

MINUTES OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 21 September 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors James-J Walsh (Vice-Chair), Brenda Dacres, Colin Elliott, Councillor Joyce Jacca, Jim Mallory and Pat Raven

APOLOGIES: Councillors Pauline Morrison, Sue Hordijkenko and David Michael

ALSO PRESENT: Gary Connors (Crime Reduction Service Manager), Jeff Endean (Housing Programmes and Strategy Team Manager), James Greenshields (Chief Executive, Tonic Housing), Chief Superintendent Rob Jones (Borough Commander), Barrie Neal (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance), Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney (Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People) and Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2017

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, nominations were sought to Chair the meeting. Councillor Dacres was duly nominated and seconded and voted to Chair for the duration of the meeting or until such time as the Chair or Vice-Chair was in attendance.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Dacres Chair the meeting until the arrival of the Chair or Vice-Chair.

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 12 July be agreed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Dacres declared a personal interest in item 5 as she had a close family member who is a Police Officer.

3. Response to Referrals from this Committee

There were no responses to referrals due at this meeting.

4. Evidence Session - Provision for the LGBT Community in Lewisham

4.1 James Greenshields, Chief Executive, Tonic Housing, gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which will be included in the agenda documentation. James also presented a short film to the Committee which can be found on the following [link](https://vimeo.com/160863683). (<https://vimeo.com/160863683>).

4.2 During the presentation, the following key additional points were raised:

- Tonic Housing would be happy to submit additional data from their Business Plan on the LGBT community in London.
- Older LGBT residents faced distinct problems in retirement and as users of social care or in social housing. It was an age group who had experienced many past injustices because of their sexuality and were at risk of experiencing them again as they approached older age.
- 28% more LGBT people over 65 took recreational drugs than non-LGBT people in 2016 according to statistics from Stonewall in 2107.
- There had been a 75% increase in the number of transphobic crimes referred to CPS by the Police between 2014/15 to 2015/17 according to the CPS Hate Crime Report. (This represented 58 cases in 2014/15 rising to 98 in 2015/16).¹
- A disproportionate number of older LGBT people lived alone compared to the population as a whole.
- Older LGBT people were reporting being scared about disclosing their sexuality to care staff. The research undertaken by Tonic Housing had been recognised by housing providers who reported that they didn't always have the resources to research or tackle the problem further.
- According to Stonewall, 45% of older LGBT people had felt discriminated against when accessing social services and 73% were anxious about disclosing their sexuality to care staff.
- Following requests from Tonic Housing to housing providers to identify the number of LGBT residents; 11 out of 12 housing providers reported they had no LGBT residents. This appeared to be statistically improbable and helped to demonstrate that part of the problem was that people were not being identified or supported.
- Opening Doors London and Stonewall Housing had been working on the concept of a kite mark system for recognising excellence in housing and social care for older residents.
- There were models for social housing for LGBT residents in the USA and in Germany but to date there was nothing in the UK despite the recognition of the needs of this sector of the community.
- Tonic Housing want to work with partners to build an LGBT majority mixed community retirement facility.
- There was also an aim to develop LGBT sensitive domiciliary care.
- Tonic Housing was working closely with, and had backing from their five funders: Barrow Cadbury Trust; Comic Relief; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Trust for London; and The Tudor Trust.

¹ Extract from CPS Hate Crime Report: "2014/15 was the first reporting year following the change to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to incorporate transgender identity as an aggravating feature. The CPS is now able for the first time to report separately on its performance in relation to prosecutions involving transphobic hostility. Whilst two years does not provide a sufficiently robust basis on which to draw firm conclusions in respect of trend data, the fact that the CPS is now able to publish this data will be of reassurance to communities and will play a part in encouraging the confidence to report."

https://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_hate_crime_report_2016.pdf

- They were also working with the development partner “Igloo Regeneration”.
- Tonic were actively looking across London for a site and had approached a number of local authorities. Tonic would be very keen for the site for their proposed LGBT majority housing to be in Lewisham. They had already been in discussion with the Executive Member for Housing and with officers in the Council.

4.3 During the discussion that followed and in response to questions from members of the Committee, the following additional points were raised:

- Following a question regarding the fear of “ghettoisation” of sectors of the community from an LGBT majority housing scheme; the Committee heard that the housing scheme was not looking to create isolated communities. Integration was very important to the project and working with local housing providers and the local community and local authority was key. The scheme would also be carefully looking at longevity and sustainability including being able to adapt to reflect different issues in the future as they emerged. This could include changing the percentage allocated to the LGBT community.
- Following a question on the financial sustainability of such a housing proposal and the costs to potential residents; the Committee heard that there was an aim of 50% of the units to being affordable. Tonic had also submitted funding bids and predicted the possibility of substantial legacy income in the future.
- Finding those most in need could be challenging particularly if people were not disclosing their sexuality. Lots of work with the local community and community partners would be necessary.
- **Councillor Walsh, Vice-Chair arrived and took over the role of Chairing for the remainder of the meeting.**
- Some members of the Committee stated that a new housing scheme in the borough would be very beneficial for residents and it would be exciting to be at the forefront of promoting equality for older LGBT residents. Other members of the Committee noted that it was important to look at inequalities across all of the protected characteristics and carefully assess where there was most need to ensure Council resources were allocated prioritising those most in need.

4.4 Councillors Jacca and Walsh highlighted to the Committee the summary of their visit to Manchester. During the discussion, the following key points were raised:

- Members of the Committee reported they had undertaken a very interesting visit to Manchester City Council and the LGBT Foundation where they had heard extensively about their work on equalities, LGBT provision, partnership working and their proposals for an LGBT retirement housing provision. They wished to particularly thank both organisations and the Scrutiny Manager for organising such an interesting visit.
- Manchester City Council had a system of Lead Members where both backbench or Executive Councillors were allocated with special

responsibilities and this included all protected characteristics from the Equalities Act many of which were further divided such as “Lead Member for Gay Men” and “Lead Member for Lesbian Women”. This helped to embed the importance of equalities across the Council.

- Councillors Walsh and Jacca were asked to consider what they felt were the most important lessons learnt from the visit. They stated that the very well established partnership between Manchester City Council and the community and voluntary sector was one key aspect of Manchester’s success as well as equalities being embedded across the organisation such as through the emphasis placed on the Equalities Impact Assessment in reports.

4.4 **RESOLVED:**

That James Greenshields, Chief Executive, Tonic Housing be formally thanked for his presentation and for attending the Committee.

That during the recommendations stage of the in-depth review, consideration be given to making a formal recommendation to the Housing Select Committee to look at the evidence and the committee’s finding around housing provision for older members of the LGBT Community.

That the report be noted.

5. **Local Police Service Update**

5.1 Rob Jones, Borough Commander, presented to the Committee. During his presentation, the following key points were raised:

- Managing how to meet needs following recent events and threats at the same time as saving money were the ongoing priorities and challenges.
- Following on from item 4 on this agenda, the Borough Commander reported that the statistic on a 75% increase in transphobic hate crime was high but there was also a big problem with under-reporting. Lewisham Police were doing a lot of work to improve community relations and build confidence in the Police. There was a dedicated LGBT liaison officer. The increased incidences of transphobic hate crime could in part be due to better reporting and improved understanding.
- Recent serious events in London such as the terrorist attacks in London Bridge and Parsons Green had seen Lewisham officers amongst those on the scene. Many experienced anxiety as a result and supporting those officers was a priority.
- The Metropolitan Police were in the middle of an on-going savings process. An additional £400 million of savings was needed on top of £400 million that had already been achieved. The Estate Strategy was at the heart of the savings proposals and would see a reduction in estate to one quarter of those held in 2010. This would help to maintain officer numbers whilst fulfilling the savings obligations. Public consultations were due to start shortly and some Police counters would be closed. Lewisham Police Station would maintain a counter that was open 24 hours per day/ 7 days a week. There was also due to be a reduction in Borough Commander

numbers from 32 to 12 with Lewisham combining with Bexley and Greenwich.

- The Metropolitan Police were changing how they recruited to ensure they had a more diverse and representative Police force. This included new entry level detective posts which had encouraged a significantly higher number of female and BAME candidates than past recruitment.
- There had been very successful partnership working with the Community Safety Team including on tackling gangs and on weapons sweeps.

5.2 In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

- Community Policing was still seen as vitally important. There had been a reduction in the number of officers across London from 32,000 to 30,000 and this would fall further with the continued budgetary pressures, however the force was emphasising reduction in management levels to help to protect numbers of “frontline” Police Officers.
- Every ward in London would have a minimum of 2 dedicated ward officers but this would be more in certain areas.
- Demand at the Deptford and Catford Police Stations was low with, on average, 1 - 2 crimes reported there per day. Most people now preferred to report online or via phone. The Police Force understood it was often a concern to local residents but maintaining Police counters was not efficient.
- Concerns were raised around the reduction in PCSOs and the valuable resource they provided to the community.
- Every school in the borough would have a designated Police Officer and these would become more visible.
- The Borough Commander would report back to the Committee on the figure for sexual offences in schools in Lewisham and whether this had risen over the last few years.
- Across London there had been an increase in moped and acid attacks but this had not been the case in Lewisham. All officers were now carrying water for immediate use in an acid attack and improvements were being made to responding to moped attacks.
- Members of the Council and the Committee were concerned and saddened regarding recent attacks on Police officers in Lewisham and thanked the Police for all the work they did.
- Knife crime was falling in Lewisham and the Police and community partners had been very effective in managing this. There were on-going challenges on the rates of domestic violence and burglaries.

5.3 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and Rob Jones, Borough Commander be thanked for attending and presenting to the Committee.

6. Safer Lewisham Plan

6.1 Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People presented the report to the Committee. During her presentation and in the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

- The Safer Lewisham Plan priorities continued to shape the focus of work, this was focussed on all forms of serious violence including peer on peer abuse, and gender based violence. Appendix A of the report highlighted the Action Plan.
- Campaigns including “The Violence Stops Here” had been launched and a conference held in June 2017.
- The Council now had a detailed and comprehensive view of serious youth violence, safeguarding and criminal justice.
- The Universal Schools Programme would be working with Youth First later in 2017. The programme would include strategies for combatting drugs, knife crime and sexual violence and understanding appropriate relationships. In addition, there would be targeted interventions in Primary and Secondary schools working with pupils and parents.
- There continued to be on-going work around the Prevent agenda and on counter-extremism.
- Discrimination and disproportionality continued to be an important issues. There were still concerns in the community about injustices particularly with respect to stop and search.
- Removing stigma from parents seeking help through the schools programme was important. Mentoring, coaching and supporting were key.
- The Schools programme was an interactive 6 session programme with parents and students. In addition to this there would be youth workers in school for example during break times.
- Digital campaigns were important but it was important to monitor how effective they were. It should not be uniquely confined to social media.

6.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

7. **Select Committee work programme**

7.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the work programme to the Committee and highlighted that in addition to the items listed in the report for the November meeting, there would also be an item on the budget and savings proposals.

7.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

That a proposal for an all member briefing on gangs and youth violence and on the trauma-informed approach be put forward as a suggestion for member training and development.

8. **Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet**

There were no referrals to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm

Chair:

Date:
