

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 16 April 2014

Present:

Members: Councillor C Fletcher (Chair)
Councillor Clifford (Deputy Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor R Sandy
Councillor T Skipper
Councillor K Taylor
Councillor S Thomas

Other Members: Councillor P Townshend

Other Representatives: Jacqueline Barnes, Coventry and Rugby CCG
Claire Bell, West Midlands Police
Jon Waterman, West Midlands Fire Service

Employees:

S Brake, People Directorate
R Howe, People Directorate
L Knight, Resources Directorate
A Parks, People Directorate
M Watson, People Directorate
A West, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillors F Abbott, L Kelly and A Lucas

Public Business

79. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

80. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th March, 2014 were signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 74/13 headed 'Welfare Reform', the Committee were informed that the Department of Works and Pensions had been contacted with a request for information and this would be circulated to members as soon as it was available. The request for a further report would be included in the Committee's work programme for the new municipal year.

81. Crime and Nuisance Performance 2013/14

The Committee noted a summary of Coventry's recorded crime performance for the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March, 2014. The report provided a comparison with the same period for 2012/13. Representatives of the Coventry Police and

Crime Board attended the meeting for the consideration of this item and for the items contained in Minutes 82 and 83 below.

The Committee were reminded that responding to Community Safety issues was a statutory responsibility for a number of agencies including the local authority. They worked in partnership to prevent and detect crime and disorder and prevent reoffending. This was achieved through a Community Safety Partnership, whose work was governed by the Coventry Police and Crime Board.

Chief Superintendent Claire Bell, West Midlands Police, introduced the crime performance figures for the year which showed that total recorded crime had fallen by 1.1%. Significant reductions included burglary dwelling offences down by 15.5% and anti-social behaviour reduced by 15.6%. There had been increases in the number of domestic violence and domestic non crime offences. Information was provided on the initiatives being undertaken to help to reduce levels of crime. The challenge was now to sustain the improvements already achieved.

Members questioned the representatives and officers on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- The impact that the weather could have on offences being committed
- Concerns that the incidents of anti-social behaviour were lower because residents had given up reporting offences
- How engaged were the budget hotels following the conflict resolution training
- Details about child exploitation gangs operating from the city
- Further information about why less crimes were happening
- The levels of under reporting of crimes
- An assurance that the police figures were comparing like with like and that there hadn't been changes to criteria
- The approaches being taken to deal with drug dealers
- The importance of prevention work concerning cases of sexual violence which could have a big impact on a victim's mental health.

82. **Strategic Assessment 2014/2015: Early Overview and Findings**

The Committee considered a report of the Coventry Partnership and received a presentation by the Head of Community Safety providing an early overview and findings from the Coventry Strategic Assessment 2014/2015. Councillor Townshend, Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) and Chair of the Police and Crime Board attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The Strategic Assessment was a statutory annual document produced by the Community Safety Partnership. The assessment was based on a wide range of data which was analysed in the context of wider social trends and knowledge sought from a range of professionals and agencies. The document sought to understand trends within crime and disorder and determine/understand relationships between wider social issues impacting on community safety.

The assessment allowed the Community Safety Partnership to link in with other partnerships in the city to achieve greater reductions in other areas of work such

as high unemployment; dependency on benefits; low education attainment; and poor health and well-being.

Issues that had been identified had been highlighted in previous assessments and reinforced the need to prioritise areas such as domestic and sexual violence and abuse; anti-social behaviour; and hate crime and burglary. Attention was drawn to the additional focus this year on sexual exploitation and vulnerability which had been included in the Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan, Minute 83 below refers.

Particular reference was made to the different approaches for dealing with crime and nuisance, not just enforcement.

Members questioned the representatives and officers on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Details about the success of a recent case study concerning a nuisance neighbour and drug use
- How crime trends in Coventry differ from trends elsewhere
- How Coventry residents could reduce their risk of burglary and vehicle crime by securing their properties/vehicles
- The differences in perceptions of likely offenders and victims in Coventry compared to other cities
- The options to target pimps, abusers and customers to help vulnerable street workers who suffer sexual and domestic abuse
- The importance of partnership working to be able to deal with the issues surrounding sexual and domestic abuse
- The problems for young people experiencing domestic violence, abuse, crime, drugs and alcohol in family situations which could become learnt behaviour and the response of youth workers to support these vulnerable young people
- Responsibility for safeguarding
- The importance of data sharing between partners and the barriers to data sharing
- The option to have a front line service ready to deliver for victims of domestic violence and abuse
- How partnership working can enable preventative works to be undertaken.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The findings of the latest Strategic Assessment be noted.

(2) The preventative work undertaken by partners on the Coventry Police and Crime Board be noted and organisations be encouraged to share this knowledge with partners.

(3) Following the discussions with the partnership representatives present, the Committee strongly support the recommendation from the City Council meeting on 10th April, 2014 concerning the setting up of a National Information Database and all partner organisations be encouraged to share information.

(4) The Committee note the alternative approaches for reporting and dealing with crime and all Councillors be encouraged to report issues in their Ward to the appropriate agencies, also encouraging their constituents to report incidents.

83. The Draft Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2014/15

The Committee considered the draft Coventry Local Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2014/15. The plan had been produced following a diverse consultation process involving the communities of the city and had been approved by the local Police and Crime Board. The plan had been strengthened by using evidence from the Annual Strategic Assessment.

The Plan detailed the areas that mattered most to the community and, working in partnership, efforts would be focused to tackle these issues. Agencies would focus on supporting vulnerable people and victims, improving places disproportionately affected by crime and nuisance whilst tackling offenders. The strategic aims were set out along with how the plan would be delivered.

RESOLVED that the priorities for inclusion in the Coventry Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2014-15 be endorsed.

84. Report Back on the Work of Outside Bodies

The Committee considered five reports outlining the work of the following organisations over the preceding twelve months, together with details of attendance by the City Council representatives on those organisations:-

- (i) Voluntary Action Coventry
- (ii) Coventry Partnership
- (iii) Local Government Association General Assembly
- (iv) West Midlands Joint Committee
- (v) Coventry and Warwickshire Local Transport Body.

RESOLVED that the City Council at their Annual General Meeting continue to nominate representatives to the following Outside Bodies:-

- (i) Voluntary Action Coventry**
- (ii) Coventry Partnership**
- (iii) Local Government Association General Assembly**
- (iv) West Midlands Joint Committee**
- (v) Coventry and Warwickshire Local Transport Body.**

85. Outstanding Issues

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been included in the work programme for the current year, Minute 86 below refers.

86. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2013/2014

The Committee noted the completed work programme for 2013/14. Items still to be considered would be prioritised for inclusion in the Committee's work programme for the new municipal when planning for 2014/15.

87. Review of 2013/14 Scrutiny Activity

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that reviewed the work of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee carried out during the course of the 2013/14 municipal year and sought to identify priorities or issues for consideration when planning 2014/15 work programme.

The Committee had met on ten occasions during the year and the work programme had been used to prioritise issues for consideration. There was an acknowledgement that some issues were not covered during the year and some areas of Cabinet Member portfolios were not addressed.

RESOLVED that the review of activity be noted and, for the next municipal year, the Committee be provided with opportunities outside of the normal Committee meetings to allow time for detailed questions and discussions.

88. Any Other Items of Public Business - 2013/2014

The Chair, Councillor Fletcher thanked members for all their support and contributions during the current municipal year. Members placed on record their appreciation for all the work undertaken by Councillor Fletcher.

(Meeting closed at 12.05 pm)