

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 16 January 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Ben Curran (Chair), Tim Huggan (Deputy Chair), Sue Auckland, Penny Baker, Dawn Dale, Karen McGowan, Pat Midgley, Anne Murphy, Peter Price, Peter Rippon, Kaltum Rivers and Andrew Sangar

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1. ANDY SHALLICE

1.1 The Chair referred to the recent death of Andy Shallice, who as a member of the public had been a regular attender of this Committee and his contribution had influenced items on agendas, including the next meeting.

1.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- 1.3 (a) places on record its sadness at the death of Andy Shallice; and
(b) requests that his valuable contribution to this Committee's meetings be noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Michelle Cook.

3. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

3.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th November, 2019, were approved as a correct record.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

6.1 Questions from Reverend Tina Sampson-Smith

6.1.1 Given the recent spate of violent crime, gun and knife incidents, making the headlines is it not now time to re-evaluate the potential of the Knife Angel with its educational value?

6.1.2 If not, what are your plans for educating youths out of their gang culture.

6.2 The Chair stated that the decision regarding the Knife Angel was taken by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety so he would pass the question to him asking that he responds to Reverend Sampson-Smith. With regard to the question relating to gang culture, he said this will form part of the discussion during Item 8 on the agenda – Update on the work of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit.

7. CHALLENGE FOR CHANGE

7.1 The Committee received a presentation and report which gave a summary of the the latest review into a part of the Council Housing Service. The purpose of this project was to see how effectively customers were able to access the housing service.

7.2 Present for this item were Peter Brown (Project Manager, Future of Council Housing), Louise Cassin (Housing Business Plan Team), Grace Collins (Tenant Scrutiny Panel) and Carrie Hedderwick (Tenant Scrutiny Panel).

7.3 Carrie Hedderwick stated that the Challenge for Change was a set up a few years ago as a Customer Scrutiny Panel consisting of tenants, leaseholders and customers of the housing service. She outlined what the project objectives were this time with regard to what information was available to customers, how they could access it and what barriers there were to accessing the service. The project was also to identify how satisfied customers were with the Customer Services Promises Charter and delivery of the service to see how it coped with demand. Ms. Hedderwick stated that the purpose of the project was aimed at reviewing the customer experience when contacting Housing Services by either telephone or visiting the Neighbourhood offices, but acknowledged that people cannot always attend the Area Offices due to commitments such as working, child care, job interviews etc.

7.4 Grace Collins referred to observational visits to housing offices that had been carried out undercover to see how well the service was working. At these visits, a review of existing leaflets and the information available was observed. She outlined the recommendations from a survey that had been sent out to customers to gather their views on access to housing services. These were to radically improve the quality and accessibility of information on the Council's website, explore opportunities to deliver housing services in shared buildings or spaces i.e. as at Crystal Peaks, improve in-person, telephone and online access to services and that better training be provided to staff to enable them to resolve queries, rather than passing the customer on to another team. The survey showed that, generally people were satisfied with the service they received, there were a lot of negative comments about the length of time it had taken to get through to speak to a member of staff and the lack of communication regarding the call queue.

7.5 Members made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-

- It was stated that the survey hadn't set out to separately account the views of those with disabilities, the visually impaired nor those who were hard of hearing, although this was captured in the survey demographics. It was intended to follow up in six months' time with suggestions to assist disabled people access the services easier.
- Members of the Panel had visited the Gleadless Valley Neighbourhood Office and had found that the staff were very helpful but were not able to assist with all queries. The Panel felt that staff should be able to deal with all enquiries as people didn't want to ring a call centre and would prefer face-to-face contact or a local number.
- Housing+ was introduced as a new model for the delivery of council housing services which aimed to provide additional support to help people look after themselves and their home through Neighbourhood Officers. It was hoped that the results from the survey and the C4C recommendations would help to improve service performance.

7.6 RESOLVED: That this Committee:-

- (a) thanks Peter Brown, Louise Cassin, Grace Collins and Carrie Hedderwick for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the presentation and report and the responses to the questions raised;
- (c) requests Housing+ update be brought to a meeting of the Committee soon; and
- (d) supports the recommendations made by the Challenge for Change Customer Scrutiny Panel and requests that an update on action to the recommendations be brought back to this Committee in six to nine months' time.

8. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

8.1 The Committee received a report of the Joint Heads of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit providing an update on the work of the Unit and its links to the Council and other organisations working to prevent and reduce violent crime across South Yorkshire.

8.2 Present for this item were Dr. Alan Billings (South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner), Lee Berry (Superintendent and Joint Head, South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit), Angela Greenwood (Senior Partnership Manager, South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit) and Rachel Staniforth (Joint Head, South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit).

8.3 Angela Greenwood explained the work of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) which aimed to enhance partnership arrangements which were intended to lay the

foundations of a sustainable, multi-agency approach to reducing violent crime, scale up local delivery of tried and tested multi-agency public health approaches and deliver a range of new interventions and initiatives with partners across South Yorkshire, focusing on violence prevention and violence reduction.

- 8.4 Lee Berry stated that in August 2019, the Home Office announced that they would be providing the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner with £1.6m funding to set up a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in South Yorkshire. The funding allocation was based on NHS data on hospital admissions for sharp object assault. The funding was to empower organisations to think differently and work together to reduce violence. The VRU was looking at a public health approach to prevent and reduce violent crime. Lee Berry said the approach focused on the needs of the public or groups rather than individuals and would work with communities, groups or partners and success of the VRU would be built upon co-ordinating and learning from existing initiatives and resources within communities to ensure there was a comprehensive approach to tackling violence across Sheffield and South Yorkshire. He referred to the six key areas outlined within the report that the VRU would focus on.
- 8.5 Rachel Staniforth referred to the five common elements in the public health approach as being the prevention of violent crime, having a strong data and evidence base, looking at what causes violent crime and understanding the driving force behind it, looking at the population level across South Yorkshire and working together in partnership. Rachel Staniforth said that an Area Profile document had been drafted and was under consideration. It was hoped that the final document, expected to be published in May, 2020, becomes a useful tool for partners and community organisations. Ms. Staniforth then circulated an appendix to the report which gave a list of Sheffield funded projects for the VRU fund and also a list of district wide funded projects from the fund. She said that the VRA reports monthly to the Violence Reduction Executive Board.
- 8.6 Members of the Committee made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were given as follows:-
- The £1.6m funding soon diminishes. Part of the ongoing work was to understand what community groups are out there and how to develop a reduction delivery plan, with key performance indicators going forward. The priority will be a delivery plan for all partners.
 - The collection of data was free and we thank Council Officers for their help in getting the data. The VRU used our own data analyst to interpret the data.
 - The Home Office funding, which was secured in August, 2019, had to be allocated to local community-based and partner organisations to fund the prevention and reduction of violence across the six key areas by March 2020, therefore there was a limited period of time for funds to be allocated. Bids for funding for had to be submitted to the VRU by the 31st October, 2019 and all successful bidders had been notified.

- One of the mandatory products specified by the Home Office was to deliver a South Yorkshire Violence Response Strategy, and it was felt that members of the community had an input into this strategy. The VRU had contacted and commissioned Voluntary Action Sheffield to lead and coordinate this throughout South Yorkshire. Nine Workshops had been held across South Yorkshire during December, 2019. engaging up to 10 members of the community at each, both adults and young people, to get their insight into what it is like to live in their area, as well as seeking their input into the South Yorkshire Response Strategy.
- The Unit was trying to overlap data provided by the police and at A&E departments at local hospitals. Some Navigators have been engaged in A&E Departments and police custody suites to engage and listen to those detained in custody and seek to understand how they have become involved in criminality. The Navigators will provide help and support aimed to steer them away from criminality and support them on a journey away from the one they are on now.
- It was acknowledged that there was a need to put youth workers back into areas of need, to engage with young people and steer them away from crime. Evidence has shown that some of the information given at school has the effect of frightening children and has the opposite effect on them. Following a further bid for Home Office funding after the 31st March this year, it was felt that youth work was one area that needed support.
- Domestic violence within the home can have a devastating impact on children and young people that can last into adulthood. SmartWater has been used at the homes of domestic abuse victims in an effort to deter perpetrators from returning to the home and to provide victims with reassurance that their security has been enhanced. By using SmartWater technology, the Police are not only sending out a warning to perpetrators that they will know if they have tried to visit the home of their victim but if they do, the Police will be able to prove it.
- The Violence Reduction Unit was working closely with the Community Safety Partnership with the aim of linking in to all community groups.
- The £1.6m funding was for one year. It was hoped to receive further funding for future years to build on the work already done by the Unit. The "Glasgow model" has been widely praised as a way of tackling violent crime. The work of the Violence Reduction Unit will not deliver results overnight as the causes of violent crime are many years in the making and the solutions will take time. It was hoped that the Unit will be sustainable for many years.
- The set-up costs have already been spent from this year's allocation, so hopefully with further funding being made available, it will be possible to fund more projects.

8.7 RESOLVED: That this Committee:-

- (a) thanks Dr. Alan Billings, Lee Berry, Angela Greenwood and Rachel Staniforth for their valuable contribution to the meeting; and
- (b) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made and the responses to the questions raised.

9. HATE CRIME IN SHEFFIELD

- 9.1 The Chair moved and Members agreed, that this item be moved to the meeting to be held on 13th February, 2020.

10. WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20

- 10.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson), attaching the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2019/20.
- 10.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee approves the Work Programme as detailed in the report.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 13th February, 2020 at 5.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.