



## Richmond Upon Thames Safer Neighbourhood Board

### **RICHMOND SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD**

### **CSP MEETING 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025**

### **SNB CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE AS AT 3 MARCH 2025**

1. I took up the appointment of Chairman Richmond Safer Neighbourhood Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. My Vice Chairman is Mrs Pam Fleming. Welcome to the latest in a series of updates as Chairman, Richmond Safer Neighbourhood Board; this Update is 'as at' 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.

2. The most important functions are the local ones, to ensure that all Wards have a functioning PLG; and to support NHW. The SNB will also take updates from senior MPS leaders on Borough level crime performance, and Trust and Confidence. The Board meets quarterly, and the next 2 Boards are:

- a. 3<sup>rd</sup> April, which is also our AGM. I am seeking new Members of the SNB, interest should be sent to the Secretary.
- b. 3<sup>rd</sup> July, at which we will be privileged to have as our guest Chief Superintendent Steve Lemon; and our BEM award winning PCSOs Maz Regan and Bill Smith.

### **SNB Governance, Purpose, and Composition**

3. The role of the Richmond Safer Neighbourhood Board is to bring together the Police and communities to establish local policing and crime priorities, make sure the public is involved in community safety decisions, monitor Police performance and the level of public Trust and Confidence, and to fulfil a range of important specific functions. One of the most important functions is to ensure that every ward has a functioning Police Liaison Group. The SNB also provides crime prevention advice, supports youth projects and encourages dialogue between the Police and hard-to-reach or vulnerable groups.

4. The SNB has nine functions, five of which are directly linked to policing, the other four linked to oversight and engagement mechanisms. My report is shown against each Function as follows:

5. **Ensure all wards have a Police Liaison Group and support them.** The MPS has resourced Safer Neighbourhood Teams into 8 clusters, each under an MPS Sergeant, and the 8 x Sergeants are in place. Police Liaison Groups for each Ward are organised to match the MPS clusters. There are 18 PLGs, working effectively; thank you to Maria Margiotta for taking on the Chair of St Margarets and North Twickenham PLG; and to Ray Williams for agreeing to take on a federated S Twickenham and W Twickenham, from 1 January 2025.

6. **Monitor crime performance and community confidence.**

a. Much has been learned, shared and discussed in the last quarter about the well-publicised<sup>1</sup> difference in resourcing of MPS specialist capabilities on the one hand, versus Neighbourhood policing, on the other. The small MPS teams, training, absence for leave, and abstractions continue, and the community suffers from inadequate front-line policing as a result.

b. The shortfall in MPS overall funding leads to concern about redeployed Police officers and civil staff, and the SNB will be monitoring MOPAC's plans and announcements closely, aiming to ensure that SNTs are preserved and where possible improved.

c. The SNB is aware of the ERPT provision across the SW BCU, which is stretched across the greatest distances in London; leading to longer response times. Det Ch Supt Kelland explained the latter, and the SNB supports her view that the first new major investment (when and if provided) should be made into the SW BCU ERPTs, to provide greater capability from more than 2 centres.

d. A very professional gang has been burgling residents' homes at will since late October 2024. I revisited the Casey Review of the MPS, and noted some of the key issues.

- In spite of some notable arrests, of well-known persistent burglars (of non-residential properties), this highly skilled, professional gang at the centre of a large number of **residential** burglaries in S Richmond, is still at large.
- The community is living in fear of further burglaries. This fear was exacerbated by the very poor MPS-to-community communications over the Christmas-New Year period. Community engagement since improved, with:

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<sup>1</sup> Casey Report.

- A PLG on 13th January, where the Cluster Sergeant cut a lonely figure, with no other front-line presence in the meeting, let alone anyone from the Burglary Team; where victims gave harrowing and remarkably calm accounts of their grief and losses, at the hands of the burglars who had broken into their homes.
- A community meeting on 5th February, where again there was no reassuring report from the Burglary Team, only more accounts of poor community engagement, and a lack of investigative efficiency (for example, new faces from the Burglary Team turning up to a home where there had been previous MPS visits, only to know nothing and need to start at square one; forcing the family to revisit their traumatic experiences from the start).
- A couple of community engagement sessions on 22 February, led by the Cluster Sergeant, but again with no coherent crime prevention advice which could have been provided and linked to the modus operandi of the gang.

e. Issues linked to MPS resourcing and organisation:

- Prior to 2018 each Borough Chief Superintendent had their own Burglary Team. With the BCU structure, the Burglary Team is located outside Richmond Borough, and is not under the command of the local Superintendent. Supt Chris Scammell cannot task the Burglary Team in any way; nor, it seems, has any part of the Burglary Team been even temporarily assigned to him, in the local area, to do part of their investigation.
- Across London, SW BCU has 4 Boroughs but only 2 Response teams. This is the worst provision in the Capital. It means that if there is a burglary, or other 999 call, it is likely that response will take longer. So, it is much more likely that this particular gang's modus operandi is tailored to the likely MPS response time; and each time they have been able to make good their escape before the MPS has arrived.
- The recent HM Inspectorate of Constabulary report 2024 criticised the MPS investigative performance. Burglary teams have been centralised, taken away from their Boroughs, then cut further. Burglary team Inspectors have too much workload. What has happened in response to this criticism in the report? There is no evidence of investigations teams being better resourced, nor organised in a different way.

- I have visited Twickenham Police Station several times. There is, as the Casey Report highlights, no staff canteen, just a few vending machines. Other parts of the MPS are far better resourced. Nothing illustrates better the disparity in resources, than the state of Twickenham Police Station itself.

7. **Establish policing priorities in the borough.** This system is working well, both at Ward level, where priorities are agreed at PLGs; and at SNB level where priorities are established at each SNB meeting. The MPS have had 'Burglary' as their Number One Borough level priority for at least the past 9 months, but there seems to be no practical difference in their operations, and no new resources sent in that direction.

7. **Support Neighbourhood Watch.** Support to NHW continues. MPS used to invest heavily in support to NHW, and there are gaps across the Borough. The SNB is looking at mechanisms to encourage more co-ordinators, and to provide better MPS support.

8. **Monitor complaints against borough officers.** Nothing to report.

9. **Hear and monitor complaints from victims of crime.** Nothing to report. SW BCU wishes to devote more resources to this area, so the SNB will be interested in the plan and how we can support.

10. **Provide assurance on custody visiting.** The latest annual report of the Independent Custody Visitors has been obtained, however there is no direct role for Richmond SNB because there is no Custody Suite in the Borough. A system to ensure effective liaison relevant to residents of Richmond Borough who might be held in custody at Hammersmith or Kingston could be helpful.

11. **Engage with Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs).** There is an IAG representative on the SNB and co-ordination occurs as required at SNB Executive level. The SNB takes updates from the IAG representative at each SNB meeting.

12. **Ensure the Stop and Search community monitoring function is delivered.** The SNB has a Stop and Search community monitoring function representative, and takes updates from the MPS (S&S statistics) and the S&S representative at each SNB meeting.

13. **SNB Projects in FY 24/25.** MOPAC funds every SNB across London to undertake local projects. Richmond SNB is undertaking the following projects; which are going well as we progress towards the end of the FY:

- a. **Safe Space Richmond.** Top priority, and this in partnership with the Council and MPS, SW Trains, BTP and Street Pastors has been a great success.

- b. **Streetwise – Mothers Against Muggings.** Felic Barkus and Barbara Lingle-Elliot ran their StreetW!se project to raise awareness and provide advice about how to react should a mugging be attempted against a young person.
- c. Grant to Multicultural Richmond for a **Hate Crime Awareness** event.
- d. **Crime Prevention.** The SNB provides Crime Prevention advice, both via volunteer SNB Members at events, SNBs and PLGs, and via our dedicated Crime Prevention Officer.
- e. **Youth Project.** Grant to support a SNT event in Heathfield, focused on young people.
- f. **Events supporting MPS Outreach.** SNB supported the MPS stand at the Full Of Life Fair, 27 Sep; the memorial event for PC Sid Sidhu, 24 Oct; and the final NMFL event at St Mary's University, 7 Nov.

14. **SNB Projects in FY 25/26.** The SNB will adopt local projects relevant to the Mayor's Police & Crime Plan and Priorities; especially crime reduction, crime prevention, and better support to victims. Projects may be carried out by partners (eg Safe Space Richmond) or, for example with Mothers Against Muggings, by non-salaried volunteers.

- a. **Safe Space Richmond.** Top priority, and this in partnership with the Council and MPS, SW Trains, BTP and Street Pastors has been a great success.
- b. **Streetwise – Mothers Against Muggings.** The intention is to build on success in FY 25/26. As new pupils join our schools, there will be a continuing requirement for the project to raise awareness and provide advice about how to react should a mugging be attempted against a young person. The SNB will also continue to engage to request promotion of this initiative across London.
- c. Grant to Multicultural Richmond for a **Hate Crime Awareness** event.
- d. **Crime Prevention.** The SNB will continue to provide Crime Prevention advice, via volunteer SNB Members at events, SNBs and PLGs, and via our dedicated Crime Prevention Officer.
- e. **Youth Project.** A grant will be provided to support a SNT event, focused on young people.
- f. **Events supporting MPS Outreach.** SNB will support a small number of MPS outreach events in FY 25/26, according to priorities determined by the SNT.

g. **Support to VAWG related Projects.** The SNB notes the new Richmond VAWG Strategic Group Plan, and the direct support needed at the Richmond One Stop Shop; we will determine where the gaps are, and a project that might have a big impact (against a modest outlay) and be sustainable over a number of years. Professor Maria Mellins will lead, with help from our Advisor to SNB Claire Bethel.

15. **Key dates in SNB diary for previous quarter and next quarter:**

- a. 9 Jan MOPAC Police and Crime Plan Consultation Meeting
- b. 14 Jan MetCC CF Steering Gp pre-meeting
- c. 17 Jan SNB Chair meeting with SNT Superintendent and Inspectors
- d. 21 Jan MetCC CF Steering Gp, Lambeth
- e. 28 Jan VAWG Strategic Group mtg
- f. 30 Jan **SNB Board Meeting**
- g. 4 Feb Met CC CF Mtg (In person and online)
- h. 22 Feb MPS street briefings in S Richmond
- i. 25 Feb SNB Chair meeting with Interim Chair LCP2
- j. 25 Feb MOPAC online brief – Projects for 2025/26
- k. 10 Mar Community Collaboration Event at St Mary's University
- l. 25 Mar SNB Chair meeting with MPS SNT Inspectors
- m. 26 Mar **Community Safety Partnership Board** meeting
- n. 31 Mar Closure of SNB Projects year
- o. 31 Mar Deadline for SNB Projects Funding Application for FY 25/26
- p. 1 Apr New SNB Projects year starts
- q. 3 Apr Meeting of LCP2 with MPS Commander Pavelin
- r. 3 Apr **SNB Board Meeting** and AGM
- s. 16 Apr SNB Chair bilateral with Ch Supt Steve Lemon
- t. 29 Apr VAWG Strategic Group mtg
- u. Xx Apr ~~LCP2 SGM~~ Delayed, date TBC
- v. 29 Apr VAWG Strategic Meeting
- w. 29 Apr Met CC Community Forum Steering Group Meeting
- x. 6 May Met CC Community Forum Meeting

16. Thank you for all you do, as we work together to help keep our community safe.

Best wishes,

**Roger Metcalfe**

Chairman, Richmond Safer Neighbourhood Board

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025