borough Commander highlighted various actions including walkabouts, the Met Trace property marking project, presenting statistics in a more meaningful way, dealing with issues of concern to residents such as fly-tipping, etc.

The Borough Commander stated that partnership work with the council had been an important element of their approach to tackling crime and ASB. The Director of Safety added that significant work had been carried out with the council's communications team in a variety of "formats" to inform the public on action taken e.g. prosecutions of noise nuisance, fly-tipping, etc. SNB members were advised that the council had recently completed a fear of crime survey and received over 1000 answers.

The Borough Commander was asked whether the borough used police communications staff to disseminate messages about the force's work. He responded that these posts had been deleted as a result of budget cuts. He explained that positive messages had been communicated through a quiz, advertised through Twitter, showing simple statistics on the low daily numbers of burglaries, muggings, etc.

The SNB membership suggested that positive messages could be disseminated through a variety of publications circulated in the borough, such as newsletters. The Borough Commander responded that he already contributed regular articles to council publications, which could be accessed through "My Account" .

The Borough Commander added that more informal events involving the police could improve confidence and observed that most festivals in the borough were attended by the police, including a recruitment stand. It was noted that the police had taken place in popular road shows funded by the SNB in spring 2015 and it was suggested that more such road shows should be organised in future. SNB members also stated that confidence could be increased with a more consistent police attendance at ward panel meetings.

Inspector Ioannou acknowledged that there was a confidence problem in East Croydon, which the British Transport Police were tackling. However, he pointed out that responses to their surveys could easily be skewed by a bad commuting experience.

A member of the public stressed that confidence had a lot to do with the local

environment. For instance, good lighting played an important part in making people feel safe. This had improved in Broad Green but could be improved in some parts of East Croydon station. The IAG representative was encouraged to meet with the manager of East Croydon station to discuss this.

The smell of marijuana in the street, on the other hand, had a very negative effect on people's perceptions of an area. Inspector Ioannou commented that the British Transport Police had introduced a "cannabis amnesty" instead of arresting and criminalising consumers, with an emphasis on informing consumers regarding the consequences of consumption and the risks to their mental health. It was observed that about 40% of people in custody today had some form of mental health problem.

The Director of Safety commented that the forthcoming regeneration of the town centre was bound to have a major impact on people's perceptions of Croydon.

SNB members questioned the Borough Commander regarding Croydon's night-time economy. He stated that there were less people in the town centre at night-time following the closure of "Tiger Tiger" but that issues were arising from the fact that similar numbers of people were trying to get into less venues.

A member of the public highlighted scams targeting older people in the north of the borough, some perpetrated by people masquerading as delivery drivers. She suggested that more should be done to educate older people to prevent such offences. The Borough Commander commented that these offenders were on the police's radar.

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POLICE REPORT

The Borough Commander reported that over 4,000 Smart Water kits had been given out so far, and that a second roll-out was due to take place in two months' time, with comprehensive safety advice.

The Borough Commander was questioned regarding the rise in hate crime in the borough. He commented that a rise could be due to improved reporting. The Director of Safety announced that Croydon was a hate crime pilot site.

SNB members expressed confusion at the following MOPAC statistics:

- What is the difference between "racist and religious" offences and "faith hate crime"?
- Does violence against the person includes Violence with injury?

They asked for the statistics to be made easier for the average man in the street to understand. It was suggested that some form of commentary would help clarify the figures.

The Borough Commander was questioned on Stop and Search under Section 60 (which give the police authority to search individuals without grounds), which was instituted in the borough for 3.5 hours on 3 March. He explained that the police had received reliable intelligence that two opposing gangs, which were not from Croydon, were due to travel to the borough as a case was to be presented at the crown court, and planned to cause a disturbance. He stated that eight people had been searched under the Section 60 Stop and Search regulations. The

	<p>representative of the Stop and Search Monitoring Group stated that such searches were very emotionally loaded, and added that the group would welcome more searches leading to positive outcomes. The Borough Commander stated that about 33% of searches led to a positive outcome, including finding cannabis on the person.</p> <p>The Borough Commander was questioned on missing children. He stated that the numbers in this borough were the highest in London because Croydon also had the highest numbers of Looked After Children, and particularly children placed here by other boroughs. He stated that about 10 went missing every week, and that some went missing again and again. The major concern of the police and the council was that these children were particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. The Borough Commander that these disappearances led to a lot of police action, with a particular focus on key individuals at risk.</p> <p>The Borough Commander was thanked for his report.</p>
7	<p>UPDATE ON SNB PROJECTS</p> <p>The SNB administrator announced that the deadline for submitting SNB projects to MOPAC was 31 May 2016, and encouraged SNB members to send in suggestions.</p> <p>She also highlighted the report regarding the substance misuse project carried out by the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation, copies of which were available for all SNB members.</p>
8	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Cllr Richard Chatterjee publicised the forthcoming General Meeting of Croydon Community Against Human Trafficking, which was due to take place on 22 March. The SNB administrator undertook to publicise details of the venue.</p>
9	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday 8 June 2016: Annual General Meeting in the Community Space, Mint Walk, Croydon</p>