

Present:

Councillor Stutt, Chair
P. McEvoy
P. Richards
S. Dooley

Absent:

Councillor Kooner,
Vice Chair
R. Rai

Staff Present:

A. Ordeman, Director, Police Support Services, Corporate Services
P. Sanderson, Manager, Social Infrastructure & Community Investments (SICI)
B. Aasebo, Community Safety Manager, SICI
T. Ahmad, Senior Project and Policy Lead, SICI
M. Nikolina, Business Service Analyst, SICI
B. Edwards, Assistant Commissioner, Surrey RCMP
L. Thomas, Fire Chief, Surrey Fire Service
S. Chand, Legislative Services Coordinator

Guests:

S. Muir, Chief Officer, Metro Vancouver Transit Police
E. Gibson, Manager, Toxic Drug Response and Priority Populations
J. Conway-Brown, Harm Reduction Lead, Toxic Drug Response and Priority Populations
C. Thomson, Police Mental Health Outreach Team, Surrey RCMP
F. Moon, Drug Section, Surrey RCMP
T. Baker, Fraser Health Car 67 Nurse

A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was
meeting of October 23, 2024, be adopted.

Moved by P. McEvoy
Seconded by P. Richards
That the agenda of the Public Safety Committee

Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – September 25, 2024

It was
meeting of September 25, 2024, be adopted.

Moved by P. McEvoy
Seconded by P. Richards
That minutes of the Public Safety Committee

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Transit System Security**

S. Muir, Chief Officer, Metro Vancouver Transit Police

The Chief Officer provided an overview presentation of the transportation network officers that are deployed by Metro Vancouver Transit Police. The service area is comprised of two separate divisions with six geographic community service areas that are patrolled by Transit Police. Highlights included information on the role of the community safety officer and specialty teams that are developed to ensure the safety of transit riders throughout the Lower Mainland.

In response to questions from the Committee, the delegation provided the following information:

- While there has been an increase in weapon related incidents over the past year, Transit Police has projects in place to help manage these types of situations to ensure public safety. It was noted that the Transit Police enhanced their presence by deploying Community Safety Officers frequently on-site, as many individuals have different perceptions of safety.

2. Toxic Drug Poisoning Crisis

E. Gibson, Manager and J. Conway-Brown, Harm Reduction Lead, Toxic Drug Response and Priority Populations, Fraser Health

The Harm Reduction Lead team members provided a presentation on drug toxicity since the public health emergency 2016. Highlights of the presentation included:

- As of April 2024, 14,852 people have lost their lives from unregulated drug supply and has become the leading cause of death for people in British Columbia ages 10-59. Unregulated drug toxicity deaths exceeded the combined deaths from motor vehicle, suicide and homicide.
- Drug use continues to be high worldwide. In 2021, 1 in every 17 people aged 15-64 in the world had used a drug in the past 12 months. The estimated number of users grew from 240 million in 2011 to 296 million in 2021, which is a 23 percent increase, partly due to population growth.
- Fraser Health provides a multifaceted approach to people who use substances, as there is no one solution that fits all. There are many resources to help an individual get connected to a supportive community and programs in place to help navigate their mental health challenges. For example, the Fraser Health Substance Use Services Access Team (SUSAT) provides navigation support for addiction services. Additionally, Fraser Health has established partnerships with Surrey Fire and Police to collaboratively enhance the drug and mental health wellness support available to the community.

3. **Surrey RCMP Response to Mental Health and Illicit Substances**
C. Thomson, Police Mental Health Outreach Team and F. Moon, Drug Section, Surrey RCMP

The Surrey RCMP Police Mental Health Outreach Team member provided an update on the current situation regarding mental health and illicit substances in Surrey. This team was established in 2018 and consists of four-unit teams, each with four to five constables. Additionally, information was shared on the Car 67 program that runs daily and community partnerships and programs in place to support members experiencing homelessness and other complex mental health or drug related challenges.

Surrey RCMP Drug Section member provided an overview of the current drug supply and the prevalence of fentanyl, benzodiazepines, xylazine and other stimulants that have been causing overdoses. It was noted that the drugs today tend to have a higher potency and a lower price than in previous years.

4. **Involuntary Treatment of Psychiatric Patients**
Dr. P. McEvoy, Public Safety Committee

Dr. P. McEvoy, Public Safety Committee member, provided information on mental health illnesses and other psychiatric disorders associated with substance use. Key highlights included statistics indicating that individuals with a mental illness have a 50-80 percent likelihood of using substances. An overview was also provided of the BC Mental Health act, explaining how a doctor certifies a patient in Surrey. It was emphasized that mental health patients often lack the necessary support for both short term and long-term care.

Discussion ensued on how the insufficient resources available impact the unhoused population suffering from a mental illness and individuals who have challenges being supported by their family members.

Additionally, members discussed challenges and frustrations encountered at the front end when an individual is brought to Surrey Memorial Hospital with a mental health issue. It was noted that it takes a significant amount of time for a person to be assessed and that doctors often discharge patients too quickly. This raised an important concern about tertiary care and the options for patients that require a medium level of care.

D. OTHER BUSINESS

This section had no items to consider.

E. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, November 27, 2024.

F. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by P. McEvoy
Seconded by P. Richards
That the Public Safety Committee meeting

be adjourned.

Carried

The Public Safety Committee adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli
City Clerk and Director Legislative Services

Councillor Stutt, Chairperson