



CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH
ON THURSDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor H.W. David - Chair

Councillors:

L. Binding, Mrs P. Cook, C.J. Cuss, Ms E. Forehead, C. Gordon, C. Hawker, Ms J.G. Jones, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann and D. Rees.

Cabinet Member:

N. George (Community and Leisure Services)

Together with:

R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), K. Peters (Community Safety Manager), R. Thornett (Tenancy Enforcement Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), S. Ead (Solicitor) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

Outside Bodies: N. McLain (Gwent Police).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Morgan, R. Saralis, and J. Taylor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 19TH MARCH 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19th March 2015 (minute nos. 1 - 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. REGIONAL COORDINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (VAWDASV) PROVISION - PRESENTATION

K. Peters (Community Safety Manager) provided the Committee with a presentation, which highlighted the changes in local domestic abuse delivery arrangements, with particular reference to coordination services and Welsh Government (WG) legislation and strategic priorities.

The presentation highlighted that previously a grant was disseminated to Local Authorities in order to fund coordination services and part funded the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and part funded the Domestic Abuse Coordinator. Domestic Abuse Services have now been regionalised as a result of Welsh Government strategic priorities and a new Welsh Government Act, the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act, which aims to combat any inconsistencies in service level and delivery across local authorities. It was noted that Newport are the lead Authority for the project and a new Regional Advisor has been appointed.

Members noted that the Regional structure is still in its infancy, as a result, further developments are required in order to establish an effective team, communicate with partners and to adopt the requirements of the Act which include the National Training Framework and Ask and Act duty on public authorities. In addition, support will be provided in schools through introducing 'Safer Relationships' into PSE lessons and a Regional Domestic Abuse Plan is to be developed with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB).

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the presentation and discussion ensued.

Members discussed the regional priorities and raised concerns for the safeguards in place and impact on local authorities. Officers highlighted that the process is still in its infancy and therefore under constant development. The Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate post is still in place, which does provide support to high risk victims, working with Police and Crown Prosecution Service.

The Chief Inspector, N McLain added that, whilst there are both negatives and positives to the changes across Gwent, the main focus still remains to be the victim and focussing on the risk of harm. Weekly multi-agency conference calls are conducted, which consider the cases of domestic abuse, as well the support for the victim and the prosecution process.

Members discussed the funding and, in noting that Newport is the lead Authority for the service, queried whether the funding was provided on the size of the area. Officers highlighted that there are 2 Officers in post for East Gwent and West Gwent. It was noted that there are more cases of Domestic Abuse within the Newport and Caerphilly areas, however for split represents the best use of the resources available to the team. Members were asked to note that whilst there has been an increase in funding received, there has not been an increase in resources.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

5. FAMILY INTERVENTION PROJECT AND VALLEYS INCLUSION PROJECT

Following a Member request at the last meeting, R. Thornett (Tenancy Enforcement Manager) presented the report, which provided information on the Solas, Lasting Solutions Family Intervention Project (FIP) and the Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project (VIP).

The Lasting Solutions Family Intervention Project was in operation within the CCBC area from November 2010 until March 2015. The FIP was a rehabilitation scheme for the most challenging families who were at risk of losing their home as a result of anti-social behaviour and used a combination of assertive support and enforcement techniques. The aim was to work with the most challenging families and any agencies already working with them, to deliver sustained and agreed change. Services were delivered by a key worker.

The project continued to work with a family until either the family reformed their behaviour or the family failed to engage with the project. An exit strategy was put in place for the withdrawal of the key worker.

Within CCBC, homeless prevention work has been evolving over a period of time. Support Officers have been working within the Housing Advice Centre for the past 12 months focusing on providing crisis support to households where there is a threat of homelessness. This has been in preparation for the new statutory requirements on Local Authorities to develop new homeless strategies by 2018. The advancement of the prevention work has been funded out of the Preventing Homelessness budget which has also received transitional funding from Welsh Government and this will result in the appointment of additional homeless prevention support officers. Also, it had been agreed to part fund the Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project out of the same budget. Taking all this into account, it was confirmed that the £25k cost of FIP which predominantly fell on Housing was no longer cost effective in light of the other prevention services being introduced and as a result, FIP ceased to operate in April 2015. However, the families still receiving support continued to do so until their cases were closed.

The Shelter Cymru Valleys Inclusion Project has been operating almost continually within CCBC since July 2005. It was initially a pilot project wholly funded by WG operating within Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taff. The aims of the pilot project which have transferred into the existing project include prevention of eviction and exclusion and provide a route back into settle housing for people already excluded, reduce anti-social behaviour, improve participation and inclusion, and reduce the impact on housing management.

Since 2008 Housing have referred 54 households to the VIP for support and the project provides a support mechanism for households in CCBC that isn't available elsewhere. It helps them to determine the cause of their difficulties as a household, rather than focusing in an individual. By getting to the root of a problem/s they help the family to take the necessary steps to address the underlying issues and prevent problems arising in the future.

A full evaluation (2010/11) and 2 interim evaluations (2008-2010 and 2013) have been conducted and found clear evidence that the VIP has prevented homelessness and reduced anti social behaviour. It has also had a significant impact on service users' personal lives by improving confidence, self-esteem, relationships with families and the ability to manage daily issues.

Members thanked the Officer for the report and expressed support for the scheme and the clear benefits it provides, however highlighted their disappointment at the lack of support from other agencies for the service.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report and it was unanimously recommended that Caerphilly Safety Partnership is urged to consider a variety of funding sources in order to maintain the Valleys Inclusion Project.

6. THE COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015 – PREVENT DUTY

The report provided Members with details the new Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and in particular the duty placed on specified authorities for Prevent and Channel.

The Government's national counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST has four components: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. The Prevent component of the Strategy is a partnership responsibility with 'specified authorities' including local government, police, health, criminal justice, education and child care sectors, playing a key role in identifying and supporting at risk individuals. Prevent primarily focuses on preventing vulnerable people from being drawn into extremism, and committing acts of terrorism, through the Channel multi agency process.

The Committee noted that Section 26 of The Counter-Terrorism Act 2015 places the 'Prevention of People Being Drawn into Terrorism' and 'The Support for People Vulnerable to Being Drawn into Terrorism' on a statutory footing and is supported by two sets of statutory guidance relevant to the specified authority role, which includes Local Authorities, Schools and Police.

The Committee noted that in 2013, the Safer Caerphilly Channel Panel was set up, which has well established mechanisms for dealing with referrals from the local Police Single Point of Contact and the Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit. The Panel operates under a set of terms of reference agreed by all partners. To date two cases have been dealt with, one through Home Office specialist counter narrative intervention. The number of referrals are increasing as awareness raises among partners. There is a high level of awareness among the public at present due to media coverage of Islamist extremism. However, Prevent/Channel aims to deal with all forms of radicalisation.

The Committee thanked the Officer for the report and discussion ensued.

Members discussed the report and sought further information on the support provisions available within Schools. Officers highlighted that The Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service have recently appointed a member of staff to support Chief Education Officers and schools in their new duties to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, producing safeguarding policies to identify children at risk and intervene appropriately and providing staff training to staff to identify children at risk.

A Member, in noting that two cases have been dealt with by the Safer Caerphilly Channel Panel, sought further information on the cases. Officers highlighted that since 2013, there have been 5 cases which have been brought to the attention of the Panel, 3 of which were agreed to be minor, in which case intervention with parents, partners and the young people in question was conducted. However, there were 2 cases in which further intervention and tailored package of support for the whole family, from a variety of partners was required.

Members raised concerns around the increased International threat and the impact on Caerphilly CBC and the Safer Caerphilly Partnership. Officers assured Members that, whilst there is an increase in the threat of terrorism from extremism on a National and International level, Caerphilly CBC has been considered a low threat, however there is a greater concern around far right ideologies.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

7. SAFER CAERPHILLY PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

K. Peters, Community Safety Manager, presented the report to Members, the purpose of which was to detail the Safer Caerphilly Performance Scorecard for Quarter 1 2015 - 16.

The Safer Caerphilly Delivery Group has responsibility for ensuring that the Safer Caerphilly elements on the single integrated plan encompass the statutory responsibilities placed on community safety partners to develop strategies to: reduce crime and disorder in the area, combat substance misuse in the area, and reduce reoffending in the area.

The Safer Caerphilly Delivery Group monitors its activities through the Safer Caerphilly Partnership Performance Scorecard. Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee has previously agreed that the most recently updated Scorecard will be presented at each meeting.

The single plan priority areas relevant to Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee are:

S1 – Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of becoming a victim of anti-social behaviour for residents.

S2 – Reduce crime and the fear of crime for the residents of the county borough.

S3 – Reduce the harm caused to communities through substance misuse.

S4 – Ensure people are supported to live in their own homes and communities in safety.

S5 – Improve the education, information, early intervention, prevention and harm reduction in relation to substance misuse in the county borough.

The Safer Caerphilly Delivery Group agreed at its meeting of the 17th July to revise the scorecard for 2015 – 2016 as part of the statutory annual review process to update the S4 priority area to:

S4 – Support Domestic Abuse Victims and their families and raise awareness of domestic abuse, violence against women and sexual violence.

The Committee thanked the Officer for the report and requested a copy of the presentation highlighting the crime figures.

Members considered the data in detail and noted that, as a result of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, as part of the Positive Futures Programme, a programme has been launched which aims to tackle Anti Social Behaviour by identifying hotspot areas for ASB and encompassing projects within these areas.

The Committee noted that additional projects have also been launched, a campaign, which aims to tackle bullying online and through Social Media has been launched. Information has been provided to schools and posted on websites to ensure that young people are safer online. It was also noted that Substance Misuse Centre opened in Rhymney in July, to support people with substance misuse issues.

Members noted that Performance Indicators have been agreed for data on Domestic Abuse but had not yet been collected due to the formation of the new regional team.

A Member sought further information on the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour conducted by people under 25 years old. Officers explained that a breakdown of the age ranges involved in the Strike 1 Process could be circulated to Members following the meeting.

Following detailed discussion and debate, Members thanked officers for the report and noted the contents.

8. REQUESTS FOR REPORTS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

There were no requests for items to be placed on the next available agenda.

The meeting closed at 6.44 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2016, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR