

Community Services, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Board

8 February, 2017

Summary of Matters Considered at the Board

Report of the Chair, Councillor M Crompton

The Scrutiny Board met on 8 February, 2017 and the following items were considered. For more detail, copies of the minutes are available on the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) via the Council's website at <http://cmis.sandwell.gov.uk/cmis5/>

Neighbourhoods and Crime Reduction and Community Safety progress report

The General Manager, Community Safety and Estate Services and the Community Safety Manager provided a progress report relating to neighbourhoods, crime reduction and community safety. The Board scrutinised the performance figures relating to:

- total recorded crime;
- public place violence;
- domestic violence;
- serious violence;
- anti-social behavior;
- hate crime.

The Chief Superintendent - West Midlands Police responded to the Boards questions about the increase in total recorded crime trends, digital crime, access to local information, the digital customer experience via new technology and the refreshed website.

The Board welcome the downward trend in anti-social behaviour and that a combination of better intelligence, early intervention and neighbourhood working had made a difference in each town operating with Sandwell Local Operating Group and Community Operating Groups.

The Board welcome the preparation for the launch of the 'Sandwell against Hate' campaign in March 2017 to promote and reach out to communities and asked that the Director - Adults Social Care, Health and Wellbeing be requested to arrange training for elected members relating to Hate Crime.

The Board highlighted how useful the visit to West Bromwich Police Station - Call Centre had been and asked that site visits or a promotional video should be made for partners to see and understand the issues and pressures of the call centre operation and reinforce the need for partners and the public to make effective use of the call centre.

CCTV Centre Visit Work Stream

The recommendations of the Board are considered to be helpful in relation to community safety and in helping to protect Council housing stock. Cabinet will consider the recommendation at its meeting on 22nd February 2017.

Domestic Abuse Advocates Work Stream

The Chair and the Domestic Abuse Team Manager provided an update relating to the reporting and support network for victims of Domestic Abuse and advised where the Domestic Abuse Advisors (DAA) sat within the partnership network.

The Chair identified that funding would cease for the DAAs on 31st March 2017 and that the Council had carried out an impact assessment for not recommissioning £160k of funding for five DAAs in Sandwell Community Operating Groups in 2017-18. The findings of the impact assessment will be reported to Cabinet on 22nd March 2017.

The Board made a recommendation to the Director - Children's Services to continue funding the five Domestic Abuse Advisors pro-rata until such time that the outcome of the impact assessment has been fully considered and a decision taken relating to the DAAs in Sandwell.

The final report and recommendations of this work stream will be reported to Board on 12 April 2017 and the Cabinet report 22nd March 2017 will include a paragraph referring to the Scrutiny Boards findings.

The Domestic Abuse Advocates Work Group will meet again on 2nd March to review its findings.

Drugs, Alcohol and Mental Health work stream

The Vice-Chair advised that she had met with Drugs Education, Counselling and Confidential Advice (DECCA) Co-ordinator on 7th March 2017 to consider the scope for the work stream. The focus for the work stream will be on connecting with young people through mentoring and support in schools. The project work (Project 12) is aimed at working with young people in schools about issues relating to Drugs and Alcohol.

The Vice Chair highlighted the importance of drawing from the experiences of young people who had recovered from alcohol or drug addiction and the impact it had on them their friends and families. She suggested that further exploration could be given to parents of young people who had been through addictions with drugs and alcohol mentoring or supporting parents of young people who currently had drug and alcohol problems.

The next meeting of the work stream group will take place on 1st March 2017.

Councillor M Crompton
Chair of the Community Safety, Highways and Environment
Scrutiny Board