

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 12 June 2018

Attendance

Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Sohail Khan
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama
Cllr Linda Leach (Chair)
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Barbara McGarrity
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Zee Russell

Employees

Martin Stevens (Scrutiny Officer) (Minutes)
David Watts (Director for Adults Services)
Karen Samuels (Head of Community Safety)
Allison Robertson (Head of Procurement)
Hannah Pawley (Graduate Management Trainee)

Witnesses

Chief Inspector Tracey Packham (West Midlands Police)

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies**
An apology for absence was received from Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur.
- 2 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 **Matters arising**
Cllr Muston requested the date of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel meeting be changed from the current scheduled date of 25 September 2018. The Chair agreed to speak to the relevant Scrutiny Officer to consider whether this was a viable option.

4 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **Adults and Safer City Scrutiny - Draft Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the latest draft Work Programme. He stated that the Work Plan was a live document which was updated on a regular basis. It was now included as standard on the agenda for each Scrutiny Panel meeting and there was also an opportunity to discuss the Work Plan at the Annual Work Programme event scheduled to take place on 28 June 2018 at 5pm. The Director for Adults Services, added there was now a place on the Scrutiny Work Plan for Members to suggest specific questions for a scrutiny item.

The Scrutiny Officer commented that the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner would be attending the meeting scheduled for 25 September 2018. After discussion the Chair agreed to have a preparation morning meeting with Members of the Panel and the Scrutiny Officer to discuss how they would approach the scrutiny of the Commissioner, which would be on a strategic level. She agreed to fix a date in liaison with the Scrutiny Officer and Members of the Panel.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that Wolverhampton's Adult Education Service was also on the agenda for the September meeting. The Scrutiny Officer referred to the adult open day advertised on the Council's City People Intranet site and encouraged Members of the Panel to attend if possible. The open day would be taking place on 23 June 2018 from 10am -2pm in the Foyer Building on Old Hall Street which was near the Old Sainsbury's building.

6 **Modern Slavery - Update Report**

The Head of Community Safety presented a report on modern slavery. The report provided an overview of the partnership working and the Council's plans to tackle modern slavery across the City. Section 2 of the report outlined the framework in which the work on modern slavery was delivered, which followed a national framework. There was an independent anti-slavery Commissioner and Legislation was introduced in 2015 under the name of the Modern Slavery Act. Modern slavery could take on various different forms. The legislation categorised them as holding a person in a position of slavery, forced servitude or compulsory labour, or facilitating the travel of a person with the intention of exploiting them soon after. Within the West Midlands, forced Labour was a key area of focus and the exploitation of young people. It was important to raise awareness about modern slavery as it was largely hidden within Wolverhampton.

The Head of Community Safety stated that there was a national system for referring individuals experiencing modern slavery. The contract on a national level was provided though the Salvation Army and in the West Midlands the sub-contractor was Black Country Women's Aid. The landscape was complex which led to some difficulties within the system. As a consequence the Independent Commissioner was driving through changes at a national level. The numbers identified in Wolverhampton were relatively small. There were 11 cases of modern slavery submitted to the National Referral Mechanism from Wolverhampton from Jan – Dec

2017, compared to six cases the previous year, all cases were minors. These cases involved links to county lines/drugs, child sexual exploitation and forced labour.

The Head of Community Safety referred to section 3 of the report which identified the key points discussed at Scrutiny, when the subject was discussed at the meeting in September 2017. Section 3 of the report provided an update on each of those areas. A communication plan was now in place. There was an aide memoir available to staff in the event they came across an individual of concern. City of Wolverhampton's Council's plan was in line with that of the Police and a training offer was now available after the launch of the national package. The Police had been developing their intelligence gathering processes around data capture. The Black Country organised crime group had been established, which met bi-monthly to identify organised crime groups and co-ordinate tactics. A discussion with Wolverhampton Businesses Crime reduction forum was scheduled to take place in September 2018 on the efforts to combat modern slavery. The Head of Community Safety commented that the Local Government Association had issued some guidance in February 2018 which provided a summary of the implications for modern slavery for local authorities with practical suggestions as to strengthening working practices.

A Member of the Panel asked for an update on the number of cases of modern slavery reported for the year to date. Chief Inspector Packham stated that since November 2017 to the current date, there had been 19 reported crimes. The Head of Community Safety said because modern slavery was often a hidden crime, the increase of crimes reported in this area could be seen as a positive step forward. The Council were looking to encourage all partners to report cases.

A Panel Member raised an issue which had been reported in the national press release concerning hand car washes. There were health and safety concerns for some of these staff and a concern that some workers were facing exploitation. The Chief Inspector stated car washes and nail bars were particular occupations, where examples of modern slavery had been discovered in the past. All neighbourhood Police teams visited these places to speak to the people there. They tried to identify any concerns and investigate further with appropriate partners, such as Health and Safety, Environmental Services and Revenue and Customs. A car wash recently visited in the Wolverhampton area had been found to be employing an illegal immigrant. Due to the visits by the Police, a considerable amount of enforcement action was taking place. The Head of Community Safety referred to an App which was now available to download which would advise if the car wash was operating in a legitimate way. The Chair asked for the details of the App to be circulated to the Panel.

A Member asked how the Police prioritised reports of crime. The Chief Inspector stated the Police did have a system of prioritisation, with different teams responding to different reports of crime. Priority on incoming calls was based on the threat, potential harm, vulnerability level and what enforcement action could be taken. Sometimes there were national initiatives which meant a priority focus on a specific crime area.

A Member of the Panel asked about what action was being taken over illegal use of housing. In response the Head of Community Safety said they were liaising with the Council's housing department. There were certainly issues with housing including,

problems associated with multiple occupancy and rogue landlords. The Chief Inspector commented that the Police often conducted visits to houses in multiple occupancy.

The Procurement Officer stated the Council wanted to ensure that they were not using any expenditure on organisations or individuals which were involved with modern day slavery. The procurement department had been working with Community Safety to strengthen the Council's processes when selecting contractors. All the members of the procurement team had undertaken the Council's online training course and all of the team involved in direct procurement had completed the Chartered Institute for Procurement and Supplies Modern Day Slavery course. They had also worked with the Council's legal department to update and refresh the terms and conditions for contracts, to give increased powers if modern day slavery was discovered, such as termination of contracts or penalties. These terms and conditions had also been cascaded down to subcontractors. The onus had been put on the contractor to ensure that their supply chain was fully compliant. The next phase was to strengthen the tender process in higher risk areas such as construction, food and care.

A Member of the Panel asked about the relationships the Council had with schools and religious groups on the matter of modern day slavery. In response, the Head of Community Safety said the Police would regularly engage with schools on matters of child sexual exploitation in addition to modern day slavery. Children that were victims of modern day slavery would not necessarily be within the education system. It was however important to raise awareness within schools. There was robust engagement with the faith sector. Some additional work was just commencing in the voluntary community sector. A faith engagement worker had recently been employed through the Safeguarding Board. They were working proactively to engage organisations to support the Council, such as within soup kitchens.

Resolved: That the Head of Community Safety circulate details to the Panel of the App which is able to detail if a car wash is believed to be acting legitimately.

Resolved: That the Head of Community Safety circulate the briefing note to the Panel which went to the Leader on the steps being taken to fight knife crime within Wolverhampton.

7 **Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Performance Update**

The Graduate Management Trainee presented a progress update report on the Community Safety and Harm Reduction Strategy 2017-2020. The report detailed the progress of the strategic priorities within the strategy. These priorities were reducing re-offending, reducing victimisation and violence prevention. A Black Country Reducing Reoffending Strategy had been developed which would complement the work of the Black Country Strategic Group. With reference to reducing victimisation, the key work was the 2016-2019 Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. The Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum training plan had been refreshed and training was taking place with partners across the City. There had also been a successful 'Orange the World' campaign which aimed to raise awareness of violence against women and girls. The Council had been awarded £500,000 from the

Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund to cover a three year period 2017-2020. The funding had allowed the Council to undertake additional strands of work as identified within the report.

The Graduate Management Trainee stated that more targeted work had taken place with businesses who could often fall victim to repeat crimes. The Youth Offending Team continued to deliver against the current Violence Prevention Strategy. There had been an increase in youth violence in Wolverhampton, which was in line with national trends, but was still a concern. There had been a robust approach to the Council's Prevent Duty, which included case management support and the work of the Channel Panel. The Safer Wolverhampton Partnership also actively monitored community cohesion across the City, which included any tensions arising.

The Graduate Management Trainee said the Annual Report of the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership was scheduled to be received by Cabinet in September. The performance data contained with the report presented to scrutiny was only a brief summary.

A Member of the Panel asked about the significant increase in violent crimes committed with the use of a firearm or a knife. The Chief Inspector agreed that there had been a significant percentage increase in the crimes, but the overall number of incidents remained relatively low. The West Midlands Chief Constable was the national lead for firearms. He was very keen to ensure all intelligence was actioned swiftly surrounding firearms no matter how minor. The amount of armed response vehicles had been increased across the West Midlands. Proactive operations were undertaken on gangs operating within the City which included mobile operations. In reference to knife crime, the Police did respond to reports from the public of people carrying knives. They also used their stop and search powers in a targeted approach in certain areas of the City. Preventative work was also ongoing within schools. Reporting from schools was encouraged where they had concerns about pupils. The Police undertook knife sweeps in areas of the City, where they believed knives had been stashed by gangs.

There was a discussion about Police response times to firearm incidents. The Chief Inspector said these varied depending on where the vehicles were based but the Police did relocate vehicles based on risk intelligence to ensure faster response times.

A Member asked whether there was enough neighbourhood Police Officers within the Wolverhampton area as they thought the shift pattern operated meant there was often times where there was no Police presence in a particular area. The Chief Inspector stated that different neighbourhood teams within the Wolverhampton area covered for the teams not on duty. Officers were moved around according to priorities and risk.

There was a discussion about knife amnesty. The Chief Inspector said that knives were deposited in the knife bins. She did not have the figures as it was the Police and Crime Commissioners Office which emptied them. It was however true to say people were carrying knives within Wolverhampton and the Police were having to use stop and search powers and were finding hidden stashes of knives. The Head of Community Safety said a briefing note had been prepared for the Leader of the Council summarising the initiatives towards reducing knife crime after the recent

murder within the Wolverhampton area. She offered to arrange for this to be circulated to the Panel.

The Head of Community Safety confirmed that there were key locations within Wolverhampton which were more likely to suffer from gang activity and knife crime. Engagement with schools in the lead up to the Summer holidays had been identified as a priority by the Police and Crime Commissioners Office. Screening tools had been updated within Wolverhampton in order to be able to better identify individuals at risk of criminal activity. To date there had not been any problems with engaging academy schools. The Chief Inspector stated training for medical students had taken place, called the Street Doctors Scheme. Young people deemed at risk of knife crime had been brought together with the trainee doctors to help educate them about stabbing injuries, debunk certain myths and provide some first aid skills.

Meeting closed at 7:30pm.