

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**NEIGHBOURHOOD AND
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 JANUARY 2016**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY,
21 JANUARY 2016 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6, COUNCIL
HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT:-

Councillor Iqbal in the Chair;

Councillors Atwal, Cartwright, Harmer, Hartley, Jenkins, Mackey, O'Reilly, Pears, Phillips Spence and Williams.

ALSO PRESENT:-

Mashuq Ally	- Assistant Director, Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion
Claire Berry	- Senior Service Manager, Safer Places
Kevin D Hubery	- Head of Strategic Policy
Gary Ladbroke	- Integrated Services Head
Rose Kiely	- Group Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Amanda Simcox	- Scrutiny Research and Policy Officer
Marie Reynolds	- Committee Services

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 62 It was noted that the meeting was being webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs. The whole of the meeting would be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 63 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Hartley for lateness and Lines for his inability to attend the meeting.

MINUTES

- 64 The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2015, having been circulated to Members, were confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment: that Councillor Phillips' name to be deleted from the last Minutes as she was not in attendance.
-

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

- 65 The Chairman welcomed Councillor O'Reilly to the Committee as he was now replacing Councillor Phillips.
-

CHILD POVERTY

Mashuq Ally, Assistant Director, Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion reported that the child poverty commission came into existence in June 2015 with the overall aim of the commission, was to examine the extent of the impact of poverty and inequality across Birmingham, identifying the key challenges and issues, and report on causes and possible solutions.

The role of the commission was to establish clear future targets for child poverty and to set out in child poverty, challenges for Birmingham and to update the needs assessment, in order to understand the scale of challenges, produce a Birmingham child poverty strategy or framework for action, whereby building on local and national practice and to explore new approaches.

Mashuq Ally reported, to establish a co-ordinated approach in reducing child poverty, by bringing together a forum to address child poverty, identify and determine the impact of poverty on different groups, communities and geographical areas most at risk and lastly, make a policy recommendation on integrated approaches to mitigate the effects of child poverty.

With this range of roles, a commission was brought together whereupon he subsequently detailed the membership. He stated that the commission had met on a number of occasions and highlighted that an important aspect was that they were independent, playing an important part in shaping whilst still having a relationship with the city council and its partners. Reference was made to the work strands around communication, strategy research and review activities to support evidence gathering, and in particular, looking at the symptoms and causes of child poverty, the action that was needed and identifying activity and what worked.

Consequently, the commission carried out a child poverty needs assessment that had driven the work around child poverty. In addition to the needs assessment, a number of focus group meetings with young people within the city had taken place in the areas of Aston, Lozells and Longbridge as the needs assessment had highlighted those areas. Focus group meetings with families who were suffering child poverty had taken place, and also evidence gathering

Neighbourhood & Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
21 January 2016

from the voluntary community organisation who been working with children in poverty and their families. The establishment of a shadow board for young people had recently taken place which allowed the voice of young people feed into the work of the child poverty commission. The board had recently met and had nominated amongst them a chair to lead on the board.

It was noted that the material collected was now being analysed which would then be fed into the first draft report and would hopefully be presented at the March meeting.

With regard to Councillor Cartwright's comments relating to child poverty and the fact that it needed to be taken very seriously as children in poverty were often easy targets, and that it should be high on any agenda. Mashuq Ally highlighted that it was an important area which had been taken up by the new Leader of the City Council last week, and an issue that was highlighted was the role of housing around child poverty the impact this had on young people in becoming prey to all kinds of threats and what could be done in this area, which he agreed would be taken on board.

In response to comments and questions from Councillor O'Reilly relating to the commission, Mashuq Ally stated that at the moment, the commission through the department had taken evidence from a wide variety of stakeholders in the city, and also views of the financial inclusion partnership and from the Big Lottery in terms of the way in which it strategically used its resources.

He highlighted that there had been an important round table meeting with the private sector, whereupon a great deal of evidence had been taken from young people and families in communities. A considerable amount of evidence had now been collated which was being analysed whereupon the timeframe had now been pushed back, due to the volume of information gathered, which needed to be analysed and around about by June, would probably be when the report would be presented and disseminated to elected members and other stakeholders within the city. It was noted that the Chair of the commission was willing to come and speak in order to provide an update.

It was noted that the city council and partners had to be realistic with regard to what could be achieved, and how young people could be safeguarded, and that the recommendations reflected, were realistically delivered and monitored, in order that the agenda could move forward.

In response to comments and questions from Councillor Williams relating to information being provided earlier and the aim to eliminate child poverty, Mashuq Ally agreed to re-circulate the poverty needs assessment. He added that the reason there was not a more detailed report, was due to the fact that there was still a great deal more work to be undertaken. With regard to eliminating child poverty, he stated that there was the concern to eliminate, however, it would have to be done incrementally over a period of time and that the commission would not conclude in June and that the documents would build into a legacy programme recommendation and continuous process. There would be a legacy project which would enable all to keep moving this agenda

forward and see it as a dynamic process over a time, reducing child poverty and mitigating against the vulnerabilities that young people may have to face.

In response to Councillor Mackey's questions relating to timeframes, Mashuq Ally confirmed that the field work for this area began in July 2015 and was still ongoing and that a great deal of work was not built on desk top but field work.

In response to Councillor Pears and the importance that teachers and schools could play in recognising child poverty, Mashuq Ally confirmed that a great deal of evidence from teachers in schools had been recorded due to the fact that they were privy to a great deal of intimate information about poverty that young people suffered.

In response to several comments from Councillor Harmer, Mashuq Ally highlighted that one of the areas they were looking at closely was lone working parents, and subsequently provided examples of young mothers committed to looking after their children by placing them first and going without food themselves. He stated that some of the narratives were quite appalling and that there were many single parents in similar situations.

In response to Councillor Spence's comments, Mashuq Ally referred to what the commission had done so far around employment, and the related issue regarding those who could work in many cases albeit the wages received did not necessarily cover the cost of what they needed to support a decent life, and the fact that child care costs could absorb income received which often happened with female staff on low salaries. Reference was made to some work being undertaken on how child care could be supported

In response to Councillor Jenkins' relating to the shadow youth board, Mashuq Ally confirmed that the board was only just coming into being and that it comprised of a core group which presently reflected the range of communities in the city. He added that it was in its embryonic state at the moment and anticipated that it would take off within the next few months.

In response to the Chairman, Mashuq Ally stated that the next phase of the report would be to analyse and anticipated that by the end of March it would progress through to the writing stage. He added that before the final report was produced, that it go through the socialisation process and part of that was to take the report to members and ideally take to the chamber for debate.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mashuq Ally for his presentation.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

66

RESOLVED:-

That the information and comments be noted.

EQUALITIES AND COHESION TOOL KIT

Mashuq Ally, Assistant Director, Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion presented the following report:-

(See document No. 1)

Mashuq Ally introduced the tool kit and explained why the tool kit had been developed in order that schools could be monitored around equalities and community cohesion, and subsequently highlighted the 6 areas that the tool kit covered.

It was highlighted that the tool kit had gone through consultation with head teachers and primary school teachers and since September 2015, there had been a number of projects carried out involving young people in shaping the tool kit which included; 'football for peace' looking at ways in which young people develop relationships and promote values which completed on 11 December 2015 and was now being evaluated, and 'Stan's Café' which was looking at the vision of young people. It was noted that as the tool kit involved teachers and young people there was a buy in ownership by the education department.

In response to a question from the Chairman regarding timescales, Mashuq Ally anticipated that it would be completed by the end of March 2016.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mashuq Ally for presenting.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

67

RESOLVED:-

That the information be noted.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Claire Berry, Senior Service Manager, Safer Places presented a detailed presentation by referring to the following information briefing for Neighbourhood and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee ASB Case Closures:-

(See document No. 2)

In response to several comments from the Chairman regarding anti-social behaviour cases and the point of tasking meetings, Claire Berry stated that if the right people were not there at tasking to make the decisions, then perhaps there was no point in holding the meeting. She believed that tasking was needed in an area where there were problems that needed to be addressed and when they had been resolved, there may not be the need for additional meetings. She stated if members believed that the neighbourhood tasking process was

Neighbourhood & Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
21 January 2016

not working in their area then suggested that it be escalated to a local neighbourhood safety partnership whereupon they always keep a review, or should do. She added that the neighbourhood tasking was a very important mechanism and if it was not working could prove to be an expensive process and a waste of time, and therefore urged members to contact one of the community safety people on the ground which would be raised within the community safety partnership.

Claire Berry referred to anti-social behaviour cases and confirmed that a case would be closed if there had been no re-occurrence during a 3 month period but would always maintain records of that case, and if needed to be re-opened, then the same case would be re-opened again. She referred to the usefulness of the 'trigger' process and whilst explaining how it worked agreed to circulate a copy of it to all elected members as requested.

In response to several comments and concerns from Councillor Harmer regarding anti-social behaviour cases and neighbourhood tasking, Claire Berry agreed that a poor response had been received with regard to a particular case and agreed to look into the detail of that case. She highlighted that in his particular area there was only one 'Think Family' support worker and whilst explaining the process added that it looked as though a number of things had gone wrong and reiterated that she would look into the case.

With regard to the neighbourhood tasking, she suggested that she could ask the community safety partnership in East Birmingham to carry out a health check of the state of neighbourhood tasking across the East of the City, and that a report would be sent to the local community partnership whereby members could see the results of it, and therefore if changes and improvements needed to be made, the safety partnership could make that happen.

Claire Berry referred to the outcomes case closure information that was received by members which illustrated how the department were trying to manage the demand coming through the door, which gave very little information about outcomes achieved. She highlighted that the department collected information monthly which comprised of a summary of all sorts of anti-social legal actions and suggested that there may be a way of sharing that information with members and agreed to take back for further consideration. She further highlighted the collection of customer service satisfaction around anti-social behaviour which indicates what residents felt about the service, adding that generally most residents were reasonably happy with the service received, and less happy with the outcome which was sometimes due to the mismatch in their expectations, but highlighted the importance of this, as it was utilised in trying to improve the service.

In response to further questions and comments from members, Claire Berry confirmed the drug dealing underpinned much of anti-social behaviour and the other increasingly identified trend was poor mental health in terms of victims of anti-social behaviour or people reporting anti-social behaviour. She started that as the service was quite accessible many people contacted the service that were not really experiencing anti-social behaviour but required support in other

areas. She stated that in the last 12 months, they had undertaken a lot of work with mental health in joined up working and having points of contact within the mental health service, so that when people needed that support they were able to refer them to the relevant area for help and assistance. She further stated that they now had mental health workers at the safer communities group which was not the case a few years ago. She highlighted that in terms of how elected members could help, it was about assisting the department in managing the demand with smaller resources available and the fact that issues had to be directed to the appropriate area, and that there was a need for residents to help themselves a little more. She referred to the mediation and restorative justice which were highly effective techniques for resolving neighbourhood disputes however when offered to people they were quite often rejected which she stated was a great shame. She urged elected members to promote the use of the 'trigger' system as it held partners and the city council to account as to the way anti-social behaviour was being dealt with.

In response to Councillor Cartwright's enquiry relating to people receiving anti-social behaviour that may be vulnerable and the issues associated with the travellers in Longbridge, Claire Berry stated that the city had joined their risk assessment process with West Midlands Police in trying to identify people's vulnerability and also the chance of them becoming repeat victims. With regard to travellers causing problems across a neighbourhood, she stated that it should be escalated to the safer communities group and as there were a number of agencies that needed to be involved the quicker it was reported to the safer communities group the sooner it could be resolved.

In response to comments from Councillor O'Reilly, Claire Berry confirmed that she liked the idea of an independent officer reviewing cases and agreed to feed back to the department for consideration. She referred to the changes to the anti-social behaviour service over the past years and highlighted that all anti-social behaviour responded to was based on need by officers who were part of the place management structure. In each quadrant there were 2 anti-social behaviour specialists (quality and performance officer and a partnership officer) they worked together as a team. The partnership officer made sure that the safer communities group was working to a high standard and the quality and performance officer would be overseeing the quality of the work of the city council.

Claire Berry confirmed that managers had received some training on anti-social behaviour however at this point they were still being guided by the quality and performance officer and a partnership officer in each area, adding that more training was required in this area. She stated that there was a great deal for the Place Managers to learn with the different ways of working and that there was a programme of development in place, adding that every Place Manager's training needs varied as it depended upon their previous work background.

She concluded by stating that she would be happy to share the programme of development and would welcome any thoughts and comments from members in this instance.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

68

RESOLVED:-

That the information and comments be noted.

TRACKING HEALTH OF THE BIRMINGHAM'S THIRD SECTOR INQUIRY

R01

The following report to Neighbourhood and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was submitted:-

(See document No. 3)

Kevin D Hubery, Head of Strategic Policy introduced the report whereby the recommendation referred to an earlier review relating to a detailed mapping exercise over a number of years of third sector organisations across the city. Although previously came back to committee with a progress report, a further request was received illustrating how this action had been implemented.

Kevin Hubery detailed the action that had been taken over 3 years by groups of students on placement from University of Birmingham with Corporate Strategy Team by specifically referring to page 1 of the report. It was noted that the majority of the city had now been mapped and that only parts of Hall Green district and all of Sutton Coldfield were outstanding. However, given that some of the mapping was undertaken a few years ago and that the position regarding third sector organisations in operation constantly changed, some of this information could be a little outdated.

The information gathered had been shared with each local district for them to consider and decided on how they used it. The information had also been shared with the Future Council Team to assist with their intelligence led activity. It was noted that it connected to the Outward Looking Partnership sub-programme of the Future Council who were considering how they could use and develop the information to determine how the council worked with and valued the Third Sector across the city.

It was noted that although there were no specific plans in place to undertake any further analysis, there was still access to the summer placement students for any additional research work to be carried out.

In response to the Chairman's enquiry relating to third sector organisations, Kevin Hubery explained the process of when students began mapping an area the sources of information they used in trying to identify smaller 'under the radar' organisations, which included visiting neighbourhoods and community centres where small organisations would meet. However, he added that the practical issue was that as it was a summer programme, often people were not around and this sometimes could prove somewhat difficult. He confirmed that

Neighbourhood & Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
21 January 2016

once the area was mapped the information was shared with district colleagues in how they could make best use of it.

Mashuq Ally highlighted that since this recommendation things had moved on in a number of ways.

Firstly there was the progression of the major transformation programme with the city council in terms of the future council programme, and how the city was going to engage with community and the voluntary sector partners in delivery of services with the city council. In addition to the fact, that BVSC undertook an exercise where it looked at the state of the voluntary sector groups within the city, and a report was presented around third sector which was a complex area of work, insofar that there were voluntary organisations that worked across the city, and there were voluntary and community groups that undertook more localised work and it was those groups, that had a greater spread in terms of voluntary and community sector.

Mashuq Ally suggested that the recommendation 1 was revised, and that an updated report from BVSC regarding the voluntary and community sector be provided, and in the meantime the department look at the terms of commissioning a procurement on what was being done with the citywide voluntary sector and community groups in terms of delivery. He suggested that localised groups would have to be left for the time being until the new structures were in place with regard to the future council.

Gary Ladbrooke, Integrated Services Head stated that he sat on the Sutton Coldfield Steering Group as Lead Officer and stressed that the key message from the new town council was that they did not see their role as supplementing or replacing work undertaken by officers. He further stressed that it was important to get the message out there as there may be expectations with some officers that they would replace services going forward.

He reported that on a positive note, picking up on the outward looking partnerships, Erdington and Yardley Districts were the two that were piloting work around partnership working and progressing forward. He confirmed that a report would be going to Executive Members next week outlining progress and stated that there may be a greater call from Chairs for much more information around those types of partnerships third sector organisations.

Councillor Jenkins expressed disappointment that the mapping for Hall Green district had not been completed and suggested that as there were resources in place, to try and complete the local mapping. She stated that once the work was completed, this could be shared with elected members who could take responsibility for their wards in updating the information, although there needed to be a system in place to allow this to be done. She commented that local knowledge was very important into feeding into other areas of work that was being carried out with larger organisations.

Councillor O'Reilly agreed that he would like to see the work completed as it was not fair on those areas that had not had the work carried out in their district

and if it was passed to the districts highlighted that there should be a definite handover. Reference was made to the fact that there could be some sort of organised third sector summit scheduled in the Council House or community buildings, where organisations identified could be invited to meet with the Leader, elected members and officers to discuss the work. He stressed that it would be a pity if this was not taken to the next step after all the work by officers and students that had been carried out.

Kevin Hubery confirmed that he would be meeting with BVSC shortly and could discuss the issue further with them. He stated that the incompleteness of the mapping was due to the disruption to the local structures over the last couple of years, as it had made it difficult to place students in local areas where changes had taken place. However, he confirmed that there were no issues with the number of students to undertake the work and that they would always be able to match up students with local areas.

With regard to looking at the third sector issue, he stated that there was a whole programme through the future council which the city council needed to dovetail with and the need to discuss with colleagues there, about the way in which we could work together on those ideals. He thought that the key was using local knowledge, local expertise and connecting with the right people. He stated that they had learnt over the 3 or 4 years how students had learnt from the previous cohort of students on how it could be improved. He added that if the picture was completed this summer it would be a benefit from previous learning. He further added that getting to know other stakeholders, community groups and local councillors would be another valuable improvement on what had been achieved so far.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

69

RESOLVED:-

That the completed mapping would be handed over to the Districts;

That the issue regarding an update on the state of voluntary and community sector and a third sector summit would be pursued;

That elected members would discuss working with the third sector organisations with the Cabinet Members at the next meeting in March.

WORK PROGRAMME

70

The following paper was received:-

(See document No. 4)

The Chairman confirmed that the annual report from the Community Safety Partnership would be submitted at the next meeting. It was also reported that 4 or 5 chairs would be attending the next meeting providing evidence of the

Neighbourhood & Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
21 January 2016

Neighbourhood Challenge inquiry.

DATES OF MEETINGS

- 71 It was noted that the Committee meets on the following Thursdays at 1400 hours in the Council House:-

17 March - Committee Room 2 21 April - Committee Room 6

**REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS
RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

- 72 The Chairman advised that there had been no requests for call in/councillor call for action/petitions received.
-

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- 73 No other urgent business was raised.
-

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

- 74 **RESOLVED:-**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1540 hours.

.....
CHAIRMAN