

MINUTES OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 2 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Pauline Morrison (Chair), James-J Walsh (Vice-Chair), Brenda Dacres, Colin Elliott, Sue Hordijkenko, Councillor Joyce Jacca, Jim Mallory and David Michael

APOLOGIES: Councillors Pat Raven and Paul Upex

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Joe Dromey (Cabinet Member Policy & Performance), David Austin (Head of Corporate Resources), Adam Bowles (Head of OD & HR), Liz Dart (Head of Culture and Community Development), Andrew Jacobs (Organisational Learning and Talent Manager), Megan Mellor (Community Coordinator), Barrie Neal (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance), Dr Danny Ruta (Director of Public Health) (London Borough of Lewisham), Simone van Elk (Cabinet Executive Officer) and Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting on the 21 September 2017 be agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Pauline Morrison declared a personal interest in item 5 as she received the single person's Council Tax discount.

Councillor James-J Walsh declared a personal interest in item 4 as he was one of the founders of the LGBT staff forum and in item 5 as he received the single person's Council Tax discount.

3. Response to Referrals from this Committee - Referral on the Library Service

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

4. Evidence Session - LGBT Provision in Lewisham

4.1 Danny Ruta, Director of Public Health gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which will be included in the agenda documentation. During the presentation the following key points were highlighted:

- There was a lack of information on the LGBT community and the Council's Public Health Team would welcome any recommendations around ways to improve the quantity and quality of data available.
- Public Health had the same equalities responsibilities as the Council overall and must have respect to the protected characteristics as set out in the

Equalities Act 2010 and not discriminate against anyone. Public Health also had a responsibility for identifying any inequalities in health.

- Public Health were responsible for updating the Lewisham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This was a requirement introduced following the Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and is used to ensure the needs of the local population are understood and considered as a central part of the commissioning process.
- Currently 10 public health outcomes performance dashboards were produced which aimed to monitor how the borough performed against key indicators. These were routinely monitored and updated and were based on the following areas: alcohol usage; cancer mortality; healthy weight; immunisation; maternal and child health; mental health; physical activity; sexual health; tobacco usage; and health checks for cardiovascular disease.
- There was currently very little data available on the LGBT population and the team relied on surveys such as the ONS Annual Population Survey and the What About Youth (WAY) survey conducted on behalf of the Department of Health.
- There were currently only 5 service user indicators where data on sexual orientation of users was collected. These were: HIV late diagnosis; health related quality of life for older people; smoking (adults); smoking (15 year olds); and proportion of the population meeting the recommended “5-a-day” at age 15. The data was, however, based on very small numbers and therefore had to be used with caution.
- The Council’s Health and Wellbeing Board had statutory responsibility for the JSNA. Data review was an on-going process and they had a prioritisation process for reviewing data as it took 2 to 3 months to review each area.
- The Health and Wellbeing board had agreed to set up a steering group who were inviting anyone to submit areas to be reviewed which would then be prioritised. It would be possible to submit a suggestion for a needs assessment looking at LGBT inequality in Lewisham for example. This would then be prioritised for action according to their process.

4.2 In the discussion that followed, the following key points were highlighted:

- The website was going to be redesigned to make it more user-friendly and accessible.
- Members of the Committee highlighted their surprise that there was so little information available on the LGBT community and that there had not been work done on all the equalities strands and how important it was that they were all fully covered.
- A large percentage of the HIV population in England lived in London and it was a very important area to fully understand.
- Concerns were raised about the sexual health provision for gay men in Lewisham and that they needed to be improved to ensure a good quality of service that helped to serve residents.
- The Director of Public Health was asked to clarify whether other boroughs had the same problem in terms of access to data on the LGBT community. This information would be provided to the Committee.
- It was suggested by members of the Committee that universities could be used to collect data.

- The LGBT Foundation had produced a report on the importance of LGBT evidence being part of local JSNAs and guidance for local authorities. It could be very useful if key staff received training on this.
- Members of the Committee spoke about issues such as the prevalence of HIV and drug usage in the LGBT community. As it was known that Lewisham had a higher than average population from the LGBT community, it was essential that there was an increased understanding of these and similar issues that affected the LGBT community.
- The Committee's review was focussing on the LGBT community but concerns were raised that there could be other areas of the protected equalities strands that were similarly missing from the data in the JSNA.

4.3 Adam Bowles, Head of Organisational Development and HR, and Andrew Jacobs, Organisational Learning and Talent Management Manager, gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which will be included in the agenda documentation. During their presentation, the following key points were highlighted:

- The rates of disclosure amongst staff were increasing and the Council was able to build up an increased understanding of the workforce. In 2016/17, there was information on 55% of the workforce which was similar to many other London boroughs. The highest disclosure rate was 76% in LB Newham and the lowest was 4% in LB Richmond.
- A new HR system was due to be in place in 2018 and it was hoped this would improve data collection.
- Recruitment data was much more robust as 90% of people who applied for posts listed their sexual orientation. Last year there were 5,300 applicants for posts in Lewisham. 2.0% of applicants listed their sexual orientation as Lesbian or Gay and 0.9% listed bisexual. The figures for those offered positions was 1.9% Lesbian or Gay and 0.8% bisexual. Of those actually hired 1.9% were Lesbian or Gay and 0.4% bisexual.
- There were 186 leavers (non-schools) during the last financial year, 62% of which declared their sexual orientation when they left. 3.8% of all leavers identified at LGB.
- There was a Lewisham LGBT staff forum and there were new members attending and increasingly strong links with the HR department. The forum met regularly and had a representation at many events.
- HR were looking to discuss increasingly working with the forum to discuss policies and proposals and for the forum to consider implications for the LGBT community. The forum had worked with Lewisham Public Health looking at their End of Life Care Review.
- There was a new process in place to welcome new staff to Lewisham which included a new online module highlighting the staff forums available to join. There was also a new face to face coffee with the Mayor session for new employees and representatives from the LGBT and other staff forums are invited to these events to meet new employees.
- The introduction of the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in May 2018 will have implications on how data is collected and stored.
- Training on equalities and diversity needed to be delivered to teams on a needs basis as there was evidence that mandatory training was not successful in terms of outcomes.

- There had been no LGBT related grievances, discipline or tribunal cases in the last 3 years at Lewisham.
- There were new online courses on equality and diversity available to staff and more work was being planned to introduce new courses on these themes.

4.4 In the discussion that followed, the following keys points were raised:

- Equalities data on service users such as those accessing libraries or housing services could be gathered.
- Work needed to be done to consider how people wished to self-identify to ensure the language used was helpful. This needed to be worked on further and built into the new HR IT service.
- It was important that when requesting data from staff it was clearly communicated to them how the data would be stored (anonymously and separately from employees' profiles) and the reasons for collecting it.
- The Chairs of the staff forums meet with the Executive Director for Community Services as part of the Equalities Board meetings.
- HR were working with the BAME staff forum to support them moving forward following their previous Chair leaving the organisation.
- Work could be done to facilitate Lewisham staff forums to meet with similar staff forums in other major borough employers such as Lewisham Hospital and Goldsmiths University.
- Work was being done to improve information collected in relation to grievances, raised through the appraisal process. Concerns were raised that this process was currently not up to scratch.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

That the discussion and possible recommendations mentioned at this meeting as listed above, be used to help shape the Committee's review recommendations when being agreed at the next meeting on 13 December 2017.

5. Lewisham Future Programme

- 5.1 David Austin, Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report to the Committee and highlighted the following key points:
- The savings proposals were part of the on-going budget reductions made since 2010 and would continue until at least 2020.
 - Partner organisations were now increasingly feeling the pressure from their own budget reductions, in particular in Health and Education.
 - Policy changes were also challenging in terms of managing uncertainty. Changes included: the introduction of the adult social care precept; new homes bonus; business rates retention and the Fair Funding Review; welfare changes; and Brexit.
 - The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy included £160 million of previously agreed savings of which £153 million had been delivered. An additional £33 million of savings were needed over the next 2 years.

- There was a projected £13 million overspend for 2017/18 of which £7 million was previous undelivered savings.
- Currently overspends at the end of the year were being met by using the Council's financial reserves. This issue needed to be addressed as soon as possible.
- The report highlighted £4.9 million of savings for the 2018/19 financial year. The 2018/19 budget was predicted to be set using £17.15 million of reserves.

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

- It was very difficult to compare positions with other local authorities. A proxy measure in London was the level of a Council's reserves. Lewisham was in the 50-75% quartile of reserves held but without knowing the specific details of savings achieved etc. by other authorities and what local circumstances reserves were held for and committed to, it was very difficult to compare.
- The Fair Funding review was important as the effects of Business Rate retention would affect authorities very differently.
- Some of the areas of overspend included: children's services; adult social care; environmental services from delays in income being delivered in trade waste and garden waste and additional fleet costs; and technology with the IT costs to get the service to a sufficient standard and income projections not yet being delivered.
- Full details were available in the reports to the Public Accounts Select Committee.
- There were proposals for London Councils to work together to pool business rates.
- **The Chair left the room at 8.15pm and returned at 8.20pm. During this time the Vice-Chair took over chairing the meeting.**

5.3 Gary Connors, Strategic Community Safety Services Manager, outlined savings proposal K5 to the Committee. During his introduction and during the discussion that followed, the following key point was raised:

- The proposal was for a reduction of £30,000 which represented 50% of a small budget allocated to provide resources to deliver resolutions to small crime problems throughout the year. This could include, for example, moving CCTV cameras or delivering an advertising campaign.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. Lewisham Poverty Commission - Final Report

6.1 Councillor Joe Dromey, Executive Member for Policy and Performance introduced the report to the Committee. Simone van Elk, Cabinet Executive Officer, was also in attendance for this item. During the presentation and in the discussion that followed, the following key points were highlighted:

- The Commission was set up following a recommendation from the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's review into Poverty in Lewisham

and in the context of the high levels of poverty and child poverty in Lewisham.

- The process had been very interesting and rewarding, in particular, combining external experts, Scrutiny Councillors and Executive Councillors in a new approach had been very successful.
- The recommendations included those for the current and any future Mayor, those for partner organisations and those for the National Government.
- It could be useful to provide a copy of the report to all present Councillors and to any new Councillors to Lewisham.
- Members of the Committee felt it was a very good example of a new way of working with Executive and Scrutiny Councillors working together with local experts.
- It was important to support voluntary groups in their work, building a strong community sector. Use of the Social Value Act could be further explored by the Council in its approach to commissioning.
- Councillor Dromey thanked the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee for its support and role on the Commission and thanked Council officers in the Policy and Partnership Team and in the Mayor's Office for their support, and Simone van Elk for her role.

6.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

7. **Community Cohesion (including extremism strategy)**

7.1 Gary Connors, Strategic Community Safety Services Manager, and Megan Mellor, Community Coordinator introduced the report to the Committee. In their presentation and in the subsequent discussion, the following key points were highlighted:

- The Government's Counter Extremism strategy had been published in 2015. It was focussed on combatting hate perpetrators and non-violent terrorists and was separate to the Prevent Strategy.
- The Counter Extremism strategy's main focus was on: Countering extremist ideology; building a partnership with all those opposed to extremism; disrupting extremists; and building more cohesive communities.
- The strategy had also introduced new funding that was available for local authorities to employ community coordinators and Lewisham was one of 13 local authorities in London who was successful in gaining funding for this post.
- Part of the role of the coordinator was engaging community groups and building support and helping community groups to access funding through the Government's Building a Stronger Britain Together (BSBT) funding scheme.
- A member of the Committee requested assurances that the funding was not similar to the immigration enforcement part of the Government's Controlling Migration Fund. It was confirmed that although the post was grant funded by the Home Office, the employee worked directly for the Council.
- The team was looking to work with organisations such as Anne Frank Trust on initiatives in schools to combat prejudice and tackling extremist views.

They also worked with organisations such as Second Wave on commissioning projects in schools and with community groups.

- A report would be brought back to the Committee outlining the work done by the Council on implementing the Extremism strategy and the outcomes from the funding received.

7.2 RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

That an update report be added to the Committee's work programme for the meeting on 7 March 2017.

8. Select Committee work programme

8.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the report to the Committee and highlighted that it would be amended to reflect the request during item 7 of this meeting that an additional report be added on the Council's approach to implementing the Government's Extremism strategy.

8.2 RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

That an update report on Lewisham's approach to implementing the Extremism strategy be added to the work programme for the meeting on 7 March 2018.

9. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

RESOLVED:

There were no referrals to Mayor and Cabinet.

That following the evidence session on LGBT Provision in Lewisham, the Committee proposed to make recommendations on improving the JSNA as part of their in-depth review. The Committee would explore this in more detail at their next meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chair:

Date:
