

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 6 November 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor R Brown (Chair)

Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor J Clifford
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor R Singh

Other Members Present:- Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities)
Councillor G Duggins (Leader of the Council)
Councillor B Gittins (Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)
Councillor P Seaman (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place: S Bennett, G Holmes

People: L Gaulton, N Hart, K Nelson, G Quinton, C Ryder, R Wilshire

Others Present: Chief Superintendent M O'Hara
P Green, Headteacher, Lyng Hall
D Woodward, Catch 22
R Bhayat, Positive Youth Foundation

Apologies: Councillors A Andrews, A S Khan

Public Business

23. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

The Committee noted Councillor L Kelly's involvement in matters relating to Minute 26 below in her former role as the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner.

24. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October, 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 17 – “City of Culture 2021”, the Committee received an update in relation to outstanding actions, including the establishment of a City of Culture 2021 Members Advisory Panel and visits to other Cities of Culture.

25. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee agrees to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to Minute 29 below headed ‘Keeping Young People Safe’”, on the grounds that the report involve the likely disclosure of information defined in Paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the investigation of a crime and in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

26. Keeping Young People Safe in Our City

The Committee considered a Briefing Note on the city-wide approach being taken to keep young people safe in our City. Partners in Coventry held a summit to consider what could be done locally in January, 2019. It was noted that a further summit would be held in 2020.

The Briefing Note covered:-

- The Young Persons Violence Prevention Strategy
- The Public Health Approach
- Identifying Vulnerable Young People
- Projects, activities and partnerships and progress made
- The Police perspective
- Trend data

The Coventry Youth Violence Prevention Partnership Board (CYVPPB) was established in June 2019 and includes senior representatives from Policing, Public Health, Children’s Services, Adult Services, Education, Probation, City of Culture, Faith Groups and Youth Justice. At its meeting in June 2019, the CYVPPB agreed to draft a multi-agency strategy using a public health approach to address the issue of youth violence in the City. The high-level Strategy was appended to the Briefing Note and was being presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Police and Crime Board and both the Adults and Childrens Safeguarding Boards for consideration and endorsement.

The Strategy is based on taking a “public health approach” and is modelled on the Strategy produced by the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (WMVRU). The WMVRU has been set up by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner as the successor to the West Midlands Violence Prevention Alliance. Supporting the CYVPPB are a Project Board and an Operation Group and their further roles were detailed in a further appendix to the Briefing Note. The Strategy is a 10 year

Strategy and this emphasises the long-term commitment of the partnership and recognises that this issue cannot be resolved without a sustained long-term effort.

The Briefing Note detailed approach and progress against the following six key objectives in the Strategy:-

- Building Strong Foundations
- Primary prevention
- Secondary prevention
- Tertiary prevention
- Enforcement and Criminal Justice
- Attitudinal change using effective communication

The Committee noted that even though the strategy is still in draft, a great deal of work has already been undertaken to progress the short-term priorities identified, details of which were included in the Briefing Note. The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner recently sent out a call for providers to bid into a fund which will provide activities for young people across the West Midlands during October half term. Providers were able to bid for up to £5,000 to deliver activities in key crime hotspots across the West Midlands and the following three projects were successful for Coventry:-

- Positive Youth Foundation and Short Football – Hillfields, Wood End and Bell Green
- Empowr-U- Joe Graham, Wood End, Hillfields
- Coventry Boys and Girls Club – City Centre

Extensive activities have already taking place with schools including:-

- Secondary schools have well established Panels led by Head teachers which meet 6 weekly and include professionals from the police and other relevant agencies to discuss families and incidents where there has been an incident of, or threat of, violent crime.
- Positive Youth Foundation have established a key educational program for Secondary school pupils called Staying Safe and they are also working on funding an increasing number of mentors who can work directly in schools with students who are at risk.
- Violent crime is a key agenda item on Secondary and Primary Heads meetings and there is regular information sharing updates about what more can be done.
- Workshops have begun to be offered to all schools, led by secondary staff to educate them around violent crime directly from ex-gang members.
- There are newly establish Primary Panels, chaired by Heads and including the involvement of the Police and Early Help to emulate the existing Secondary panels. The Briefing Note outlined work undertaken in this regard.

- The Magistrates in Schools project is supporting almost all Primary Schools with a half day programme around justice and democracy, which also tackles elements such as knife crime directly.

Details of the Public Health Approach to Knife Crime was also detailed in the Briefing Note. The Partnership Board believes that violence in the City should be approached as a public health issue in that it has root causes, it can be treated, but most importantly, like a disease, it can be prevented. The following steps to build community resilience over the long term by taking a multifaceted prevention approach were detailed:-

- Using data and intelligence to understand and identify the scale and scope of the problem
- Quantifying the burden at population-level and identifying inequalities and risks
- Identifying and focussing on defined populations, who may share certain risks
- Seeking evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem
- Generating both long-term and short-term solutions
- Working with and for communities
- Not being constrained by organisational or professional boundaries but seeking out system-wide solution delivered through system leadership
- Scaling up small interventions when evidence demonstrates successes

Taking this public health approach, the Briefing Note detailed primary prevention, secondary prevention and treatment actions from a range of partners., as well as prevention work which begins at the earliest possible stage with future parents. Details of work undertaken with Drug and Alcohol Recovery, Mental Health, Domestic Abuse Services and the City Council were highlighted. A large proportion of prevention is delivered through family hubs, where the delivery of early help services are centralised around a building.

The Briefing Note also covered:-

- Identifying vulnerable young people, demographics and race data, projects, activities and partnerships
- The Police Perspective and Trend data
- Police activities which are currently being mapped against the draft strategy including:-
 - Two university interns who will shortly be joining the Police and will assist in researching strategies used elsewhere for tackling violence to see if they can be deployed in Coventry
 - The Youth Violence Reduction Team have 2 members of staff embedded within 4 family hubs
 - Police have been in discussion with Trading Standards Colleagues about test purchasing knives in local businesses
 - The Active Citizen Fund is being used to support initiatives to engage communities around this agenda

- The Early Intervention Youth Fund and the Strengthening Families project has seen approximately 170 young people progress through the referral process
- St Giles Trust are delivering a project in Coventry Police Custody block for those who are under 25 years and arrested for violence/weapons offences

The Committee noted that the key to the successful delivery of the actions plans supporting the strategy will be the involvement of young people (under 25) and that the Board is currently considering the most appropriate way to involve young people across a whole range of ages, experiences and backgrounds.

As well as the Briefing Note, the Committee received a comprehensive presentation at the meeting from representatives from West Midlands, Police, the Headteacher of Lyng Hall School, Catch 22 and Positive Youth Foundations as well as City Council officers from Public Health, Education, and Children Services. Further information was circulated in relation to:-

- Police data for crime/trends
- Funding secured from a variety of funding streams
- Trend data for permanent exclusions and supported transfers

The Committee ask questions and sought clarification on a number of issues including:-

- The impact resource issues have had on the problem and long term solutions in relation to this
- Demographic data
- The link between drug crime and an increase in knife crime and work being undertaken in this regard
- Whether a gendered approach is taken in relation to tackling the problem
- How duplication is avoided in the multi agency strategy
- Benchmarking data for the 10 year strategy
- Work being undertaken in schools including “social immunisation” in relation to providing appropriate information to all young people to stop preventable crime involvement
- Data ownership between all the partner organisations
- Work undertaken by volunteers

The Committee also received further confidential information in relation to this matter in the private part of the meeting (Minute 29 below refers)

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair, Councillor R Brown, thanked all of those present for their contributions to the meeting and commended all of the mutli agency work being carried out in this regard.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That, in light of the comprehensive and informative information provided, the Committee express their reassurance by all of the partnership work being undertaken in this regard.
- (2) That further consideration be given to this issue once appropriate data is available
- (3) That the Committee recommend to the Coventry Youth Violence Prevention Partnership Board that:-
 - a. That the phase “Social Immunisation” in relation to providing appropriate information to all young people to stop preventable crime involvement be introduced into the Young Persons Violence Prevention Strategy
 - b. That the Strategy also include a gendered approach to interventions

27. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2019/2020 and Outstanding Issues

The Committee considered their Work Programme for 2019/20. It was noted that an item on Buses would be included on the agenda for the meeting on 5 February, 2020 and that the items on Hate Crime and Domestic Violence would now be considered at the meeting on 25 March, 2020.

28. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

Private Business

29. Keeping Young People Safe in Our City

Further to Minute 27 above, the Committee received and discussed confidential information in relation to this matter.

RESOLVED that the content of the information be noted.

(Meeting closed at 12.30pm)