

## Scrutiny & Overview Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 26 March 2024 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors Rowenna Davis (Chair), Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair), Leila Ben-Hassel (Deputy-Chair), Sue Bennett, Simon Fox and Eunice O'Dame

**Also Present:** Councillor Ola Kolade – Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Councillor Enid Mollyneaux – Shadow Cabinet Member for Community Safety

**Apologies:** None

### PART A

#### 20/24 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes from the meeting held on 12 February 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### 21/24 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were no disclosures of interest made at the meeting.

#### 22/24 **Urgent Business (if any)**

Although there was no urgent business for the consideration of the Committee at the meeting, the Chair highlighted her concern about a recent key decision on the Laptop Renewal Programme, particularly around whether the decision represented value for money. Consideration had been given to using the call-in process to bring the decision to the Committee for further scrutiny, but there was not a consensus for this approach. Going forward, a briefing on the decision had been arranged for the Committee and a review of the

implementation of the Programme would be scheduled in the committee's work programme.

The Chair also highlighted the recent decision by NHS England to relocate children's specialist cancer services to Evelina Hospital, rather than St Georges Hospital. The preference for the St Georges option, given the increased travel times for patient with the Evelina option had been raised by Croydon's representatives on the South West London and Surrey Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC), who were a statutory consultee on the decision. The concerns about the Evelina Hospital option were shared by others on the JHOSC and options for taking forward these concerns were being explored. The Chair put on record her thanks to the Council's representatives on the JHOSC, Councillors Chatterjee and O'Dame for all their work on this issue.

## 23/24 **Croydon Community Safety Partnership - Annual Review**

The Committee considered a report set out in pages 19 to 42 of the agenda which provided a summary of the work of the Safer Croydon Partnership over the past year. This report was provided to the Committee as part of its annual review of crime and disorder matters in the borough.

In attendance for this item were the following: -

- Councillor Ola Kolade – Cabinet Member for Community Safety
- Chief Superintendent Andy Brittain - Metropolitan Police
- Superintendent Mitchell Carr – Metropolitan Police
- Selene Grandison – Head of Croydon Probation Delivery Unit
- Kristian Aspinall – Director of Culture & Community Safety
- Ciara Goodwin – Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Coordinator
- Alison Kennedy – FJS Operations Manager
- Christopher Rowney – Head of Violence Reduction Network
- Liz Ostrowski - Independent Consultant

During the introduction to the report, the following points were noted: -

1. There was a general recognition that the challenges within the borough could not be solved without partnership work.
2. Since the Committee had last reviewed community safety matters in September 2022, a Community Safety Partnership Board had been established, which was open to any member of the public to attend, becoming an important mechanism for engagement with the local community.
3. The Youth Safety Plan had been developed with youth groups engaged on the content of the strategy.
4. The key areas of focus for the Safer Croydon Partnership remained tackling youth violence, violence against women and girls and improving the use of data and evidence to tackle crime hotspot areas.

Following the introduction, the Committee proceeded to question the members of the Safer Croydon Partnership on the information provided. The first question noted that the partnership was balancing a number of different boards and strategies, and as such it was questioned how the Partnership remained streamlined and focussed on delivery. In response, it was highlighted that the work of the Partnership was expansive and different channels were needed to look at different areas, but the Executive Board had oversight over all areas. Furthermore, it was noted that three of the boards were statutory for all Community Safety Partnerships (CSP), with only two additional boards set up. This was a common amount for CSPs, with many often having more.

In follow-up, it was questioned whether there was any scope for streamlining and simplifying the structure of the Partnership. It was advised that there were other options, such as merging the community safety and safeguarding boards, but this tended to be done in low crime areas and it was recommended that these be kept separate for areas such as Croydon. Although the structure may be complex for a member of the public to understand, they would be free to attend meetings of the Community Safety Partnership Board to learn more about the work of the partnership.

It was noted that the report set out a wide range of activities delivered by the Partnership in the past year, but it was questioned how the impact from this activity was measured. It was acknowledged that some outcomes were hard to measure, which was why case studies had been included in the report to demonstrate impact. An example of the impact of the partnership given included work to engage with groups of young people who had previously been congregating in Church Street which had led to dispersal. It was

highlighted that the Town Centre was in the top ten priority wards for the Police, with almost 100 people arrested since the start of the year as a result of increased police activity and the introduction of facial recognition technology. Reassurance was given that the facial recognition technology was independently audited to provide assurance that there was no disparity, around areas such as ethnicity and gender.

It was questioned how the Council's Housing Service interacted with the partnership and whether there were any challenges in this relationship. The Committee was assured that Housing was included in the partnership as part of the Council and that Housing was present on an operational level for specific cases and issues. Going forward there would be further activity designed to improve these links in the forthcoming Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

Further information was requested about how the Partnership was working to deliver the Youth Safety Plan. It was explained that the aim of the Plan was to reduce the number of young people getting injured on streets, reduce the number of young people in the justice system and improve the perception of safety. As part of achieving these aims, it was recognised that it was important to improve the relationship with local schools, this had resulted in the Safer Schools Team having a dedicated officer in most schools in the borough and regular contact with the 5 to 6 schools without an officer. The Police also had a youth engagement team who ran various schemes including a netball scheme for girls.

In response to a question about the number of referrals being made across the partnership, it was explained that there was a new system in place to ensure referrals were made when needed and that the partnership was in a good place regarding referrals.

An update was requested on the current status of the Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB). It was highlighted that the SNB was a public meeting with community involvement that was delivered by the Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and was a separate entity from the Safer Croydon Partnership. The Council was working with the Police and the Chair to get it working after a period of inactivity caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The SNB now had new terms of reference and had met in December and again in March in the Town Hall. Going forward the SNB would be meeting on a quarterly basis, with an aim to host meetings at different venues across the borough. Although the Council provided some administrative support for the SNB, this was fully funded by MOPAC.

It was acknowledged that it could be difficult to balance the good work of the partnership against the level of crime evidenced from statistics, but contributing factors were often issues that went beyond the boundaries of the borough and could only be addressed through partnership working across both London and nationally. This could be evidenced through the work of the Violence Reduction Networks, whose Chairs regularly met to share good practice. It was highlighted that events such as protests often had an impact on police resources in the borough, with local officers supporting policing at these events, alongside this there were ongoing recruitment challenges within the Metropolitan Police, which also affected resources.

At this point the Committee concluded its questioning and agreed the following, actions, conclusions and recommendations, before moving onto the next agenda item.

### **Actions**

Following its discussion of the annual report on the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the Committee agreed the following actions to follow-up outside of the meeting: -

1. To circulate the updated terms of reference for the Safer Neighbourhood Board to the committee members.
2. To share the outcomes from the review of anti-social behaviour to the committee members once available.
3. The Committee recognised that the Safer Croydon Partnership had delivered a significant amount of work over 2023/24. It was agreed that future annual reviews should provide more quantitative data on the positive outcomes achieved through the Partnership.

### **Conclusions**

Following its discussion of the annual report on the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the Committee reached the following conclusions: -

1. The Committee recognised the work of the Safer Croydon Partnership which had been delivered a wider range of activity across its priority

areas, while operating within limited resources across a challenging and complex borough.

2. The Committee recognised the commitment of the Safer Croydon Partnership to increase the level of community engagement in its work, which could be evidenced through the creation of the Community Safety Engagement Board.
3. Although the Committee recognised the Safer Croydon Partnership had delivered a significant amount of work, it was agreed that when it next looked at community safety, further evidence was needed to demonstrate the tangible outcomes achieved through this work.

### **Recommendations**

Following its discussion of the annual report on the work of the Community Safety Partnership, the Committee agreed to submit the following recommendations for the consideration of the Mayor: -

1. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that the Council uses its existing networks and resources to raise awareness of the Safer Neighbourhood Board and its meetings.
2. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that the Council through its role as a statutory partner uses its influence to ensure that the partnership has a clear focus on delivering tangible public outcomes for residents, rather than inputs and processes from officers.

### **24/24 Violence Reduction Network - Draft Strategic Assessment**

The Committee considered a report set out in pages 43 to 102 of the agenda, which presented a draft version of the annual Strategic Assessment produced by the Violence Reduction Network. This report was provided to the Committee as part of its annual review of crime and disorder matters in the borough and gave the Committee the opportunity to provide comment on the draft report before the final version was produced.

In attendance for this item were the following: -

- Councillor Ola Kolade – Cabinet Member for Community Safety

- Chief Superintendent Andy Brittain - Metropolitan Police
- Superintendent Mitchell Carr – Metropolitan Police
- Selene Grandison – Head of Croydon Probation Delivery Unit
- Kristian Aspinall – Director of Culture & Community Safety
- Ciara Goodwin – Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Coordinator
- Alison Kennedy – FJS Operations Manager
- Christopher Rowney – Head of Violence Reduction Network
- Liz Ostrowski - Independent Consultant

Before the Committee commenced its questioning on this item, the Chair commended the report for its clarity and the range of data and crime statistics it provided.

The first question asked for more information on the implementation of the Youth Safety Strategy and how it was influencing the level of knife crime in the borough. It was advised that the Strategy had only recently been introduced in September 2023 and many of parts of the strategy were still at an initiation phase. Although the level of knife crime remained high, an engagement and diversion service had recently been commissioned for the whole year and were in the process of building relationships. Bids had also been submitted to the Mayor of London to fund other programmes such as interventions and schemes aimed at older young people.

As a follow-up, it was questioned when the outcomes from the work delivered as part of the Youth Safety Strategy, would result in a fall in the level of knife crime. Although it was acknowledged that it was extremely difficult to predict crime levels, it was hoped that there would be evidence of the figures reducing by next year. Given the limited resources available, the Police were having to focus their resources on targeted hotspots which were identified using data and intelligence. Gaining the intelligence needed from the community was an ongoing challenge for the Police, with an ongoing work to improve engagement at a ward level with parents and the wider community. It was accepted that part of the challenge would be repairing historic damage which had led to a mistrust of the police amongst communities.

It was questioned what was being done to compensate for the lack of physical safe spaces for young people and to keep young people safe online and to prevent them being exploited by county lines gangs. It was advised that the

Police had recently run a nation-wide intensification week in its ongoing operation to tackle county lines drug gangs, which had resulted in a number of county lines being closed in Croydon. It was highlighted that there was safe space in the borough such as the Legacy Youth Zone and other schemes, but it was acknowledged that more could be done to promote awareness of their availability.

It was noted that the Executive Mayor had pledged in his manifesto to ensure that any young person excluded from school would be provided with a mentor. As such an update on the delivery of this was requested. It was advised that it had not been fully implemented at the moment, but as it did not fall within the remit of the community safety team, the Committee agreed to pick it up at a later date with the Education service.

As the statistics provided indicated that robberies had increased by 24%, it was questioned whether action was being taken to tackle this. It was advised that the Serious Crime team had been running an operation over the past six weeks aimed at reducing the number of robberies in the borough. This work had included reviewing possible links between cases, looking at the deployment of facial recognition technology and the deployment of temporary CCTV to hotspots such as Purley. There was also a greater level of partnership working between the local Police and the British Transport Police, with daily meetings being held to share data, which was helping to target interventions. It was highlighted that three quarters of the street robberies in the borough were committed by children on children and as such the Police were also trying to micro focus on hotspots through their work with schools.

As the Committee had previously recommended engagement with local communities to develop plans that targeted hotspot areas, it was questioned how this work had progressed. It was advised that key groups had been identified to work with the partners in the development of plans, which were still being worked upon, with an organisation commissioned to support the different needs of these areas. It was highlighted that some of the hotspot areas had moved over the course of the past year and although there was not a plan signed off for each new hotspot, the police were working in these areas. It was confirmed that Public Health was investing funds into community safety to enable more work in hotspot areas and there had been recognition from community groups that there was an increased level of partnership working.

In response to a concern raised about the storage of information collected by facial recognition software for people not charged, reassurance was given that this information was not stored. Similarly, with on-street finger printing, if a



person was not flagged, the information would not be kept. The only people being stopped were those who had been flagged by the facial recognition technology, which was used as a trigger for a physical conversation between the police and individuals identified by the technology.

An update was requested on the effectiveness of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) introduced in the town centre and the accompanying prevention work. It was advised that a support first approach had been taken, with multi-agency visits to engage with people in hotspot areas to understand the services they might need, such as housing or substance misuse. These had been in operation for a couple of months, but it was accepted that there was still more that could be done. It was confirmed that only 3 individuals had been stopped as many as three times within PSPO.

From the data provided, it was noted that there seemed to be a high rate of re-offending in the borough, with further information requested on the reasons for this. It was advised that there were multiple reasons for people committing crime, which often involved drugs, alcohol and substance misuse. There were a number of different probation programmes to support people out of crime, but it took people a number of opportunities to go through the cycle of change. The Probation Service worked in partnership with other agencies, coordinating support for offenders, including GP support to access mental health services and substance intervention.

At this point the Committee concluded its questioning and agreed the following, actions, conclusions and recommendations, before moving onto the next agenda item.

## **Actions**

Following its discussion of the draft Strategic Assessment from the Violence Reduction Network, the Committee agreed the following actions to follow-up outside of the meeting: -

1. To ask the Mayor about the delivery of his manifesto commitment to ensure that all excluded children are provided with a mentor, when presenting his annual report to the Committee at the 4 June 2024 meeting.
2. The Committee requested further information on the youth offer being delivered through Public Health funding.

3. The Committee agreed that the Transitional Safeguarding Panel may be something for the Children & Young People to revisit as a deep dive in the future.

## **Conclusions**

Following its discussion of the draft Strategic Assessment from the Violence Reduction Network, the Committee reached the following conclusions: -

1. The Committee agreed that the Strategic Assessment was an excellent report which provided a clear and comprehensive summary of the key community safety challenges within the borough, with knife crime, robbery and reoffending rates being of particular concern.
2. The Committee commended the work of the Police in its partnership working with schools, including basing 22 full time officers in schools across the borough and providing extra patrols at school opening and closing times.
3. The Committee noted that, whilst work had started on its previous recommendation to create bespoke community plans to be created for high priority crime hot spot areas that involved their own unique community partners', the commitment to create plans for each area had not been completed, and this needed to be followed up.
4. The Committee agreed that Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings were an important mechanism for securing community engagement in community safety matters and as such would encourage all Members to promote awareness of their local meetings through their own community networks.

## **Recommendations**

Following its discussion of the draft Strategic Assessment from the Violence Reduction Network, the Committee agreed to submit the following recommendations for the consideration of the Mayor: -

1. Given the crime statistics indicate there is a high rate of reoffending within the borough, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that work is undertaken to benchmark against reoffending rates in other

areas and to engage with boroughs with low reoffending rates to establish whether there is any best practice that could be used in Croydon.

2. The Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that the possibility of identifying and promoting libraries and schools as safe spaces is explored.

## 25/24 **Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) - Deep Dive**

The Committee considered a report set out in the agenda supplement, which provided an overview of the key areas to be included in the delivery plan of the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. This report was provided to the Committee as part of its annual review of crime and disorder matters in the borough and gave the Committee the opportunity to provide comment on the delivery plan before the final version was produced.

In attendance for this item were the following: -

- Councillor Ola Kolade – Cabinet Member for Community Safety
- Chief Superintendent Andy Brittain - Metropolitan Police
- Superintendent Mitchell Carr – Metropolitan Police
- Selene Grandison – Head of Croydon Probation Delivery Unit
- Kristian Aspinall – Director of Culture & Community Safety
- Ciara Goodwin – Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Coordinator
- Alison Kennedy – FJS Operations Manager
- Christopher Rowney – Head of Violence Reduction Network
- Liz Ostrowski - Independent Consultant

The Chair highlighted that the Committee had held three separate community meetings to help educate themselves on people's experience of violence against women and girls in the borough and the support provided by the Council and other statutory partners. The feedback provided had helped to inform the questions to be asked at this meeting. The Chair thanked the residents, community leaders, community and voluntary organisations and especially the survivors of domestic abuse who had given their time to speak

to them about their experiences. Summaries of these meetings were uploaded with the agenda for the meeting and can be found [here](#).

The first question raised by the Committee asked about the timeline for the creation of the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan. It was confirmed that based upon the current timeline the delivery plan would be signed off at the Cabinet meeting in May. However, this may be moved to June depending on the timings.

As it was confirmed that the delivery plan did not need to go to a meeting of Council for final approval, it was questioned how all Members would be able to input into the delivery plan. It was agreed that a briefing session would be arranged for all Members to raise awareness.

It was confirmed that no additional funding had been allocated in the budget for delivery, but there was existing ringfenced funding available, which would be supplemented by increased contributions from Public Health and the Housing Revenue Account. At the same time other external avenues for funding were being aggressively pursued.

It was highlighted that many of the offences committed that were classified as knife crimes happened in the home environment, such as domestic abuse and homicide. As such, it was suggested that the information presented at Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings should differentiate between crimes that were a result of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and those that were a result of youth violence. It was agreed that this would help to raise awareness of the level of VAWG related incidents within local communities, particularly in comparison to the level of youth violence.

It was questioned how the delivery plan would empower local community and voluntary organisations working within the VAWG sector. It was advised that there would be an emphasis in the final plan on collaboration, including looking to community organisations for advice and innovation. There was also a need to ensure that available funding was directed to the right sources to ensure the best possible outcomes were achieved.

As a follow-up, it was questioned whether there would be scope to transfer funding the Council spent on VAWG related services to community groups. It was advised that a certain level of service needed to be delivered through the current provision, which was the FJS, but there would be new commissioning opportunities for additional VAWG schemes in the forthcoming year that community organisations would be able to bid for. It was suggested that the

Council should be signposting community organisations towards new funding sources when they became available.

It was highlighted that funding often tended to be more readily available for more high profile issues, such as knife crime. Even though violence against women and girls was the highest level of crime against women in the borough, it was the public perception that youth crime was worse. It was acknowledged that it was a national issue that VAWG was not looked at in the same way as other more publicly visible crimes.

In response to a question about the performance of the Croydon MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), it was advised that it was very effective and seen as a centre of best practice for others across London. The MARAC currently met weekly due to the high number of referrals it received, but it was anticipated that delivery would change going forward as it was currently being reviewed.

It was questioned how the FJS and other partners engaged with local businesses to educate them about the signs of domestic violence. It was advised that there had been outreach work with local businesses, but this had stopped during the pandemic. It was agreed that this should be revisited going forward. It was highlighted that it was important to promote early intervention initiatives and to expand the number of places people felt able to talk about domestic abuse.

It was questioned whether there was sufficient engagement with male community leaders and whether any thought had been given to engaging with Crystal Palace Football Club on a campaign to raise awareness of VAWG. It was agreed that there was a clear need to be mindful of the role of men in preventing VAWG, which would be reflected in the delivery plan. The possibility of engaging with Crystal Palace Football Club would also be explored.

It was highlighted that from the community meetings it was clear there were a lot of organisations doing good work across the borough on VAWG, but there was no central repository to bring this information together. As such it was asked whether the Council could take a lead on compiling and publicising this information. It was advised that the Council was in the process of reviewing its community safety presence online, which would include ensuring there was up to date information on VAWG groups and services available. The Committee suggested that this information should also be available in a physical format that was available for distribution in the community.

It was confirmed that the Croydon University Hospital had recruited 55 domestic abuse champions who were supported by professional domestic abuse workers in the organisation. The Council's own Guardians Programme had 22 staff members involved, but this would be revisited as part of the delivery plan. The Committee suggested that the possibility of establishing a network of community champions should be explored as part of the delivery plan.

Regarding the work of the FJS, it was confirmed that each member of staff had a high risk caseload of 30 clients. In addition to this staff were also required to carry out assessments, meet drop-in clients and supported referrals. Only the FJS dealt with the high risk referrals from MARAC, although lower risk cases could be referred to the community and voluntary sector for further support as needed.

It was noted that VAWG came in many different forms and was not solely related to abuse in a home setting, as such it was questioned whether there was any plans to tackle public harassment. It was advised that the Police had an action plan that came into effect from December 2023, which included a strand on safe spaces. As part of the Croydon Safer Streets operation, there was an app for people to log where they felt unsafe which allowed the Police to target hotspot areas. Additional lighting had also been installed in certain areas to help ensure people felt safer. It was confirmed that there was a strand in the delivery plan to raise public awareness about the different forms of VAWG.

An update was requested on the DRIVE scheme that aimed to address the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic abuse. It was confirmed that the scheme had been rolled out across London for high risk perpetrators, alongside a separate programme for mid-risk offenders which aimed to work holistically with families to lower risk. The Police had also been piloting domestic abuse orders which carried a positive requirement of perpetrators.

As a follow up, it was questioned whether staff had sufficient training to prevent perpetrators from manipulating the system at the expense of their victims. It was acknowledged that there was still some way to go to ensure staff were fully aware of the issues involved, but further education would continue to be provided. From the consultation process to inform the delivery strategy there was support for early intervention with perpetrators, providing the right level of support could be provided at the right time. It was confirmed that there would be theme on working with perpetrators in the delivery plan.

It was noted that as a national organisation it could be a challenge for the Probation Service to work with local community groups on VAWG, particularly around information sharing, but the service did work with the FJS and MARAC. It was confirmed that the consent of the perpetrator was not always needed to share information, but any decision was taken on a case by case basis depending on the risks involved. In the first instance a perpetrator would be encouraged to self-refer themselves for support.

Given the limited availability of legal aid, it was questioned whether more could be done to ensure that survivors had better access to legal representation or other advocacy services. It was advised that it was difficult to answer as it was known before legal aid was cut nationally there would be a negative impact. There were four law firms who worked with the FJS on a pro bono basis, but their capacity was limited. It was suggested that options for expanding support through other law firms should be explored, including on a pan-London basis.

From the feedback given at the meeting with victims, most had highlighted that they felt they had been subjected to racialised stereotyping in some instances which had impacted upon the support they received. It was noted that the consultation had also highlighted the need for cultural competence as people needed different types and levels of support. Therefore, cultural competence training for staff informed by local communities was vital alongside an approach that prioritised individuals being asked what support they needed rather than trying to fit them into a more generic approach. It was highlighted that the Police's new VAWG Strategy did reflect the different experiences of different communities and how this would be addressed in front line services.

Another issue raised from the community meetings and within the report was the need to improve the support available for children who had experienced an abusive environment. As such it was questioned what was planned for this area. It was noted in the consultation that families did not always know what services were available or were unable to afford the cost. As such, it was essential to provide support for these young people as evidence clearly indicated that it could lead to more significant issues in the longer term.

At this point the Committee concluded its questioning and agreed the following, actions, conclusions and recommendations, before moving onto the next agenda item. The Chair also thanked all the attendees for their engagement with the questions of the Committee throughout the meeting.

## **Actions**

Following its discussion of the report on the Delivery Plan for the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, and informed by Scrutiny's meetings listening to victims, community groups and the public, the Committee agreed the following actions to follow-up outside of the meeting: -

1. A request was made for the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan, including accompanying community engagement report, to be share with the Committee, once available.
2. The Committee requested that any key performance indicators relating to the Family Justice Service and those for any other work streams relating to tackling violence against women and girls are shared with them.

## **Conclusions**

Following its discussion of the report on the Delivery Plan for the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, and informed by Scrutiny's meetings listening to victims, community groups and the public, the Committee reached the following conclusions: -

1. The Committee welcomed the development of the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan for Croydon, including a supporting report prepared by an independent consultant which had been informed by community engagement.
2. The Committee welcomed confirmation that a briefing would be provided for Members on the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan.
3. The Committee welcomed confirmation that the Council looked to transfer funding, where possible, to community and voluntary sector groups through the commissioning of services and to prioritise them for any future grant funding. It was agreed that it was important to maximise the effectiveness of this approach by raising awareness amongst these organisations of any new funding opportunities becoming available.
4. There was a concern that awareness about the excellent services available on VAWG, in both the statutory and third sector, were not well known by the public, and this needs to be addressed.



5. There was concern about the cultural competence and equal treatment of victims, particularly from black and ethnic minority communities, that had also been picked up by the work of the Council's independent consultant. This needed to be addressed.
  
6. In light of comments from the community meetings about the lack of awareness of the services available in the borough, the Committee welcomed confirmation there would be a review of the information provided in the community safety pages of the Council website, as this would be an opportunity to provide a centralised source outlining the support available in the borough. It was suggested that the production of hard copies of this information should also be explored for community distribution.

## **Recommendations**

Following its discussion of the report on the Delivery Plan for the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, and informed by Scrutiny's meetings listening to victims, community groups and the public, the Committee agreed to submit the following recommendations for the consideration of the Mayor: -

1. As the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan was still being developed, the Scrutiny & Overview Committee recommends that the follow areas are included in the final plan:
  - To restart the pre-pandemic workstream providing targeted engagement about the signs of violence against women and girls with local businesses, such as barber shops, hairdressers, and those businesses in the nighttime economy.
  - The provision of new Domestic Abuse Champions across the statutory partners was welcomed and as such the scope of this should be expanded to identifying and training potential community based champions.
  - The Delivery Plan needs to include a focus on children coming from families experiencing domestic abuse. Even if they are not experiencing the abuse directly, they will suffer fallout if it's happening between others in the home.
  - There needed to be training provided for all statutory partners on the many different forms of violence against women and girls, and to improve the cultural competence of those support victims.

- That document is created to set out the support and services available for victims of violence against women and girls, that can be distributed within local communities.
- The Delivery Plan needs to have a proper emphasis on perpetrators and how to hold them to account.
- There needs to be clear focus in the Delivery Plan that Violence Against Women and Girls is a 'male problem' and as such there needed to be increased engagement with male community leaders about the issues involved.
- The possibility of partnering with Crystal Palace Football Club on a campaign to tackle violence against women and girls should be explored.
- There should be key performance indicators included in the Mayor's Business Plan Performance reports that would measure the performance of the Delivery Plan.

The Committee also agreed to submit the following recommendation to the Metropolitan Police for their consideration: -

1. The Committee recommends that the Police review the data provided for Neighbourhood Panel meetings to ensure that it clearly outlined the number of cases linked to domestic violence and the wider umbrella of offences related to violence against women and girls. In doing so, it would help raise community awareness of the scale of the crimes linked to violence against women and girls.

## 26/24 **Scrutiny Recommendations**

The Committee considered a report set out on pages 103 to 106 of the agenda which presented recommendations proposed by the scrutiny sub-committees for sign-off ahead of submission to the Executive Mayor.

**Resolved:** The Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed to: -

1. Approve the recommendations made by its Sub-Committee's for submission to the Executive Mayor for his consideration.

## 27/24 **Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-23**

The Committee considered a report set out on pages 107 to 132 of the agenda which presented the most recent version of the work programme for the Scrutiny & Overview Committee and its Sub-Committees.

**Resolved:** The Scrutiny & Overview Committee agreed to note the most recent version of the Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24.

28/24 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This motion was not required.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

**Signed:**

.....

**Date:**

.....