1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & GUIDELINES

The Chair welcomed Reverent Maria Holden and Katy Smith to their first meeting of the Safer Neighbourhood Board.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shabana Dhedhi, Martine Foley and James Phillips.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the names of the YIAG representatives being added to the list of Board Members present.

4. YIAG REPORT

Representatives from the YIAG provided an update on the work they had undertaken since the last Safer Neighbourhood Board on 30 August 2018. The update is appended to these minutes.

A representative from the YIAG asked representatives from the Metropolitan Police to provide possible dates to attend police patrols as they had been on hold for some time.

The Chair asked for further details of the online design work that the YIAG had been undertaking. A representative from the YIAG explained that young people in crises would not have time to find the appropriate phone number to ask for help and said that they find most things easier via a mobile phone application. Ms Brueseke went on to explain that the London Borough of Waltham Forest was a pilot borough for the ‘Is it ok?’ initiative which involved two workshops: one on the initial idea and another where they discussed what the application might look like.

Ms DaCosta referred to National Anti-Bullying week and asked whether the peer workshops had been delivered to primary schools as well as secondary schools and pupil referral units. Ms Brueseke confirmed that the workshops had been delivered to primary and secondary schools.

Mr Dundon asked whether the YIAG had insurance cover for their activities. Ms Brueseke said that she was unsure and would check with her colleagues at the London Borough of Southwark. She added that the YIAG were considered Council employees, so were likely covered by the Council.

5. POLICE REPORT

The Chair welcomed DCS Tucker and asked for the Board’s best wishes to be passed onto the officer who was injured on 23rd November whilst on duty.

Basic Command Unit

In response to questions from the Board in relation to the Basic Command Unit (BCU), Detective Chief Superintendent Tucker confirmed that the BCU Unit had been live for 5 weeks and response times had improved in both London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Newham. He added that the transition of moving officers had gone very well and 24 hour policing had been maintained.

DCS Tucker explained that there was a budget for 1,158 officers and that they were exceeding that number by approximately 30 officers. He said that services had been aligned to ensure that there were 999 responsibilities 24 hours a day.
DCS Tucker explained that the new BCU model provides the flexibility to allocate more officers, in particular areas known to be a hotspot for crime, such as St. James’ Street however, he confirmed that making people safe was the challenge for his officers.

DCS Tucker stated that the BCU had faced excessive violence which took on a ‘tit for tat’ nature in terms of gang violence. Officers are getting on top of the situation however confirmed that there was a need to think strategically about where the Police want to be in 5 years. DCS Tucker went on to say that violent crime had decreased and that he was confident that it would continue to do so. He referred to the importance of Police officers being confident in the community supporting them.

DCS Tucker said that as a response to the increased violence in the borough there had been an increase in Section 60s and stop and searches.

The issue of DWOs not working the same hours as their Sergeants was raised. It was noted that some officers were not happy with this situation. When DWOs attended the SNT meetings, there can be a delay in getting answers to the ward panel’s questions as they may need to consult senior officers to be able to provide accurate answers.

In response DCS Tucker stated that his goal was to make his boroughs centres of excellence for policing. He said that there was a lack of confidence in policing and that he wanted to change this. He added that many police officers did not feel confident in answering questions from the public or ward panels and that he wanted to find a way to empower his officers so that they felt confident to answer questions and to be leaders in the community.

DCS Tucker went on to explain that there was now one sergeant to 10 PCs due to budget cuts and that the sergeant would not be available in the ward at all times. He confirmed that he expected all his officers to be able to respond to queries from the community, however explained that their confidence had decreased due to the large number of incidents. DCS Tucker informed the Board of his intention to inform his officers of his expectation that they respond to queries from the public and ward panels confidently in future without the need to check with Sergeants.

Councillor Berg congratulated DCS Tucker for his 33 years in the police force. He then stated that the required badge changes as part of Newham and Waltham Forest’s amalgamation was an issue for officers. He added that if that was the only issue then DCS Tucker was doing a great job and that he was pleased to hear that police officers were starting to get support from the community. DCS Tucker explained that, for officers, their badge number formed part of their identity and said that some officers had had the same badge number for many years. He added that the change of badge numbers had been a learning point for him.

Ms Katy Smith stated that Police Community Support Officers seemed to have more confidence than PCs and suggested that something may be missing from the training that they receive. She added that recent changes in the workings of SNTs may have made attending officers nervous in relation to speaking up at such meetings or providing advice. Ms Smith confirmed that she was pleased that DCS
Tucker intended to take this issue forward. DCS Tucker said that training for police officers had changed substantially and gave the example of remote training. He said the issue of how to give police officers the confidence to answer questions and speak up at meetings was a difficult one to answer. Inspector Nixon explained that the Dedicated Ward Officer (DWO) training was being arranged. He said that he was not aware that police officers not speaking up was an issue and said he would think about how this could be addressed in their training. DCS added that he did not want his officers speaking in corporate platitudes and expressed the view that the community wanted honest answers to questions.

Councillor Te Velde agreed that it was important for the community to get behind the Police and asked what more community leaders could be doing in that respect. DCS Tucker explained that the way the Metropolitan Police was structured meant that they were dealing with less victims of crime. He suggested that leaders within the community think about what influence they might have within the community and about the messages they may want to communicate. He said that some criticism of police officers was very dated and referred to the importance of speaking honestly about the issues. DCS Tucker went on to say that there had been 150,000 less arrests in the last 5 - 6 years. He also explained that language used was an important factor and gave the example that police officer were not “my officers” they were “our officers” as they were part of the community and work hard to keep the community safe.

The Chair said that many members of the community may be keen to support the Police however that can often be very difficult. She explained that some tried to provide as much information as possible in relation to a crime and either it was slow to be passed to the correct officers or people were unable to get through to 101. DCS Tucker explained that dialling 101 was one way of contacting the Police and said that if people were struggling to get in contact he would take the information back to his superiors. He confirmed that there were other methods of contacting the Police, including CrimeStoppers and to contact the local DWO.

After the Chair stated that the numbers for DWOs were not on the website, DCS Tucker stated that he would look into the issue. The Chair went on to say that the message from DWOs was that it was fine to report issues via email, however the Chair explained that some DWOs had advised not to report issues via email as the DWO may be on 3 day rest periods and the issue may not get picked up promptly enough. DCS Tucker said that if the issue was urgent they should dial 999.

It was discussed that there were mixed messages being received from DWOs regarding contacting the teams via phone and email. With some SNTs being happy for members of the public to email and leave voice mail messages and others having a voicemail message that specifically stated members of the public should not leave voicemail. It was suggested that it gave the impression that they did not want to engage.

Councillor Berg referred to the fact that new GDPR regulations had been introduced and, as a result, the Metropolitan Police must have lost substantial information. Inspector Nixon confirmed that they had emailed individuals to find out if they had any objections to their information being kept which he described as quite an
onerous task. He confirmed that they did not have permission to keep all the information.

**St. James Street**

The Chair congratulated the police on the work that has taken place around St James St to tackle the anti-social behaviour and crime in the area. However, she gave the view that more communication about operation Langdale was required and that there needed to be a more coordinated approach with the various partners and community.

Inspector Nixon confirmed that there had been a large number of arrests in that area and said that all ward teams were being asked to be more active around Twitter and other social media feeds with good news stories. He stated that more work was required on publicising good news stories and to change the mind sets of some PCs in relation to sharing information.

It was noted that there was a community event in St James Street to discuss crime and ASB organised by the Big Local and local partners, however registration was required in advance and there appeared to be limited publicity about the meeting. This led to people not knowing about the event or not being able to attend. There was a feeling that people should not have to give their contact details in advance of the meeting as this gave the impression that they were being vetted before attending. This has been fed back to the police and the council.

**Section 60s**

In response to questions from the Board, Inspector Nixon confirmed that there had been an increase in stop and searches since the merger of Police services between the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Newham and added that there had been efforts made to try and improve officers’ confidence when dealing with stop and searches. Inspector Nixon went on to say that there had been 22% rate of positive outcomes over the last month and confirmed that the supervision rate for stop and searches had increased.

Ms DaCosta stated that she had been told that stop and searches would be increased as a result of the increased crime in the borough. She added that she was told that Section 60s were only used when a serious incident(s) had happened, such as a murder. Inspector Nixon confirmed that the last Section 60 was as a result of a recent threat that the Police became aware of. He added that wholesale stop and searches was a tactic to try and reduce individuals carrying weapons. He conceded that stop and searches would not solve many of the issues, however would help mitigate risk in the short term. Inspector Nixon explained that stop and searches helped the Police to identify individuals who they could take proper action against in the future.

6. **IMPLEMENTING OUR RESPONSE TO THE LSBU GAN GS REVIEW (PRESENTATION)**
Alistair Macorkindale, Head of Community Safety, provided a presentation to the Board, the slides of which are appended to these minutes.

A representative from the YIAG referred to the intention to provide support to the vulnerable and pointed out that young people were often in a good position to identify vulnerable young people. The representative then noted that the hotspots for crime were also the busiest areas in the borough. Mr Macorkindale stated that if an area was busy then there were natural guardians present as well as surveillance. He pointed out that drug deals often took place in busy areas to mask the activity.

Councillor Te Velde referred to the statistics in the ‘public perceptions’ slide and asked what age group the figures were based on. She said that if young people were not included then they should be targeted. Mr Macorkindale confirmed that the statistics had been collected from the Police and Public Attitudes survey which was for adults.

Ms DaCosta pointed out that some of the gangs had moved from the area, but many returned. She added that the new station had just provided a new area for people to sit and many used the area to sit and drink alcohol. Mr Macorkindale stated that residents had raised this issue at a recent community meeting and said that many residents had sought assistance from Social Care organisations or the Police.

Mr Dundon said that it would take time to reverse the situation and said that a global approach was needed. He also gave the view that redevelopment of the High Street would help improve the situation.

7. PROJECT FUNDING UPDATE

The Chair confirmed that MOPAC has accepted the Board’s recommendations in relation to project funding applications. She added that at the next meeting there would be update on individual projects.

8. SAFETYNET FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Board noted that the priority focus report being considered at the SafetyNet meeting on 4 March 2019 would be ‘Anti-Social Behaviour’. The Chair asked that it be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Board noted the date of the next meeting – 25 February 2019.

The meeting closed at 9.02 pm

Chair’s Signature

Date