

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 26 April 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor R Lancaster (Chair)
Councillor G Crookes
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor R Singh (Deputy Chair)

Cabinet Members: Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities
Councillor R Ali, Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport
Councillor K Caan, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport
Councillor J Mutton, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

Employees By Directorate:-

People: G Faherty, L Gaulton, R Limb, E Mc Dermott,
R MacKenzie Wilson, L Nagle

Place: S Bennett, G Holmes, P Jennings

Others Present: C Dyer, Mentoring West Midlands
K Evans, Fry Housing
R Kaur Gakhal, Safe and Supported Partnership
S Marsden, Fry Housing
Inspector G Osbourne, West Midlands Police
Martina Palmer
S Parkes, Barnardos
C Pike, Valley House
Detective Constable G Squires, West Midlands Police
E Yates, Coventry Haven

Apologies: Councillors Blundell and Gannon

Public Business

78. Female Genital Mutilation

The Committee considered a Briefing Note which provided an update on progress made to tackle Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Coventry. The Briefing Note provided an update on the prevalence of FGM in Coventry and progress against

the recommendations endorsed by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in 2015, which were detailed in the Briefing Note.

The Briefing Note provided background information on FGM, including its definition, as defined by the World Health Organisation; the impact it can have, both mentally and physically on girls and women; and the reasons given for practising FGM. The results of a survey which estimates the prevalence of FGM in England and Wales, together with data from University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire showing the numbers of women affected by FGM accessing midwifery services, were detailed in the Briefing Note. The Committee noted that the high percentage of FGM referrals to West Midlands Police during 2014-15 may be due to the well-established referral processes and reporting procedures in Coventry.

In June 2015, Coventry City Council's Public Health Team commissioned Coventry Haven (In partnership with CRASAC and Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid) to provide a specialist FGM service to tackle FGM in Coventry. This service is the main vehicle through which partners are working to eliminate FGM in Coventry and through which the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in 2015 are being delivered. Work of West Midlands Police on this matter was detailed in an appendix.

The Briefing Note detailed progress made on the following recommendations:-

- Preventing FGM from taking place by raising awareness and engaging with communities
- Supporting professionals to identify and support girls and women at risk of or affected by FGM
- Supporting victims of FGM throughout their lives

The Briefing Note also detailed the next steps in relation to tackling FGM in the long term.

The Committee questioned officers and representatives present on the contents of the Briefing Note including:-

- Why there have been no prosecutions for FGM nationally; the effectiveness of current legislation; and the use of protection orders
- Work done at Airports (including Operation Limelight) and with Border Agency staff
- Data available in relation to the number of girls/women effected
- Community engagement and the role of Community Champions
- Work undertaken with schools
- Sustainability and exit strategies in place to ensure all the good work and progress continues in this regard once the funding runs out.

RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- (1) Notes and welcomes the progress made in relation to FGM**
- (2) Requests that Public Health officers, working with partner organisations where appropriate, :-**
 - (a) Ensure that there is sufficient funding to ensure that the work of the community champions can continue**
 - (b) Monitor and provide statistical data on the impact that the withdrawal of funding has on the work in this regard, including the impact on accessing services and service provision, and submit a report on this matter to the Committee at an appropriate time.**
 - (c) Requests that the Police consider mirroring Operation Limelight in other European Cities where those cities have international airports that act as a hub for flights to and from the UK (i.e. Amsterdam)**
 - (d) Work with partners to influence airlines into providing training for cabin crew on FGM and other safeguarding issues.**

79. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

80. Progress Update on the Domestic Violence and Abuse Services (DVA) Commissioned Services for Coventry

The Committee considered a Briefing Note which provided an update on the implementation and performance of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) services in the City which commenced on 29 September, 2014. The Briefing Note particularly focused on:-

- Features of the service that have made a tangible change to service delivery
- Development areas across the term of the contract

Commissioned DVA services commenced on 29 September, 2014 and replaced existing contracts. The current contract is for a period of four years and includes the Single Point of Access (SPA) service for Coventry, which aims to provide a “one-stop” contact point for victims of domestic violence. The contract consists of four providers, each providing a specific element of the service model:-

- Refuge – Helpline/single point of access and victim community-based support

- Safe and Supported Partnership (SSP) – Victim supported accommodation
- Barnardo's Defuze – Children and young people's service
- Fry Housing Trust – Perpetrator service

Representatives of all four providers were present at the meeting.

The Briefing Note indicated that delivery funding total £1,187,700 for 2017/18 and is shared across local agencies.

In terms of performance, the following changes that have made a difference since the start of the contract were detailed:-

- A clear single point of access for victims and professionals to request support
- Improvements to information sharing protocols across partner agencies to ensure that victims and children are not missed and receive appropriate and timely support
- Improvements to case management processes through the Refuge IMPACT database; a single case management database that enables multi-agency working to deliver a seamless service in Coventry
- Increasing the number of supported accommodation from 40 to 54 units
- DVA services are represented on the DVA Operations Group (a meeting of key stakeholders including social care, the police, safeguarding leads, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust and Coventry and rugby Clinical Commissioning Group)
- A perpetrator programme that has seen a growing number of people across the service

The services have been running for 2 years, 6 months. It was anticipated that across the term of the contract there would be areas of support that would need to be developed or adapted, hence the focus on a flexible service model.

Areas currently being progressed include:-

- Developing a process for victims requiring supported accommodation with no recourse to public funds who do not have children
- Establishing prioritisation criteria for perpetrator service
- Eliminating duplication of paperwork being completed by providers for the same case (e.g. risk assessment)
- Raising awareness and understanding of DVA services by partner

agencies across all levels including roles and responsibilities

- Making links with the Law centre on complementary services provided for victims requiring legal support or advice

The Committee noted that Coventry Haven, a non-contracted support provider for domestic violence and abuse services, is still active in the City and provides a valuable service to people in Coventry.

The Briefing Note highlighted performance data, governance arrangements and details of a Perpetrator Programme.

The Committee questioned officers and representatives of the service providers on aspects of the Briefing Note including:-

- How the Coventry Haven fits into service provision
- How “success” is evaluated
- Communication between service providers and social workers
- Setting of KPI’s and the collation of performance data (The Committee requested that they be provided with a synopsis on the performance data available and how the contract is monitored)
- The perpetrator scheme

RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- (1) Notes and welcomes the progress of the services and outcomes achieved**
- (2) Notes the governance arrangements in place regarding monitoring and how the service links to statutory services**
- (3) Requests officers to work with partner agencies to support the lack of provision for those victims with no recourse for public funds**
- (4) Requests that officers, working with partner agencies, raise the issue of introducing legislation that makes the attendance on perpetrator courses mandatory**
- (5) Requests that officers provide information regarding Domestic Violence, including statistical information, and how to report incidents, to be placed on the Council’s website**
- (6) Recommends that the Cabinet Member:-**
 - (a) Highlights the success of the partnership working on this issue with the Local Government association, with a view to replicating this practise across the country**

(b) Considers the Committee's offer of Scrutiny providing support when setting the KPI's for the new contract

(c) Refers the report regarding the awarding of the new contract to Scrutiny before final approval

81. Business Rates Consultations and the West Midlands 100% Business Rates

Further to Minute 15 /16, the Committee considered a Briefing Note which followed up the Committee's previous consideration of this issue. Since that date, the Government had published a response to its Business Rates consultations and had issued two further Business Rates consultations. In addition the Council had joined a West Midlands 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot scheme, the estimated projected impact of which had been incorporated into the Council's budget plans. The Briefing Note detailed the current position relating to all of these matters.

The Council's response to the consultation on proposals on the design and implementation of the locally administered Business Rates Relief Scheme was appended to the Briefing Note. In addition, a draft consolidated West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) response was circulated.

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

- Whether the West Midlands will have a role in relation to competition between constituent Councils in attracting businesses to the region
- The current funding formula for Local Government

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the contents of the Briefing Note and the agreed/proposed consultation response be noted**
- (2) That the Committee recognise and note with concern the uncertainties regarding this issue**
- (3) Request that officer ensure that in any current or future consultation response regarding this matter, reference is made to ensuring that Coventry gets a fair deal and that inequalities in the funding system are addressed**
- (4) Request that the Committee continues to receive updates on developments in Business Rates as and when they become available**

82. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee noted a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator which outlined the approach to be taken on progress, outcomes and responses to recommendations and actions made by the Committee.

83. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2016/2017**

The Committee noted their work programme for the current municipal year.

84. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 1.00pm)