

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.30 am on
Wednesday, 26 September 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor J Clifford (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor A Andrews
Councillor R Brown
Councillor C Miks
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members: Councillors F Abbott, P Akhtar and G Duggins

Employees:

L Gaulton, People Directorate
P Hargrave, People Directorate
C Hickin, Place Directorate
G Holmes, Place Directorate
L Knight, Place Directorate
C Ryder, People Directorate

Apologies: Councillor T Khan (Cabinet Member), J McNicholas and R Singh

Public Business

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th July, 2018 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the Committee agrees to exclude the press and public under Sections 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private report in Minute 18 below headed “Modernising Domestic Abuse Services and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services” on the grounds that the item involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the identity, financial and business affairs of organisations and the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Council under a particular contract for the supply of goods or services and in all circumstances of the

case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

14. Modernising Domestic Abuse Services and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

The Committee considered a report and received a presentation of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) on the proposals for the commissioning of the contracts for domestic abuse services and sexual violence and abuse services. A corresponding private report detailing confidential aspects of the proposals was also submitted to the meeting for consideration (Minute 18 below refers). Both reports were due to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 2nd October, 2018. Councillor F Abbott, Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities and Councillor G Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The report indicated that Coventry's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018 – 2023 was considered and approved by the Police and Crime Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Adult's and Children's safeguarding boards and Scrutiny Co-Ordination Committee. It incorporated the city's approach to addressing domestic abuse, including honour-based violence and forced marriage.

The City Council commissioned a range of services that aimed to address domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse by protecting and supporting victims and influencing the behaviour of offenders. It was now proposed that:

- The domestic abuse service model and specification was revised and updated and services were commissioned in 3 lots (a victim and children's service for information, advice and community based support, a supported accommodation service and a perpetrator service) over a period of 5 years with two 2-year options to extend. The local authority's financial investment in these services would remain at existing levels, but the contract value would reduce by 3% to reflect the cessation of funding contributed by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The sexual violence and abuse counselling service specification was revised and updated. The service would be recommissioned based on the existing budget over a period of 5 years with the option to extend to mirror the domestic abuse contracts. The model for this service would not change.

It was also proposed that domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse services were commissioned as separate entities but were procured concurrently.

In order to get best value from these services and enable successful bidders to establish strong and meaningful relationships among local partners, the contract would run for five years with two 24 month extensions available, giving a possible contract length of 9 years. It was proposed that the services were procured via competitive tender with contracts commencing 1 July, 2019. The commissioning process for a longer term contract would seek to gain additional value from providers.

The proposal was based on the latest evidence about what works to improve quality and outcomes and what local Coventry people wanted from our services, following consultation with the general public, service users and wider stakeholders, engagement with the provider market and consultation with domestic abuse commissioners in the West Midlands and across the country.

The anticipated costs per annum of all contracts, which would be funded by the Council core funding and the Public Health grant, would be £1,347,955.

The presentation set out the need for the services; detailed the existing provision; highlighted the issues raised during the consultation; set out the proposals for the services including details of the proposed counselling and support service model; and drew attention to the funding and timescales.

Members raised a number of issues arising from the report and presentation and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- The terms of the contract and whether there would be break clauses
- Whether there would be duplication with other services funded elsewhere across the city and regions, such as PCC funding
- Clarification about the risk assessments
- Details about the importance of the work undertaken with the different communities in the city
- Where FGM sat within the services commissioned and how support was co-ordinated
- The demand for services and the waiting times for counselling
- More information on the perpetrator service, including clarification on the data in the report with requests for more up to date data and details of reoffending rates when available
- If the recent high profile abuse cases had led to an increase in reporting
- How Coventry had fed into the national Government consultation on domestic violence and abuse
- The need for more national funding to support services
- Getting the balance between funding preventative programmes and support for victims
- Where there was a crisis team for immediate help
- Support for the proposals for modernising the services, including welcoming the family approach.

RESOLVED that:

(1) Cabinet be informed that the Committee expressed their support for the proposal to commission domestic abuse services and a sexual violence and abuse service.

(2) A report back on progress including details of waiting times for counselling be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

(3) The update provided to the Safeguarding Board at their meeting the previous day concerning partnership working and involvement of local communities be circulated to the Committee.

15. **West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Feedback**

The Committee received an update from the Chair, Councillor Clifford, on the work of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Scrutiny Committee, which had picked up the pace of its work this year. Councillor Clifford had attended the Committee's last meeting on 4th September when the Committee had been given updates on the forward plan and the five Working Groups. Councillor Clifford was a Member of the Health and Wellbeing Working Group and this Group would be holding their next meeting at Friargate during October.

Councillor Clifford also indicated that, as a Member of the Scrutiny Committee, he was involved with the preparations for the Mayor's question time session in December on the budget proposals for the WMCA.

RESOLVED that the update on the West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee be noted.

16. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2018/2019**

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

RESOLVED that:

(1) The work programme be noted.

(2) The proposed item on West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Skills Strategy be scheduled for a meeting in the current year.

(3) An additional item on 'Knife Crime and Gang Culture' be scheduled on the work programme.

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

There were no additional items of public business.

18. **Modernising Domestic Abuse Services and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services**

Further to Minute 14 above, the Committee considered a private report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) that set out the confidential aspects of the proposals for the commissioning of the contracts for domestic abuse services and sexual violence and abuse services. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 2nd October, 2018. Councillor F Abbott, Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

Members raised several issues arising from the report and responses were provided.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be informed that the Committee expressed their support for the proposal to commission domestic abuse services and a sexual violence and abuse service.

19. Any other items of private business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

There were no additional items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 11.45 am)