

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 18 April 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor R Brown (Chair)
Councillor A Andrews
Councillor J Clifford (Deputy Chair)
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor R Singh

Other Members: Councillors P Akhtar, G Duggins, J Mutton and P Seaman

Employees:

N Daley, People Directorate
L Gaulton, People Directorate
C Hickin, Place Directorate
G Holmes, Place Directorate
L Knight, Place Directorate
A West, Place Directorate

Other representative: Inspector Katherine Sibley, West Midlands Police

Apologies: Councillors N Akhtar and D Gannon

Public Business

77. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

78. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th March, 2018 were signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

As this was the last meeting of the current municipal year, the Chair, Councillor Brown, placed on record his thanks to the members, officers and members of the public for all the support given to the Committee and the Scrutiny Boards during the course of the year.

79. Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023

The Committee considered a briefing note of Liz Gaulton, Acting Director of Public Health and Craig Hickin, Head of Environmental Services which sought approval

for the draft Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2018-2023, a copy of which was set out at an appendix to the report. The draft action plan in support of the strategy was tabled at the meeting. Inspector Katherine Sibley, West Midlands Police attended the meeting in respect of this item along with Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, Councillor Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership, Councillor John Mutton, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources and Councillor P Seaman.

The briefing note highlighted that domestic abuse had been identified as a priority for Coventry, with the annual cost of domestic abuse in the city estimated to be £34.8m. Details of the number of reported domestic abuse crimes was included.

The strategy had been drafted by a multi-agency working group and it was anticipated that the strategy and a wider needs analysis would inform recommissioning of the domestic abuse services. The action plan would support implementation of the strategy.

The strategy covered domestic abuse including honour based violence and forced marriage which were both defined as forms of domestic violence and abuse. The strategy acknowledged that while anyone could experience domestic abuse, there were certain characteristics that could increase a person's risk, its effects, and/or create barriers to accessing help and support. The strategy acknowledged that whilst in general women predominantly experienced abuse, there were other characteristics which could create barriers to accessing help and support. The following groups were identified as falling within these categories: children; older people; adults with care and support needs, including disabled people; men; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender; black, Asian minority ethnic and refugees; and people with mental illness and /or substance misuse problems.

The Committee noted that the strategy had been informed by engagement with a wide number of stakeholders. A co-design event had been held with professional stakeholders to discuss priorities, identify any gaps and suggest how the strategy could address them. The key issues raised were detailed. Service users and statutory and voluntary sector stakeholders were invited to complete surveys to identify their most important priorities. Targeted engagement with young people aged 15-18 had taken place through the Positive Youth Foundation by convening a focus group, while the adults with care and support needs were surveyed through Grapevine.

The following priorities areas were to be taken forward through the strategy and had been developed using the Government's Contest model:

- Prepare – the development of a strong governance and service commission structure to provide high quality, equitable services that were shaped around the needs of victims, ensuring that their voices were heard and responded to
- Prevent – a long term approach to improve awareness, understanding and early identification of abuse at all levels of society. Victims would be empowered to report and staff would be given the skills and confidence to support them. Interventions tailored to victims at all levels of risk with a range of needs would help to break the intergenerational cycle of abuse and minimise repeat victimisation

- Protect – there would be effective information sharing and referral pathways between key agencies, breaking down organisational barriers to ensure victims of abuse were identified and protected. The safety of victims, and that of their children (where relevant) would be paramount. Victims would be supported to access safe and appropriate accommodation and safeguarding procedures would be robustly implemented to ensure that children and vulnerable adults were protected, and that the voice of the child was always heard
- Pursue – an approach centred on achieving justice and positive outcomes for victims, including reductions in offending. There would be better understanding of perpetrator risk to support the use of court and out of court disposals so that they were held accountable for their actions and appropriately supported to understand and change their offending behaviour.

The report set out the outcomes for each of the four priority areas including how the outcomes would be achieved.

The Committee noted the membership of the Domestic Abuse Working Group. It was proposed that the Working Group would become a Steering Group to support the recommissioning of the Domestic Abuse Service in 2018 and to implement the Strategy's action plan. The Committee also noted the other local Boards where the strategy was to be or had been submitted for approval. A launch event was to take place on 13th June, 2018.

Members raised a number of issues in response to the briefing note and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- When considering the holistic approach to the strategy, why had FGM not been included along with references to substance abuse
- In light of the importance of front line early intervention, was it the intention to have a domestic violence worker in each of the family hubs
- Was there any involvement/ links to the Border Agency
- Concerns about the use of old data
- The ability of the Committee to be able to influence the strategy and action plan
- Further information about the index of multiple deprivation map of Coventry
- Who would have responsibility/ ownership to ensure progress with the action plan
- How would the findings of the current Government consultation on Domestic Abuse feed into the Strategy
- The suggestion that more emphasis be placed on economic abuse
- The involvement of Domestic Abuse Agencies such as CRASAC in the development of the strategy
- The suggestion that the strategy should include that children be heard and 'valued'
- In relation to the communication strategy, consideration should be given to the use of the different languages spoken in the city and to make use of local radio stations for promoting the strategy
- The suggestion that Faith Groups be involved with the outreach work concerning the strategy

- A concern about the financial implications associated with the strategy and whether consideration had been given to bringing services in-house to save on costs
- The involvement of perpetrators and their victims in the development of the strategy and the importance of taking their views into account
- Concerns that there wouldn't be sufficient finance available to support all the actions arising from the strategy
- If consideration had been given to looking at different initiatives used in Europe for addressing domestic abuse
- A request for a Member's Seminar in 12 months to provide an update on progress with the implementation of the Strategy.

RESOLVED that:

(1) Subject to the recommendations set out in (3) below, the Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023 be endorsed.

(2) The draft Coventry Abuse Strategy Action Plan 2018-2023 be noted.

(3) The following recommendations raised by members be reported back to the Coventry Community Safety Partnership Board:

a) That the importance of early intervention and the issues of substance abuse and economic abuse be included in the strategy

b) Officers be requested to engage with the Border Agency regarding the Domestic Abuse Strategy, in particular in relation to forced marriage and FGM

c) Consideration be given to the inclusion of more up to date data within the strategy

d) Consideration be given as to how the findings of the current Government consultation on domestic abuse will feed into the strategy

e) The strategy be updated to include that children should be heard and 'valued'

f) Consideration to be given to data benchmarking to ensure that progress with the strategy can be monitored

g) The involvement of Faith Groups be built into the Strategy Action Plan

h) As the strategy evolves more account be taken of the views of perpetrators and the victims and survivors of domestic abuse

i) Officers be requested to investigate additional initiatives for addressing domestic abuse used in Europe

j) Consideration be given to the communication strategy, in particular to the use of different languages spoken in the city and to make better use of local radio stations for promoting the strategy

k) The Strategy to list the 30 organisations who attended the networking event to help in the development of the strategy.

(4) A briefing note be sent to Councillor J Mutton, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources and the Chair, Councillor Brown, detailing the financial implications associated with the implementation of the strategy including consideration of the option of bringing services in-house to save on costs.

(5) A briefing note be sent to Members providing additional information on the index of multiple deprivation map of Coventry.

(6) Members to be invited to the launch event for the strategy to be held on 13th June, 2017.

(7) Arrangements to be put in place for a Member's Seminar to be held in 12 months on the Coventry Domestic Abuse Strategy.

80. Outstanding Issues

The Committee were informed that all outstanding issues had been included in the work programme.

81. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2017/2018 and Review of the Year

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Members and Elections Team Manager, the purpose of which was to review the work of the Committee during the course of the 2017/18 municipal year and to identify any priorities or issues for consideration when planning for next year's scrutiny work programme. A copy of the final work programme was attached at an appendix to the report.

The Committee gave consideration to what had worked most effectively and what should be taken into account when planning arrangements for the next year.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The work programme be noted.

(2) Officers be requested to ensure that future reports/ presentations are circulated with the corresponding agenda in advance of meetings providing members with the necessary preparation time.

(3) Homelessness to be raised as a future item for the Committee's work programme for 2018/19.

82. Any Other Items of Public Business - Scrutiny of Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, which was tabled at the meeting, and informed the Committee of the recommendations from

the Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board (3) at their meeting on 11th April, 2018 when they considered an item on the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP).

At their recent meeting the Board considered an item on the LEP and the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub. Members questioned officers on the work of the LEP as well as on accountability of the decisions made about public money. Whilst recognising that LEPs had been established specifically to be led by the private sector, there was a concern about the lack of oversight by local authorities on the decisions, especially when involving funding. As this was a sub-regional issue, the Board had recommended:

- (i) That Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee lead on CWLEP scrutiny for the Council.
- (ii) The Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to work alongside CWLEP officers and scrutiny officers to co-ordinate a holistic approach to CWLEP scrutiny across the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region.

The Committee discussed the option of inviting Jonathan Browning, Chair, and Martin Yardley, Chief Executive, to a future meeting to providing an overview of the CWLEP.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to lead on CWLEP scrutiny for the Council.**
- (2) The Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to work alongside CWLEP officers and scrutiny officers to co-ordinate a holistic approach to CWLEP scrutiny across the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region.**
- (3) Jonathan Browning and Martin Yardley to be invited to a future meeting of the Committee in the new municipal year.**

(Meeting closed at 11.20 am)