

MINUTES OF THE SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 16 June 2021 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Juliet Campbell (Chair), James Rathbone (Vice-Chair), Liam Curran, Pauline Morrison and Rachel Onikosi.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Bill Brown

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Brenda Dacres (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Safer Communities), Councillor Jonathan Slater, Vicki Amedume (Associate Producer (The Albany), Kellie Blake (Senior Producer, Events Team), Charlotte Dale (Head of Overview and Scrutiny), Liz Dart (Head of Culture and Community Development), James Lee (Director of Communities, Partnerships and Leisure), Salena Mulhere (Assistant Chief Executive), Nancy Stridgen (Arts Development Officer) and Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Confirmation of Chair and Vice-Chair

1.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager, opened the meeting and requested members of the Committee confirm the appointments of Cllr Juliet Campbell as Committee Chair and Cllr James Rathbone as Committee Vice-Chair.

1.2 RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Cllr Juliet Campbell as Chair and the appointment of Cllr James Rathbone as Vice-Chair of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee be unanimously agreed.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2021

2.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting on 1st March 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of interest

3.1 Councillor James Rathbone declared a personal interest in item 8 as he was a trustee of an organisation currently in receipt of a grant from the Council's Main Grants Programme.

4. Response to Referrals from this Committee

4.1 There were no responses to referrals to be considered at the meeting.

5. Select Committee work programme

5.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the report to the Committee. During the discussion the following key points were noted:

- The Work Programme could be amended throughout the year to address emerging issues. There would be a work programme item on the agenda at each meeting of the Committee.
- It was likely that an item on the budget would be taken in the Autumn and once the details were finalised the Committee could amend their work programme to accommodate this.

5.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the provisional work programme be agreed.

6. Lewisham Borough of Culture

6.1 Liz Dart, Director of Culture, Libraries and Learning presented the report to the Committee along with colleagues Kellie Blake, Senior Producer, Nancy Stridgen, Cultural and Community Development Officer, and Vicki Amedume, Associate Director at The Albany. During the discussion the following key points were noted:

- The geographical spread of events across the borough was important and the aim was to have events in every ward.
- Funding was being sought to secure legacy projects as part of the proposals. This could include the re-opening of the Broadway Theatre. Other legacy projects included some commissions having permanent elements and a network of culture champions in Lewisham schools. There was also the aim to do work to increase diversity in the cultural sector.
- Education partners would connect the team to young people in care and young people in the Pupil Referral Unit to involve them in events were possible.
- Discussions were taking place with the Albany to involve campaigns such as Fun Palaces.

6.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

7. Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

7.1 James Lee, Director of Communities Partnership and Leisure introduced the report to the Committee. During the discussion, the following key points were raised:

- Concerns were raised about some of the data used in the report and the sometimes large variance between local figures and national. It was requested that more information be provided to the Committee on this including ensuring data was triangulated from difference sources to ensure

it was robust and any reasons for discrepancies could be properly assessed.

- Members of the Committee requested that the VAWG Strategy return to the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee later in the year.
- The Strategy had been built around engagement with survivors of domestic abuse.
- Tight timeframes for funding programmes from central government and from the GLA and MOPAC posed additional challenges in securing funding needed.
- A member of the Committee raised concern on the strong focus on domestic abuse rather than all forms of VAWG in the Strategy and that this “diluted” other forms of VAWG. There was little reference to issues such as: sexual violence; gendered gang violence; street abuse; and issues in schools in the report. Nationally and London-wider Domestic Abuse Strategies were separate to VAWG Strategies albeit with clear overlaps. Domestic Abuse should be one of the strands of VAWG rather than the whole strategy.
- The Committee were informed that it was following engagement with Children’s Social Care where the strong emphasis had been placed on domestic abuse and that the VAWG term was not well understood.
- Members of the Committee raised issues where there were assumptions and inferences in the report that were not backed up by data. The Committee were keen to ensure any assumptions were clearly explained as to the rationale and data behind them. The example was given of the phrase at 6.5 in the report: “the increase in self-referrals in this period, which would indicate a greater ability of victims to seek help.”
- A member of the Committee commented that “Domestic Abuse” was not in the title of VAWG Strategies nationally and London-wide. If there were problems with the public not understanding the term then more could be done to support and educate them.

7.2 **RESOLVED:**

- 1) Information should be provided to the Committee on the reason the Lewisham Domestic Abuse and VAWG Strategy was almost entirely focused on domestic abuse rather than domestic abuse being a distinct strategy or a key part of the VAWG Strategy. Nationally and London-wide VAWG Strategies focus on crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls including sexual abuse, stalking, forced marriage and domestic abuse.
- 2) That the statistics provided in the report on domestic abuse rates in Lewisham be triangulated with a range of data sources to ensure they are robust and accurately reflect the situation in Lewisham.
- 3) The VAWG Strategy should return to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee later in the year and following the consultation process for further scrutiny.

8. **Main Grants Programme Consultation**

- 8.1 James Lee, Director of Communities Partnership and Leisure introduced the report to the Committee. During the discussion, the following key points were raised:
- Members of the Committee were keen to understand whether it would be possible to scrutinise the main grant proposals prior to them going to Mayor and Cabinet. The Director of Communities, Partnership and Leisure would look into this further and work with the Scrutiny Manager to ensure it was on the Committee's timetable.

8.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the Main Grants proposals return to Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee for pre-decision scrutiny prior to them going to Mayor and Cabinet in January 2022. The Director of Communities, Partnership and Leisure should work with the Scrutiny Manager to ensure there is provision for this in the Committee's timetable.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chair:

Date:
