

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Date: 28 February 2018

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors M Rahman (Chair), D Davies, Y Forsey, R Hayat, M Linton, S Marshall, T Suller and K Whitehead.

In Attendance: Rhys Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change), Mary Ryan (Corporate Safeguarding Manager), Sally Jenkins (Head of Children & Young People Services), James Harris (Strategic Director – People) and Elizabeth Blayney (Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors R Mogford

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None

2 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 January 2018**

Invitees;

- Rhys Cornwall (Head of People and Business Change)

The minutes of the Meeting held on 10 January 2018 were considered, and a verbal update was provided from the Head of People and Business Change. At the previous meeting, Members had requested feedback on the partnership work in Pill, specifically the approach the partnership had used to identify issues and need for this area, the work that had been undertaken to provide solutions and whether it would be a suitable approach to use for other areas.

The Officer advised the Committee that The Pill work is reported through the Single Integrated Plan monitoring that Scrutiny receive. And in the new draft Wellbeing Plan, there is a proposed intervention of 'Strong Resilient Communities' Developing a place based approach with local communities that consider the long term needs alongside the short term needs and assets of that community. Working in collaboration with the community and a range of organisations. Identifying assets and needs and empowering local people to lead and develop their local community. Under this intervention, the PSB would anticipate the development of a place based approach as described.

The Committee thanked the Officer for providing the update.

Agreed:

The minutes of the Meeting held on 10 January 2018 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 **Education Achievement Service Business Plan 2018-2021**

The Chair advised the Committee that due to the weather conditions, the EAS representative was unable to make the meeting, so the item would be postponed. Due to the Committees comments being reported to the Cabinet meeting on 14 March, the Committee would need to meet within the next week. The Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer would advise the Committee of the date as soon as possible.

4 **Draft Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy**

Invitees:

- Mary Ryan – Corporate Safeguarding Manager
- Sally Jenkins – Head of Children & Young People Services
- James Harris – Strategic Director - People

The Head of Children & Young People Services presented an overview of the Strategy to the Committee, and advised that Newport were the lead authority in Gwent for this work, and had been since 2015. The Corporate Safeguarding Manager was responsible for the team in Llamau, and who had received a high amount of praise from the number of initiatives run. Regional work was an enormous challenge with the competing demands, the number of providers and sectors however there was excellent work being undertaken.

The strategy was in draft form, the timeframe had been amended to 2018-23 in line with the Wellbeing plan, as this would be monitored as one of the elements within the plan.

A full list of the Partnership Board Members were included within the report, and included the 5 local authorities, the Police, Health Boards and a number of other organisations. From the beginning there had been consultation with survivors which had helped develop the strategy. In November 2017, the partners hosted the first All Wales conference which launched the strategy for consultation.

Training had been organised in different ways, via online training for staff and face to face training with professionals and organisations. Focus groups had been used to look into and gather information on specific areas. The Officer acknowledged that a weakness within the strategy was the low consultation rates in male survivors; there was a work plan in place to address this.

The Members asked the following:

- Members commended the intentions of the initiative of the plan, and asked how success would be measured. Some success would be measureable, there was currently a training pilot being run making sure that all professionals have the awareness and skills how to ask the right questions. The measure was of the experience of those who come through the service being better supported, and the team were better able to ensure that people can stay safety in their homes. There was a need to be aware that figures on reporting would likely increase in the first instance, but in the long term (10 to 15 years) success would be measured through a decrease in this figure. The more professionals that undertook the training, and were more able to ask the right questions and have the right skills to properly respond in situations of domestic abuse. Many of the outcomes mirrored those for the Social Services and Wellbeing Plan
- The evidence base and context provided within the report was commended.

- Were the Partners confident that there were sufficient resources to implement the Strategy? The partnership had funding for the team to develop sub groups however this funding would cease at the end of March 2019. The Partnerships was aware that there were resource implications which would need to be worked through.
- The Head of Service advised that although this is an area of work was a priority for all authorities, it was not statutory funded. The provision would be a continual challenge and it was important for all partners to know their role in the strategic plan. There were issues with ongoing funding, which could not solely be sourced from Welsh Government or the Councils, but through a wider network of partners, including Health. This did present a challenge, and partnership working collaboratively would be the key to successful implementation.
- Members were interested in finding out what links had been made out in the community, as Newport is a diverse city, and also how can people in cultural organisations be reached. Members were advised that BAWSO (Black Association of Women Step Out) were the main partner who help to give access to different ethnic groups and also went wider into the community to engage them in the strategy. These ranged from small local groups to large member organisations.
- Had the number of abuse cases risen over the last 10 years, and were there any known reason why this was happening. Members were given information that in 2015/16 there were 129 high risk caseloads, 151 in 2016/17 and 114 for the half year figures and it was important to get to cases a lot earlier through engagement. 135 children were included in those families. The Police and Public Protection Team in Gwen had launched a Safeguarding Team. Work had been done to streamline the case review process to amalgamate three reviews for separate areas into one coherent review. As to the reasons for the increase in reported abuse, it was difficult to pin point the reasons due to the complexity of the issue.
- Members queried if countering drugs and alcohol formed part of the strategy. The strategy overlapped with the Substance Misuse Team in Gwent which are financially supported separately with significant resources, which was not the case for this strategy.
- How would this strategy be monitored and moderated on a regional and local level. Each Local Authority, and partner organisations had to sign off on the strategy, and progress would be reported back to the Councils, via the Scrutiny arrangements. In terms of specific actions, this was overseen by Quality Assurance Team, who would be presenting a Safeguarding report to Scrutiny annually, which would give another opportunity for Members to consider the work taking place in this area. Strategic Equalities Committee also had a role in looking at this area. The intention for the future was to align the reporting to make sure it was streamlined as to not create unnecessary work – this referenced aligning the reporting timetables for Scrutiny, Regionally and the Equalities Committee.
- What was the relationship with the Courts? Procedures to make the system effective, but supportive of the victim, recognising the difficulty for the victim to give evidence. The changes represented small steps but were all positive progress. Significant progress had been made for children, with the strict and clear use of advocates, video links and the court had been designed by young people.

- Members asked for clarification of the links with the Public Service Board. Members were advised that as the lead authority and there was role in terms of quality assurance on how this was implemented.
- There was currently no Member on the regional Adoption board or the Violence board so it may be useful to consider, but the Deputy Leader for the Council chairs the Strategic Equality Group.
- It was asked if the figures of abuse were higher in Newport or if it was similar across the board. Members were advised due to the high populations Newport and Caerphilly were highest, but the high risk cases in Newport were very complex due to its size and diversity.
- In response to queries regarding the provision of the training, Members were told that the training had been developed through Welsh Government, with the first stage being done online and all Council staff being required to undertake the training which should increase awareness. The level of training was dependent on the nature of the role.
- The Officer advised the Committee that they try to ensure there is always a specialist teacher in the class room based training, alongside a Health colleague. There would also be training events to be held. The Committee were also advised that there is a support mechanism in place for those affected by the training.
- It was asked if the training would be available for Members, as it was important for them as representatives of their communities to know how to support and signpost residents. It was also asked if the training has been done in different languages. Members were advised that the training is for all staff, and currently the training is all English however it could be done in different languages if necessary.
- Regarding the gap in responses from male survivors, Members were advised that numbers were currently low however the Partnership was aware of this gap and was looking to improve how to engage further with male survivors, possibly with focus groups and additional training to staff. There were a number of national programs in place to help awareness, and it was hoped that over the next 5 years awareness would be built on a number of elements as it will be very clear where to signpost.
- Partners were working with feeder groups, as well as a large number of 3rd party sectors and housing providers. Since Newport took the regional lead in 2014 it was needed to look at how it could be managed.
- Members asked how the strategy would be approved, and were told that once the strategy had been agreed, it could then be taken forward with partner agencies, but it would need to go to Welsh Government in May 2018. It was also advised that the delivery of the strategy would be over 7 years; however it could be brought to scrutiny whenever the committee wishes from 1 year onwards.
- It was asked if best practice had been shared. The Committee were advised that best practice had been shared at a regional level, and mentioned that each local authority has a member on the board. Members were also advised that the Chair of the

Strategic Delivery Group sits on the Partnership board, and the same organisations are representatives on the partnership board as well as the delivery board.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending and they were excused from the meeting. The Committee considered the evidence gathered through questioning the officers on the strategy and agreed to make the following comments to the Cabinet for consideration:

Comments to the Partnership Board:

- a) The Committee commends the Partnership Board on the extensive evidence base outlined within the strategy, which provides a solid foundation and context to the development of the strategy. The aspiration of the strategy is clear and well-articulated.
- b) There are many positive elements of the work being undertaken that were outlined in the strategy, including:
 - The training programme being used to educate at all levels;
 - Single review process demonstrated partners working together to address and resolve issues.
 - Large number of third sectors representing a range of cultural and ethnic groups demonstrated the partners were consulting with a wide range of communities.
 - Demonstration of positive working relationships with police and the courts which was resulting in better practice being adopted, particularly relating to family courts. This was having a positive impact in supporting and helping victims.
- c) The Committee had concerns relating to the implementation of the strategy to raise with the Partnership Board for consideration:
 - **Resources** – it is unclear how the partners will ensure adequate resources to implementing this strategy, as the Council was not in a position to allocate resources. Concern that there would be a rise in high risk cases, which could exacerbate resourcing issues in the future. The success of this would require a collaborate approach to resources to ensure sustainable funding.
 - **Measurability** – It was not clear how success would be measured based on the information in the strategy. The Committee suggests that more information on how success will be measured should be included in the strategy as it provides context to how the strategy will be implemented, and makes it is clear what each of the partners on the Board are supporting through the strategy.
 - **Note there is a gap in the responses from with male survivors.** The Officers were aware of this gap, and the Committee were satisfied that the Board has a plan and a work stream to address this. The Committee noted that this was an area that they would be focusing on when monitoring the implementation of the strategy in the future, and asked that the progress on addressing this be outlined in the update brought back to the Committee.
- d) The Committee asked to receive the Delivery Plan for the implementation of this strategy once it had been agreed. This would be for information purposes and circulated via email to the Committee.

Comments to the Cabinet

- e) **Monitoring arrangements** – Noting the statutory role of the Local Authority for this strategy, the Committee agreed to include an update on this on its work programme for a years' time, to assess the progress of its implementation and how it has impacted on Newport. When this update is presented to the Committee, it was requested that Representatives from the Partnership Board be invited to attend alongside the Officers from NCC.
- f) The Committee discussed whether it would be beneficial for there to be Member representation on the Partnership Board to ensure support at an Elected Member level for the implementation of the strategy. The Committee **recommends** that the Cabinet and the Officers on the Board consider whether this would be beneficial and appropriate.
- g) The Committee **recommends** that the Council nominates a Member Domestic Abuse Prevention Champion who can champion and promote the work within this area. This nominated Member would then be invited to attend the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships when this matter is considered in the future.
- h) The Committee **recommends** that the training outlined that had been provided for Council staff be rolled out to all Members of the Authority. Elected Members were key links with their communities and any training that would equip Members to support their community would be useful.

5 **Forward Work Programme Update**

The Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the Forward Work Programme to the Committee in particular the items scheduled for the next two meetings.

Agreed:

The Committee endorsed the proposed schedule for the next two Committee meetings and confirmed the topics to be considered.

The Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer agreed to circulate the material from the training session on SRS that the Committee undertook in September prior to the next meeting.

6 **Evaluation of the Meeting**

The Committee discussed and evaluated the meeting in terms on the content of the reports on the agenda and how the meeting was conducted. Members agreed that it had been helpful to gain an overview of the issues surrounding domestic abuse, and commended the Authority for taking the lead in this area.

In terms of numbers of items on the agenda, the Committee commented that if the EAS item had not been postponed the meeting would have been too long, as they were both large items that warranted time and attention. It was confirmed that where possible, the number of agenda items would be kept as low as possible to allow the Committee sufficient time to undertake their role effectively.

The meeting terminated at 18:25.