

Minutes Overview Committee

Tuesday, 21 February 2012 at 10am

Membership

- absent

Councillors

Joyce Bosnjak (Chair)
Martin Wright (Vice-Chair)
Michelle Gent (Vice-Chair)
Chris Barnfather
Steve Carroll
Ged Clarke

- Wendy Quigley
Sue Saddington
Liz Yates

Officers

Martin Gately - Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Ruth Rimmington - Temporary Governance Officer
Rachel Adams – Community Safety Team PPCS
William Davies – Volunteer Student
Matthew Garrard – Policy Team Manager

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 January 2012 having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Wendy Quigley.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Domestic Violence Update

Rachel Adams presented the Cabinet response to the Committee's Domestic Violence Review that had concluded in March 2011. Members were brought up to date on the seventeen recommendations:-

Recommendation 1 – The first data reports had been submitted to the newly formed Safer Nottinghamshire Board Domestic Violence Performance and

Strategy Group. Its next meeting was in March at which the Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Framework delivery plans would be received.

Recommendations 2&3 – The training plan had been drafted and linked to the Framework. Link worker posts in Social Services had been maintained with no reductions and refuge closures had been avoided.

Recommendation 4 – Many Children's Centres were now offering parenting skills around Domestic Violence. Work with parents was available in North Nottinghamshire funded by a lottery grant to Nottinghamshire Women's Aid. Other support was available elsewhere via the "Freedom Programme" delivered in Children's Centres and by Probation.

Recommendations 5&6 – Partially accepted due to Nottinghamshire County Council not being able to directly influence school policy. There had been a successful bid to the Safer Nottinghamshire Board to introduce Healthy Relationship Education into 12 Primary Schools, in Priority plus Areas in the current academic year and a further group of Primary Schools the following year.

Recommendation 7 – A review had been carried out on the Male Service and a new advocacy service commissioned for High Risk male victims/survivors'. A Multi-agency plan had been written to co-ordinate work to support black, ethnic minority and refugee victims/survivors.

Recommendations 8 – 11 – Joint Commissioning between Children's Services, Adult Services, Community Services and Public Services had been agreed. Services were currently subject to a tender process of which the outcome would be known in April 2012. New services would be delivered by fewer providers from August 2012.

Recommendation 12 – A multi agency approach to medium risk repeat cases was still being looked at in the context of the Vulnerable Persons Panel and the Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Recommendations 13 &14 - Some finance had been retained within the Grant Aid budget in order to retain some flexibility to fund innovation and small local services. Grant Aid also funded the 24 hour Domestic Violence Helpline. This was now promoted as the single point of contact for all agencies.

Recommendation 15 – John Robinson, Chief Executive Gedling Borough Council had taken the role of Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Champion and chaired the Safer Nottinghamshire Board Partnership Group. He had initiated a "Post Campaign" launched by Nottingham Evening Post, on Valentines Day, as a year long campaign on violence against women. The campaign objectives included; 10,000 men in Nottinghamshire to sign a Pledge stating their opposition to violence against women and girls. The campaign was one of the largest of its kind in the country so far and was being led within the County Council by the Community Safety Team.

Recommendations 16&17 –

Ms Adams also informed the committee on the outstanding issues that included:-

- The delays to the co-location of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates within Police Stations in South Nottinghamshire caused by Police internal difficulties.
- A meeting scheduled in March to look at co-ordinated developments within the Health Services. Ms Adams had recently completed training for midwives.
- Partnership meetings for High Risk victims had not been extended to Medium Risk. Plans were being considered for a smaller partnership arrangement for Medium Risk Repeat cases.
- Since school domestic violence programmes were voluntary, some progress had been made with individual schools. The Dayncourt School in Rushcliffe had been selected for a pilot project funded by Comic Relief to develop a “whole school approach to domestic violence”. The results of the 2 year pilot would be shared on the Schools’ Wired System.
- Domestic homicides in recent months in Nottinghamshire had focussed further attention on domestic violence. There was potential for a report to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Rachel responded to member’s questions and comments:-

Schools should be encouraged to have a domestic violence programme/policy. Could this be done as an article in the School Governor’s newsletter or as a request from the Corporate Director Children Families and Cultural Services to suggest a guiding policy for School’s governing bodies to sign up to?

How were concerns raised by a school nurse dealt with in schools? There would be a safeguarding referral made. Rachel would check that this was the case.

Domestic Violence should be covered under governor training. Schools had a safeguarding governor.

The chair thanked Ms Adams and asked that the committee’s thanks also be conveyed to everyone who had participated in the review for the excellent work undertaken.

Localism Update

Matthew Garrard, Policy Team Manager and Councillor Martin Suthers, the Deputy Leader of the Council, had been invited to attend the meeting to update members on the Localism agenda within the County Council.

Mr Garrard updated the committee on the development and implementation of the County Council’s Localism Policy. The Policy attached as appendix to the report had been agreed at the County Council Meeting on 26 January 2012. He

explained how the Policy had been developed. The Localism Act 2011 had introduced a number of new requirements on Local Authorities that included the implementation of new rights for voluntary and community organisations to express an interest in providing or assisting in the provision of council services. The County Council's refreshed Strategic Plan 2010 -14 had a specific action to embrace Localism and commit to ensure that:-

- local people can make decisions about their lives and where they live;
- communities are involved in the way services are shaped and delivered and
- communities can be proud of their local area and residents can help to keep their local areas clean, tidy and safe.

The Policy had a number of specific key actions that included an implementation plan to ensure that principles and commitments were achieved, preparation of a framework for devolving services for parish/town councils seeking to deliver local services and draft statements on the operation of the Community Right to Challenge.

Mr Garrard explained that engagement work with the town/parish councils and voluntary and community sector had commenced in October last year to inform the development of the Policy. Information and the new statutory requirements were available on the County Council's website. Other ongoing work included the development of a framework for communities to contact the County Council and preparation of a statement on community use of small areas of land owned by the County Council where it was surplus to requirements.

The County Council proposed to engage with Community and Neighbourhood Forums or a relevant County Council Committee of local Members where there was no parish/town council.

The Deputy Leader explained that things were evolving rapidly; meetings continued to be held across the county with parish and town councils to gain a sense of their vision. Delivery of the policy was further complicated due to Nottinghamshire being a two tier authority.

Mr Garrard responded to Members' comments and questions:-

- It was in the County Council's interest to engage and empower parish/town councils and communities and provide options for those seeking to deliver local services, through a framework for devolved services to avoid any legal challenges. The matter was complicated since there were no known costs for such services.
- Further clarification was being sought on whether a voluntary or community group could challenge an authority if it felt that it could provide /deliver a service better. An expression of interest to provide or assist in the provision of council services would trigger a procurement exercise.

- What credence would Neighbourhood Forums have? An early part of the policy was related to information on what could be done and to have an influence before things took off. The Forums were recognised in the Policy.
- The legal standing of non statutory bodies was being explored further.
- There were a lot of hidden dangers with a prospective increase in the number of volunteers and community groups. There needed to be clear and concise information on what could and could not be done.
- A particular area of concern was around the provisions for neighbourhood planning. It was felt that elected members would need to provide clarity to forums at the very beginning of the neighbourhood planning process about what would and would not be possible due to restrictions that applied. Communication was paramount in all of this, particularly when shaping and planning communities.
- The whole area of costing was very vague. It was recognised that there was still a significant amount of work to be done and dialogue to be had - for example, on the issue of the community use of small areas of land owned by the County Council that were surplus to requirements

The committee had concerns in relation to the costing of services that the County Council might be subject to challenge on and asked for a letter to be sent to the Deputy Leader to draw his attention to its concerns.

Programme of Scrutiny

The Chair acknowledged that there would be an opportunity for a discussion at the March meeting on the way forward once the current Cabinet system ceased. The committee had acknowledged the value of Standing Committees.

Councillor Sue Saddington, Chair of the Communities and the Environment Standing Committee, informed members of her recent visit of the Pilgrim Fathers sites which, she said, had been very enjoyable. The committee had received its final report on Seasonal Canine Illness. Final reports were expected at its April meeting on the Tourism and Economic Regeneration and Water and Gas Emissions from Disused Mines reviews.

Councillor Ged Clarke Chair of the Social Care and Health Standing Committee, referred to the committee meeting of 20 February, which had received presentations on the introduction of personal budgets for adult social care. The authority expected all service users eligible for a personal budget to be receiving one by 31 March 2012, well ahead of the Government's 2013 target.

Councillor Liz Yates Chair, of the Education Standing Committee, reported that it had received a briefing on Key Stage 2 attainment results at its last meeting, which were pleasing, and the committee had undertaken evidence gathering for the Child Poverty and Educational Attainment Review.

The meeting closed at 11.55am.

CHAIR

Ref: M 21 Feb 2012