

Minutes of the Meeting of the Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee held on 17 February 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Alex Anderson (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Bukky Okunade, Shane Ralph and Elizabeth Rigby

In attendance: Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager
Cheryl Wells, Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the recording to be made available on-line.

16. Minutes

The minutes of the Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee held on the 17 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

17. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

18. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

19. Community Safety Partnership Report on Hate Crime

Michelle Cunningham presented the report. This report would support Member's role to ensure the Council fulfilled its duties regarding Prevent and it was important to acknowledge the links between the prevent agenda and the monitoring and tackling of hate crime. Members were informed that the comparison of hate crime and prevent referrals did not imply a causal link between hate crime and extremism however the quarterly counter terrorism local profile had highlighted areas with a low proportion of prevent referrals in comparison to hate crime reports and was an indicator that there may be vulnerabilities to extremism. For Thurrock for 12 months ending July 2021 the rate was 0.1 prevent referrals to 7.2 hate crime reports. Some of the key points taken from the report:

- There were 5 strands of hate crime and from October 2021, Essex Police made changes in the recording of hate crime where the primary motivation of the perpetrator was directed toward the sex/gender of the victim and that gender based hate crime would now be recorded.

- The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) proposed the priority for 2022/23 remained as “reduce harm to and safeguard victims from hate crime – including sex/gender based hate crime”.
- Thurrock had seen an increase of 30% in reporting and was widely acknowledged that this remained an unreported crime and was seen as a positive by both Police and partners.
- Hate crime was monitored daily by Essex Police, the Inspector completes eight case reviews a month and these are based on hate crime and were reported fortnightly at Police tasking for any trends. The CSP monitored community tensions fortnightly through the locality action groups which also dealt with referrals in relation to victims of hate crime. Hate crime was reported bi-monthly to our executive, quarterly to our prevent board and annually to the CSP strategic board. There were no repeat locations or victims and none identified community tensions linked to this increase.
- Through the Thurrock’s Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to Essex Police there were two community challenge panels in place one in Thurrock for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community and through the IAG transgender rep, on the Essex wide challenge panel. It had been identified there was a lack of confidence in coming forward and there was a long way to go to close the gap in relation to unreported crimes/incidents. To support this Thurrock had 256 officers trained as ambassadors; nine hate incident reporting centres, hosted two street events for National Hate Crime Awareness Week including a focus on engagement with businesses in Grays supported by our hate crime ambassador Councillor Abbas; supported a pop up event on hate crime in Grays as part of Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week; hate crime officers offered a disability hate and mate crime webinar which was now being offered out to Thurrock colleges and special needs schools; worked to support learning disabled community to report and understand hate crime; hate crime overview was included within the Prevent training offer and Transliving recently delivered training to a number of officers; Fortnightly multi agency meeting where vulnerable people were victims of hate crime could be discussed. Going forward the areas of focus would be to promote and monitor the reporting of gender/sex based hate crime, continue to raise awareness within disability communities, continue to offer training to communities to include licensed taxi drivers and to act on learnings from the Challenge Panel hosted by the Trans community.

Councillor Collins thanked Michelle Cunningham for the report and referred to page 13 of the report, paragraph 2.8 and asked for a breakdown of the 634 hate crime incidents to which Michelle Cunningham stated that public order offences and violence against a person had been the top two offences over the last 12 months. Information on the district hate crimes by primary offence type over the last 12 months were shared with Members. Councillor Collins referred to “arson” offences to which was told this would be criminal damage and arson but predominantly criminal damage. Councillor Collins also referred to “non-crime” to which Members were informed that all hate incidents were recorded as a non-crime. Members discussed the hate crime generic term and how hate crimes were perceived in some detail but agreed this was a national guidance and could not be changed locally but encouraged residents

to continue to report hate crime incidents as the impact of incidents and crimes reported would enable preventative work to be undertaken appropriately.

Councillor Ralph referred to the 445 racial crimes and asked whether there was any further breakdown data on this. Michelle Cunningham stated the data was self-defined ethnicity and those recorded had not matched the victim's profile to the perpetrator. Members were informed that this was a priority for Essex Police on improving the recording of the self-defined ethnicity going forward.

Councillor Okunade referred to Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRCs) and questioned what form these would help Thurrock to which Michelle Cunningham stated the hate incident reporting centres were a place where you could report hate incidents and hate crimes, either as a victim or a witness. These centres had over the last two years been underutilised due to COVID but there were plans to revamp and promote these again, those attending training would be aware of the centres and locations but agreed to send a list of all locations to Members outside the meeting. Link provided - www.thurrock.gov.uk/hate-crime/hate-incident-reporting-centres

Councillor Collins referred to page 16 of the report, paragraph 3.2, activities to address this priority in 2021, and asked for a clarification on "mate crime". Michelle Cunningham stated this was often referred to as "cuckooing" and was when somebody who had a learning disability was befriended and exploited. A video produced by the Welsh Community Safety Partnership demonstrated mate crime very well and would forward the link to members outside the meeting. Link provided - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qduVUJEN-w>

Councillor Collins referred to page 15 of the report and asked for an exact definition of offences where violence were without injury to which Michelle Cunningham agreed to send to members outside the meeting.

Councillor Anderson asked for some clarification on how the Locality Action Groups worked. Michelle Cunningham stated that Thurrock had two locality action groups, one in the west and one in the east of the borough, who met monthly and attended by teams from the community police, housing officers, anti-social behaviour, adult safeguarding, mental health, local area coordinators and housing association. Concerns or cases were discussed, taking referrals on vulnerable victims being subjected to either hate crime or anti-social behaviour. For reporting to those agencies and sharing information wider where there was a benefit in doing so to ensure vulnerable victims received the appropriate response. The locality action group tended to be more on vulnerable victims, particularly at the moment with mental health concerns, looking at hot spot areas to identify any areas with increases in anti-social behaviour and put in place additional task and finish groups for that area, there may be a need to move the two mobile CCTVs and to monitor community tensions. She added these were set up in response to the recommendations from the Fiona Pilkington case.

Councillor Abbas referred to targeting of hate crime on social media and questioned what was being done to protect residents. Michelle Cunningham stated this was around “grooming” that was happening on social media and would involve educating parents and children of the risks of exploitation and grooming on-line. There were some good websites available to educate against hate which were constantly promoted within schools in the borough.

Councillor Ralph stated the school education packages were very active prior to COVID and questioned what plans were now in place to go back into schools to continue this good work. Michelle Cunningham stated there was a large programme on offer across both primary and secondary schools by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. One of the offers included hate crime and was constantly promoted to schools and had been delivered on-line. Members were referred to the Walk Online Roadshow available for pupils, parents and carers that highlighted some of the dangers of the internet and also advised parents how to help to keep their child safe on-line.

Councillor Collins referred to page 14 of the report, paragraph 2.9 (1) and queried whether “left-wing violence” should read left-wing extremism to which Michelle Cunningham agreed the terminology was incorrect and should have been extremism. Michelle Cunningham agreed to supply Members outside the meeting some useful information on left wing terminology.

RESOLVED

- 1. That members of the committee, through this report, assured themselves of the response to Hate Crime in Thurrock.**
- 2. That members of the committee equip themselves to raise the profile of hate crime within the communities they served and promote methods of reporting.**

20. Work Programme

Members signed off the work programme for 2021/22.

The meeting finished at 7.43 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**