

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday, 22 June 2022

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar (Chair)
Councillor C Miks (Deputy Chair)
Councillor M Ali
Councillor R Auluck
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor J Birdi (substitute for Councillor G Ridley)
Councillor R Singh

Other Members: Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

Employees (by Service):

Law and Governance G Holmes, A West

Public Health and Wellbeing A Box, R Chapman, A Duggal (Director of Public Health and Wellbeing) J Ross

Other Representatives: R Gakhal, Panahghar
A Kaur, Panahghar
S Sullivan, The Haven

Apologies: Councillor J Innes, AS Khan, P Male and G Ridley

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

3. Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, introduced the item in his role as Chair of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. He provided an overview of the work of the Partnership over the last year including the completion of the needs assessment, extending the Domestic Abuse Strategy to 2025 with a new action plan. The Partnership Board's role was to

support, guide and evaluate the strategy that aims to reduce repeat victimisation and risk of harm, prevent domestic abuse occurring and reduce offending.

The Committee then received a presentation on Coventry's Response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Progress Update which outlined the following points:

- The governance system including the Local Partnership Board and a Steering Group.
- Progress on each section of the Domestic Abuse Act, including the provision and the commencement date
- Data on demand including helpline calls and MARAC cases
- Data from the police covering total number of reports both crime and non-crime, number of charges and summons, number of cases where there are evidential difficulties and the number of cases where the victim does not support or withdraws from prosecution
- Coventry's response to the Domestic Abuse Act
 - Strategic Needs Assessment published October 2021
 - Strategy Update and Addendum – Published Oct 2021
 - Refreshed Action plan – Updated Oct 2021
 - Training Needs Assessment - ongoing
 - Training Delivery – ongoing
- Details of the needs assessment including surveys, focus groups, data analysis and 1-2-1 interviews
- Information about commissioned services and what they offer to both victims and perpetrators
- New provision for victims and children in safe accommodation
- Information about the Early Intervention Pilot based with the Police, as well as Domestic Abuse champions in a wide range of agencies
- The implementation of the plan including Safe/Supported Accommodation, Voices of Victims/Survivors and other groups
- The challenges working with perpetrators
- Representatives from partner services, the Haven and Panahghar, provided information and case studies

Following the presentation, the Committee asked a number of questions and the following points were discussed:

- The recovery of the criminal justice system from covid, including the police and the courts and the impact this had on resources, experience and capacity
- Age and elder abuse were included in the action plan
- Information about service in the Armed Forces was gathered as part of an assessment and signposting was made where relevant to support obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Services were user led and responded to their needs, staff were recruited from a range of cultural backgrounds and language skills
- There was no waiting list as there was a network of services which could be referred to if needed. Service providers were always looking to see how they could share learning from other services and organisations.

- Communication materials were consulted on with service users and former service users
- There was a lot of training and support being offered to the judicial system and magistrates in relation to Domestic Abuse
- Concerns about intergenerational abuse and the perpetuation of abuse was recognised and the importance of early intervention was highlighted
- The low number of cases taken through to prosecution was highlighted as a concern but it was a priority of the Partnership. It was explained to the committee that domestic abuse was a very complex issue and there were many and wide ranging factors which lead to a victim not pursuing prosecution. Part of the support process was to listen to the victim's wishes and recognise that victims had a choice.
- There was a discussion about the importance of early intervention, including through schools with children from nursery and reception age, about healthy relationships
- The Director of Public Health informed the Committee that there was no evidence that large publicity campaigns are effective in getting the message across and that a grass roots approach was more effective. This was the reasoning behind the recruitment of domestic abuse champions and also conversations and drop-in sessions in local communities was a more effect way to get the message across.
- Information leaflets were also considered to be a risk factor as if they were found in possession of a victim this could escalate the abuse.
- The involvement of male staff in terms of supporting male victims as well as perpetrators was recognised as important and a piece of work for further development.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee: _

- 1) Notes the presentation and progress made to date**
- 2) Writes to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, in his role as Chair of the Police and Crime Board, requesting that he works closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Police and partners to increase capacity and resources with regard to domestic abuse**
- 3) Requests a further item to consider progress on early intervention, particularly in schools, is added to the Work Programme.**

4. Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) Accepts the content of the report at Appendix 1**
- 2) Recommends that Council considers the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 at its next available meeting**

5. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2022/2023**

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

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) **Approves the draft Work Programme**
- 2) **Adds a Task and Finish Group on Inequalities to the Work Programme**
- 3) **Circulates an invite to Committee Members to participate in a Task and Finish Group on Inequalities**

6. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no additional items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12:15pm)