

MINUTES OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 26 November 2019 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Juliet Campbell (Chair), James Rathbone (Vice-Chair), Sophie Davis, Eva Stamirowski and James-J Walsh

APOLOGIES: Councillors Liam Curran, Carl Handley, Jim Mallory, Lionel Openshaw and Stephen Penfold

ALSO PRESENT: Tom Brown (Executive Director for Community Services), Keith Cohen (Head of Lewisham YOS), Gary Connors (Head of Crime, Enforcement and Regulation), Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney (Director of Public Protection and Safety) and Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019

1.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting on the 9 October be agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 Cllr Rathbone declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 5 as he was a Council appointee to Voluntary Action Lewisham.

2.2 Cllr Walsh declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 5 as he was a Council appointee to Voluntary Action Lewisham.

3. Response to Referrals from this Committee

3.1 RESOLVED

There were no referrals due to be considered at this meeting.

4. Modern Day Slavery

4.1 Gary Connors, Head of Crime, Enforcement & Regulation, introduced the report to the Committee. Keith Cohen, Head of Lewisham Youth Offending Service was also in attendance. In the discussion that followed a number of key points were made.

4.2 A member of the Committee requested additional information on the numbers of referrals made in Lewisham through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and comparisons with other London boroughs for the

last few years. **This information would be provided to the Committee as far as possible** but some of the data was not available in as much depth as desirable as it was owned by the Home Office and unavailable for release.

- 4.3 Training on identifying signs of modern-day slavery was being rolled out across key areas such as to social workers in Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Once champions were in place this could be expanded further. It would be possible to organise training for members if requested. The Council had officers embedded in services to support key groups such as through the Athena Service and working with the Vietnamese Community.
- 4.4 Following a question from a member of the Committee, the Committee were informed that the possibility of an e-mail footer on the Council's Modern-day slavery statement being produced would be looked into.
- 4.5 There were particular issues in the borough such as organised begging. The Council was working closely with partners to support those genuinely in need and to identify where criminality or exploitation was involved. There were also issues with unregulated labour such as in the building trade and these would be closely monitored.
- 4.6 There had been nail bars in Lewisham and a carwash where modern-day slavery had been discovered and the Council worked closely with partners to identify and support victims.
- 4.7 A member of the Committee commented that it was important to keep the terminology consistent in the report and to not use the term "slavery" on its own in place of Modern-Day or Modern Slavery.
- 4.8 It could be challenging to reach some communities and individuals. Equipping social workers to identify signs, as well as new schemes such as the private landlord properties registration scheme were mechanisms which it was hoped, would help.
- 4.9 Councillor Campbell, Chair of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee and members of the Committee, thanked Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Director of Public Protection and Safety for her work for Lewisham Council and with the Committee over the last 12 years and wished her well for her new position.

4.10 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

That the Committee be provided with additional information on the number of National Referral Mechanism referrals in Lewisham and comparisons with other London boroughs.

5. How the Council embeds equalities across its service delivery - Evidence Session

- 5.1 Tom Brown, Executive Director for Community Services, gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which will be included in the agenda documentation. In the discussion that followed, a number of key points were made.
- 5.2 There were some areas of inequalities that were more understood than others and it was always a challenge to understand the complex nature of those with multiple characteristics.
- 5.3 Members of the committee felt that they had received a lot of information on the framework of what should be happening regarding the consideration of equalities in the Council but would like to understand more about how it was actually carried out in practice. **It was requested that the Executive Director for Community Services provide an example of how the Council had considered equalities implications and produced an Equality Analysis Assessment on a specific piece of work.** The Committee were informed that the equalities analysis connected to the Achilles Street ballot was a thorough and impressive example.
- 5.4 More information was requested on the thresholds for producing Equalities Analysis Assessments that were formally in place in Lewisham. **The Executive Director for Community Services would provide this to the Committee.**
- 5.5 The Committee were informed that socio-economic disadvantage was considered but not as a specific characteristic. It tended to form part of the layers of inequality faced by those with protected characteristics. **When the update information requested was provided to the Committee, it should specifically include consideration of socio-economic disadvantage.**
- 5.6 The Committee requested information on when unconscious bias training would be delivered to senior management. **This would be provided to the Committee.**
- 5.7 **RESOLVED:**

That the presentation be noted.

That the Committee be provided with a specific step-by-step example of how the Council has considered equalities implications and produced an Equality Analysis Assessment on two areas of work. One should be an example of where, in the opinion of officers, this was done well, and one where this was done not so well.

6. Select Committee work programme

- 6.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the report to the Committee.

- 6.2 The Chair highlighted that the report on the Council's Employee Profile was following up on the report received by the Committee in July and members had requested that representatives from the Council's trade unions be invited to speak.
- 6.3 Members of the Committee agreed that, as they had received an update on the Public Health Approach to Crime Reduction at the October meeting of the Committee, it would not be necessary for a further report in January.
- 6.4 Due to the number of items of the agenda for January, members agreed that the 6-month update to the response to the Committee's recommendations on their Prevent and Stop and Search review could be postponed until the March meeting.
- 6.5 Members agreed that at item on the Committee's Equalities review could be included on the January agenda to circulate any submissions by community groups and evidence from the LGA.
- 6.6 Members of the Committee requested that the information from the Borough Commanders for Police and Fire, include any information the Committee had requested at the last meeting they had attended in May 2019. In particular, that for the next report from the London Fire Brigade, it would be useful to include details of non-fire related work such as support given in road traffic accidents in the borough.

6.2 **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the report due to the next meeting on the "Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction" be removed from the Committee's work programme.
- 2) That the sixth-month update report on the Committee's recommendations in their review into Stop and Search and Prevent be postponed until the March meeting.
- 3) That an item on the Committee's Equalities Review be added to the work programme for the meeting on the 16th January to receive any evidence submissions by local community groups.

7. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

7.1 **RESOLVED:**

There were no referrals to Mayor and Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

Chair:

Date:
