

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.30 am on
Wednesday, 3 April 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor T Khan (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor A Andrews
Councillor J Clifford (Deputy Chair)
Councillor C Miks (Substitute for Councillor McNicholas)
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor R Singh
Councillor K Taylor

Other Members Present: Councillors R Akhtar, R Lakha

Other Representatives: Inspector M Byron, West Midlands Police

Employees (by Directorate):

People: L Gaulton, P Hargrave, C Ryder

Place: S Bennett, G Holmes

Apologies: Councillors R Ali, A Khan, J McNicholas, G Ridley

Public Business

57. Declarations of Interest

In relation to Minutes 59 and 60 below, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee noted that Councillor M Mutton was a member of Steering Groups for both Domestic Violence and Femal Genital Mutilation.

In relation to Minute 64 below, Councillor N Akhtar indicated that he had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Whitefriars Housing Group. However, as the item was only for noting, he remained in the meeting for its consideration.

58. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February, 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

59. Modernising Domestic Abuse Services and Sexual Violence Services

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which detailed progress made against the Domestic Abuse Action Plan and on the commissioning process. The Briefing Note outlined

the services that will be provided under the new contracts and updated on the proposed key performance indicators and contract monitoring arrangements.

Over the last 6 months, Public Health, assisted by colleagues in procurement, have progressed the commissioning process for Domestic Abuse Services and Sexual Violence Services. The services were divided into the following four lots, with lots being awarded to the providers indicated:-

- Lot 1 – Victim and Child Services for information, advice and community based support - Coventry Haven, Panahghar and Relate (consortium bid)
- Lot 2 – Victim Supported Accommodation – Valley House
- Lot 3 – Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service – Coventry Haven, Panahghar and Relate (consortium bid)
- Lot 4 – Sexual Violence Support Service – CRASAC

Each lot will be let on the basis of a five year contract, commencing on 1 July 2019, with two, two year extensions (if required), meaning that providers could potentially be in place for a total of nine years.

The Briefing Note highlighted the following key differences between the existing and new domestic abuse services:-

- A “No Wrong Door” approach between all providers replacing the previous single point of contact
- Better evaluation and data collection
- Longer contract with a greater focus on continuous service improvement
- Greater focus on access for under-represented groups
- Greater focus on prevention
- Greater focus on a family approach – supporting improved relationships between the non-abusing parent and affected children

There are close interdependencies between all three of the domestic abuse contracts and it is intended that a monthly allocation meeting will be held between the City Council (including public health and children’s social care), police and providers of the three contracts. The purpose of this Panel will be to manage access to children’s counselling and ensure parallel support is provided to victims of people accessing the perpetrator service and ensure appropriate links are in place with police and social care. The domestic abuse contracts will be managed using the following three sets of data, details of which were contained in the report:-

- Outcomes data
- Performance data
- Activity data

The Briefing Note also provided an update on the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023, launched in Summer 2018 with a supporting action plan, which has made

significant progress under the four themes: Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue. In particular, the Committee noted a core competency framework which has been developed and which sets out the training levels for all members of staff and elected members.

The Briefing Note also highlighted the following key differences between the existing and new contract for sexual violence counselling:-

- Using technology to increase access to service and provide other options for service users who are unable or unwilling to travel
- Greater focus on prevention
- More use of befriending/mentoring and support groups to assist victims/survivors to continue their recovery journey
- Greater emphasis on assessing the service user journey to recovery, moving them on to less intensive support as soon as they are ready to maximise the available resource

The Briefing Note indicated that the Key Performance indicators for the sexual violence service were based on a framework redeveloped alongside the service specifications and that there would be a focus on the following:-

- Maximising the number of available one to one counselling slots which are utilised
- Higher levels of prevention/education/awareness activity
- Demonstrable improvements in emotional/mental wellbeing of clients using the counselling service
- Minimising the time that clients have to wait before they receive one to one counselling
- Provision of groups that can offer informal peer support

The Committee questioned officers on aspects of the Briefing Note including:-

- Work done in schools on these issues
- The availability and accessibility of information and support
- Break clauses in the contracts
- Work undertaken with GPs and surgeries and, in particular, the take up of the Increasing Referrals to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme
- Training for elected members
- The training and checking of counselling mentors

The Committee also sought and were given assurances in relation to the collection and sharing of data.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:-

- 1) Notes and supports the contents of the Briefing Note**
- 2) Recommends to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities that it be mandatory for all elected members to complete Level 1 training in Domestic Abuse**

- 3) **Requests that a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Clinical Commissioning Group urging them to promote the take up of the Increasing Referrals to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme by all GP practices and that the Committee's support for the take up of the IRIS programme by GP practices be highlighted to the Health and Well Being Board.**

60. **Female Genital Mutilation**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which provided an update regarding work undertaken to prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Coventry.

The Briefing Note provided background information in relation to FGM, which has been illegal in the UK since 1985. In 2003, the Female Genital Mutilation Act tightened this law to criminalise FGM being carried out on UK citizens overseas. Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison but prosecutors had until recently struggled to secure any convictions. This year saw the first successful prosecution for FGM in the UK and details of the landmark case were contained in the Briefing Note, has highlighted the need to continue to take a zero tolerance approach to the practice in order to safeguard and protect women and girls.

Coventry City Council led a social media campaign to raise awareness of FGM which was supported by members of the Coventry FGM Steering Group and the Safeguarding Boards. The Steering Group is led by Public Health and comprises of key stakeholders such as Health, Midwifery, LSCB and the Voluntary Sector. This Group have been developing a Strategic Statement regarding FGM to make clear the position of the Council and its wider networks on FGM. A final draft will be presented to the Harm Abuse Reduction Partnership (HARP) for agreement on behalf of the Police and Crime Board.

LSCB are also keen to champion the topic and have produced a One Minute Guide to FGM which contains accessible, straight forward information and support to practitioners who may be working with families and young children at potential risk. The guide will be made available at the end of May 2019. FGM training is currently available via the Safeguarding Board. It is delivered annually and has recently been updated to reflect the current picture.

The Briefing Note also detailed the current position in relation to the number of women and young girls it is estimated have undergone and are subjected to FGM worldwide and nationally. In Coventry between April 2017 and March 2018 NHS data confirms that there were 35 newly recorded individuals where FGM was identified or a procedure for FGM was undertaken. This number was down from

previous years, which was in line with police data in relation to the total referrals to West Midlands Police for Coventry residents.

Coventry Haven Woman's Aid continue to offer a service to local women and children who are victims or at risk of FGM. Services provided include refuge accommodation, training programmes for professionals and local communities and a trained network of community champions. Since April 2018 Haven have supported 70 new women who have disclosed FGM, an increase on the previous year (45). Ten new community champions have been recruited and fully trained, coming from 10 different countries where FGM is a known issue. Through one to one support provided the service estimates that it has supported in preventing up to 89 cases of FGM, based on the number of service users with female children who have rejected the practice.

The petals web app, created by Coventry University and endorsed by the NSPCC, continues to be publicised and used as a resource for both professionals and the community, providing up to date information and advice in Coventry and beyond. Coventry City Council has recently secured c£10,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in the form of a one-off grant and the Coventry FGM Steering Group will shortly be asked to determine the best way in which this grant can be used.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers and Inspector Mike Bryon, West Midlands Police (who attended the meeting and provided additional information in relation to the work undertaken by West Midlands Police) regarding this matter. Issues covered included:-

- West Midlands Police activity in Coventry on this issue and the role of the Police in such cases
- Work undertaken in the community to prevent FGM and the success of community champions
- Issues relating to the recent successful FGM prosecution and difficulties experienced in evidence gathering in such cases
- Data collection and data sharing between partners

In considering this issue, the Scrutiny Board paid tribute to the late Councillor Alison Gingell who had championed the Council's and Coventry's campaign against FGM.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee support all of the work undertaken in relation to the prevention of Female Genital Mutilation, as outlined in the Briefing Note and reported at the meeting.

61. Civic Visit to Dresden - 11 to 15 February, 2019

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Lord Mayor, Councillor J Blundell, which detailed a civic visit to Dresden from 11 to 15 February, 2019.

RESOLVED that the report be endorsed and that the positive outcomes of the visit be noted.

62. Trade and Investment Delegation to Lille, France

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which detailed a trade and investment delegation to Lille, northern France in June, 2018.

RESOLVED that the report be endorsed and that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee encourages and supports visits to Coventry from potential inward investors.

63. Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

Councillor J Clifford provided an update at the meeting on meetings attended, including the Health Task and Finish Group, which was noted.

64. Annual Report on the Work of Outside Bodies - Whitefriars Housing Group

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of Councillor R Lakha, Lead Member, which detailed the work by Whitefriars Housing Group over the preceding twelve months.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the City Council be recommended to continue to work with Whitefriars Housing Group through its representatives and other formal and informal ways to meet its objectives.

65. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2018/19

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered their Work Programme for the current Municipal Year.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted.

66. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.30 pm)