

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 22 September 2015

Attendance

Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Paula Brookfield (Chair)
Cllr Ian Claymore
Cllr Bishan Dass
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Patricia Patten (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Daniel Warren

Employees

Deborah Breedon	Scrutiny Officer
Tony Ivko	Service Director - Older People
Karen Samuels	Head of Community Safety
Superintendent Keith Frazer	West Midlands Police

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies**
Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr Barry Findlay
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting (14.07.2015)**
The minutes of the previous meeting (14.07.2015) were agreed and signed as a correct record
- 4 Matters arising**
There were no matters arising
- 5 Reducing Gang Harm Strategy**
Superintendent Keith Frazer provided a presentation 'Committed to preventing gang related harm and youth violence, Together: 2016-19.'

The Superintendent celebrated the success of the strategy to date in Wolverhampton and outlined key achievements. He indicated that without a strategy in place and excellent partnership working arrangements the reduction of recorded offences, many targeted interventions and development of a community reference group would not have been possible.

The Superintendent presented three case studies:

- Managing the on-going risks
- The changing face of 'gangs'
- Prevention to harm

In each case study the Superintendent outlined the issues and explained how the measures in place and partners were working together.

The Superintendent identified eleven key challenges associated with gang culture and individuals affected by gangs. He referred to better partnership work and how this is improving the prevention of gang related harm and youth violence in the City.

The Superintendent outlined the four 'P's' as follows:

- Prevent
- Protect
- Pursue
- Prepare

He summarised each of the points highlighting that in order to prevent there is a need to protect the community against gangs, fear of crime and gang crimes; a need to identify and enforce against those in gang related activity and a need to identify instances and take early action.

The superintendent identified the objectives of the strategic vision and activities that are key to moving from reducing to preventing.

The Superintendent outlined the strategy consultation process and invited the Councillors to participate in the consultation process.

There followed a period of questions relating to the presentation.

Cllr Bishan Dass referred to the crime reduction figures provided in the presentation and asked if, in addition to guns and knives, a record of other weapons was kept. The superintendent indicated that pointed objects were recorded in the knives category.

In response to a question about risks to women, girls and other elderly people living on their own, the Superintendent informed the Panel that this highlighted the 'fear of crime'. He explained that there may be a high degree of fear of crime for women girls and elderly people but that they are not likely to be the most likely to be directly affected by gang related activity, they are actually the least likely to be affected.

Cllr Ian Claymore asked questions relating to the membership of the community reference group and about young people with mental health issues getting involved in gang activities. In response the Superintendent confirmed that the community reference group are a non-statutory community based group from the locality who report to the local prevention team. He advised that they are able to deal with the lower level activity using intervention measures, he clarified that they are not told

what to do but do have a link into statutory bodies. In relation to youth mental health issues, he advised that currently a number of the Parliamentary committees are looking at youth and mental health provision and that there is some evidence to suggest those young people with mental health issues are more likely to get involved in gang activities.

Cllr Patricia Patten asked what more can be done to prevent people buying weapons on the internet. The Superintendent advised that activities to educate young people in schools and in the wider communities are taking place in addition to wider communication with retailers about age limits and responsibility. He confirmed there is a key drive around education.

Cllr Linda Leach referred to work in her community neighbourhood to provide a knife and gun bin and she asked the Superintendent if in his opinion the bins work. He responded that yes he did and that this was evident by the number of weapons being recovered. He clarified that the demand for weapon bins was driven by the community and that this is a key challenge to get community support and buy in to encourage weapon amnesty.

Cllr Paula Brookfield asked if schools were providing weapon bins. Cllr Jasbir Dehar confirmed that a bin is provided at a secondary school at which she works and that the amount of weapons recovered was surprising. Cllr Linda Leach advised that supermarkets also provide weapon bins.

Cllr Rita Potter asked about the legal status of the cannabis drug. Superintendent Keith Francis advised that cannabis is a banned substance and confirmed that although it had been reclassified it had not been decriminalised.

Cllr Daniel Warren referred to resource cuts to public sector bodies and what impact they would have on the forward plan. He asked the Superintendent if delivery of the strategy would be achievable on today's budget and in the future. He indicated that budget cuts have already had some impact on his Bushbury ward particularly relating to neighbourhood intelligence gathering. The Superintendent noted the concern and advised that the plan would have to be delivered within the parameters of the budget and that this may mean delivering the plan in a different way to that currently presented. He advised that the partners are in the best place to deliver the strategy with the budget they receive from Government. He indicated that the development of the community reference group and use of social media to broaden intelligence flow will provide different ways of intelligence gathering.

Cllr Lynne Moran welcomed the information provided by the Superintendent and highlighted that this is not just a job for the police but for partners and the community. She referred to local concerns about drug related activities in the Whitmore Reans area, the Superintendent agreed to take the issue away and look into it, he indicated that the overall approach in the area may need to be different. Karen Samuels, Head of Community Safety advised that safeguarding is not just a policing matter and this is why it has been built into community strength.

Cllr Jasbir Dehar referred to gangs in secondary schools and asked if the Superintendent can identify where the gangs are. The superintendent indicated that intelligence gathering has improved but that improved links from schools and communities would be helpful to keep intelligence updated and fed into the

partnership. He clarified that all intelligence is important to get a better understanding about where things are. Cllr Pauls Brookfield highlighted that better intelligence will help to target resource to the best place of need.

Cllr Bishan Dass voiced concern about the reduction of resource. The Superintendent advised that reduced resources will have an effect but reassured the Panel that the strategy is built around partnership working and at this time there have not been reductions, but realignment of boundaries. The Head of Community Safety reassured the panel that in the last five years the work relating to gang related activities has progressed a long way and there is a good structure on which to take the strategy forward.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted and that the comments of the Scrutiny Panel be taken into account as part of the consultation process'

6 **The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy**

Kathy Cole-Evans, Manager, Domestic Violence Forum provided a presentation 'Violence against women & girls (VAWG) strategy 2016-19'. She explained that the name acknowledges the gendered nature of VAWG but that it can be both male and female victims and perpetrators and it addresses additional barriers to help seeking as follows:

- Domestic violence (DV)
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Honour based violence
- Sexual violence

She advised that awareness raising events have taken place, including a successful event to look at preventing domestic homicide. All of the additional barriers will be addressed in the new strategy and a series of case reviews will be available in March 2016 and could be shared with the Scrutiny Panel. The VAWG strategy 2012-15 is having impact; 46 actions completed including mainstreaming of specialist roles, improved processes and protocols and awareness raising; there has been increased reporting in the City, DV reporting up 60% (940 incidents) in Wolverhampton alone. In relation to FGM there are no reported cases to police however health organisations are required to report cases which should give an indication of the scale of the problem in Wolverhampton.

The DV Manager advised that the VAWG strategy 2016-19 outlined objectives, outcomes and principles. She clarified that the objectives will lead to the reduction of incidents of violence and to the increased reporting of offences.

The DV Manager outlined the consultation process and highlighted that the 12 week consultation period was an opportunity for the Scrutiny Panel to contribute, either collectively or individually. She advised that the consultation primarily is through electronic questionnaire via a web-link, due to resources; that existing networks, boards and mechanisms were being utilised to cascade information and that some had made a pledge to the new strategy.

The DV Manager confirmed that there is a need to consult with the public, get them on board and to help them understand the law according to the issues. She highlighted the need to work with front line services and ensure they are on-line and aware; the need for schools to report out of the ordinary absences, children who go missing and behaviour change in young females following unexplained absences; GPs to be aware of older females with evidence of FGM as it is more likely for this to run in families and to try to identify communities and bring the community up to speed on issues.

Cllr Paula Brookfield cautioned when identifying communities there is a need to be careful. The panel considered the problems of not tackling some of the intelligence issues and communication and links between schools and health. They considered that in the City, as partners we may know where the problems maybe but there is more to do to raise the general public's awareness through poster campaigns and education, even though there may be cost implications, without it people will not get to know about it.

The DV manager advised that there is funding available some public and some voluntary contribution. She asked the Panel to give consideration to making a pledge to the new VAWG Strategy 2016-19.

Cllr Jasbir Dehal referred to the issue of honour based violence and indicated that often what happens when girls reach a certain age (15) in some cultures the girl is sent away to live with older relatives.

Cllr Bishan Dass welcomed the presentation and information. He recognised the importance and that this was not an easy issue to deal with, especially hard was getting information from the community in relation to forced marriage or honour based violence, he suggested that the community generally comes out to help or sort out the issue.

The panel considered how in a diverse cultural city with so many communities, so many ethnic groups it is very difficult to understand everyone's social backgrounds. Panel considered that there is a need to raise education and awareness in the community that what is acceptable somewhere else is not acceptable here in Wolverhampton and that it is not acceptable under human rights legislation.

Cllr Rita Potter referred to DV and asked what can be done about the scenario where men return home from a football match, they may be drunk or have lost the match but ultimately are violent to their partner. The DV Manager advised that Unite are developing the Council policy about DV, she add that it is advertised through Wolverhampton Wanderer Football Club. She added that any sporting event can trigger DV.

Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur highlighted the increase in the number of first time DV reporting and 'seasonal violence' and saw this as positive. The DV manager advised that there is a need to ensure we do get it right first time as if the volume increases there are not enough services to deal with this.

The Chair thanked Kathy Cole-Evans for her report and open discussion relating to the VAWG Strategy 2016-19 Consultation Process.

Resolved:

1. The Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel members pledge support to the VAWG Strategy 2016-19.
2. The Scrutiny Officer to circulate the draft VAWG Strategy 2016-19 strategy and links to the consultation to all scrutiny panel members to consider and complete.

7 Targeted Youth Support - The Youth Justice Plan 2015-16

Youth Council members Emma Curran and Emerson Palmer were in attendance at the meeting to ask four questions relating to youth Crime from the Youth Council:

1. We believe that a lot of crime goes unreported. Young people need to feel comfortable to report crimes that they have been victims of crime
2. What support is available to young people who have been victims of crime and how is this information being shared with them?
3. What crimes classify as "anti-social behaviour" and how can we reduce the negative stigma surrounding young people who gather on the streets, making everyone feel safer and improving relationships between young people and communities?
4. What can be done to avoid criminalising young people and delete victimising?

Karen Samuels, Head of Community Safety provided an overview of the report she advised that the report writer Sally Nash, Head of Youth Offending Team (YOT) had responded to the questions in the report that had been circulated with the agenda. The report focus is on the implications of the Youth Justice Plan and the contribution made by the Youth Offending Team to community safety and how that can be supported. She invited Superintendent Keith Frazer in his role of the Chair of the YOT to contribute to Councillors questions.

The Head of Community Safety advised that under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, each Local Authority Area is required to have in place Youth Offending Team (YOT) arrangements. Central government provides a grant to support Local Justice Services via the Youth Justice Board (YJB). A condition of the grant (£581,100) is the preparation of the Youth Justice (YJ) Plan which highlights performance and key priorities for the future for the area. Karen Samuels highlighted that targeted work helps to avoid victimising all young people.

The Superintendent advised that in terms of the fear of crime (FOC) as a police officer there is often a mismatch of FOC and actual crime. He suggested that there are routes where young people can become victims of crime and that work is on-going to raise awareness; currently working with 'HeadStart' to raise awareness of young people 'Sexting' taking images of themselves to share with others.

Superintendent Keith Frazer responded to further questions from the Youth Council to underline and emphasize what work is being done. Operation Nexus is about targeting activities for young people which have been really successful, work relating to cyber bullying and work with focus on families.

The Youth Council highlighted that there is a lot more drug related crime and contraband alcohol than is known about by authorities. The Superintendent

identified that there are some unscrupulous shop keepers and that prevention aspects and education of young people was paramount.

Ros Jervis, Service Director Health and Wellbeing advised the scrutiny panel how agencies had worked together to counter issues with alcohol, tobacco, drug use and counterfeit goods in an area before the summer. This way of working, to focus on the same group was a better use of resource. She advised of work to develop a 'Tobacco and substance misuse alliance' to gather as much rich intelligence from our communities in this one forum. She said that it would include the youth Council in the forum.

Cllr Paula Brookfield was conscious of the mapping exercise taking place and asked to receive further information relating to fatal contraband and alcohol.

Cllr Rita Potter welcomed this as a quality piece of work using resources to best effect. The Service Director advised that at this time different groups were being pulled together and there would need to be some prioritisation amongst the groups many of which would be legal 'highs'.

Resolved:

1. That the Scrutiny Panel note the corporate implications of the Youth Justice Plan and the contribution made by the Youth Offending team to Community Safety and how that can be supported.
2. That a report be submitted to a future meeting relating to fatal contraband and alcohol.

8 **Outcome of consultation on the future of adults short breaks services and Oxley Plus day service**

Kathy Roper, Commissioning Team Manager provided a paper to outline the process and outcomes of consultation that has been undertaken about the future options for:

- Support Plus day service currently delivered from a number of sites across the City including Oxley Day Centre
- Pathways to work service at Bushbury woodcraft centre in Steele Drive
- Adult Short breaks services delivered from two sites in the City

The Commissioning Team Manager highlighted that the consultation around Oxley Day Centre had been positive with service users and their families recognising the proposal focus on better use of resource and integration for their sons and daughters.

In relation to Ernest Bold and Swan Bank short break provision feedback from family carers relating to the consultation is again positive, as long as the quality of service is not compromised. She advised there were some underlying concerns about change. Cllr Rita Potter voiced concerns that the clients had different needs and asked for reassurance that they would get the individual care they require. The Commissioning Team Manager assured panel that the staff will be well versed and trained in supporting them. Staff comments from the consultation were also positive better outcomes for more people whilst contributing to the Councils savings by

achieving value for money. She advised that alternative use was being discussed by the corporate landlord and the landlord for Swan Bank.

In response to an issue raised by Cllr Lynne Moran the Commissioning Team Manager clarified that there had been a printing error and contrary to the newspaper report there would be no staff losses from the proposed changes; a further article would be released to confirm this.

Cllr Patricia Patten asked for further information about use of the GEM Centre in Brick Kiln Lane for overnight stays and was advised that the consultation had shown that families were not keen on the option. She asked if the new premises would be run on a basis where it could respond to family emergencies and was advised that should an emergency occur other families had indicated that they would be happy to change to facilitate the emergency.

Cllr Bishan Dass welcomed the report and indicated that he supported independent living.

Resolved

1. That the All Age Disability In House Provider decommissions the service at Oxley Day Centre and provides the services across the city in community venues which will improve outcomes for individuals.
2. That the All Age Disability service decant from the Oxley site including Oxley Moor House.
3. That the sites are declared surplus by the People Directorate and approximated to the Corporate Landlord to manage as surplus assets and deal with the progression of their future use / disposal.
4. That the All Age Disability In House Provider Service relinquishes its lease with Corporate Landlord for the use of the Pathways to work Site in Steele Drive, Bushbury.
5. That the All Age Disability in-house providers merge the service provision for adult short breaks from the Ernest Bold and Swan Bank sites. The new merged service provision will be delivered from the council owned Ernest Bold site.
6. To note that the item has been considered as a pre-decision scrutiny item and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive.