

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

### Meeting held 14 March 2019

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ben Curran (Chair), Sue Auckland, Michelle Cook, Dawn Dale, Roger Davison, Terry Fox, Karen McGowan, Zahira Naz, Kaltum Rivers and Richard Shaw

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Penny Baker, Keith Davis, Mark Jones, George Lindars-Hammond and Anne Murphy.

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2019, were approved as a correct record.

#### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

- 5.1 The following questions were asked by Alan Kewley:-

**Q.** "The body presenting its annual report to this Scrutiny Committee is entitled - 'Sheffield Community Safety Partnership', but this currently appears elsewhere on the Council website as 'Sheffield Safer & Sustainable Communities Partnership', and previously as a Partnership 'Board'. Is this the same body with different titles, which is confusing?

**Q.** Previously, formal meetings of this Partnership (Board) have been publicised on the Council website, and open to members of the public, or community groups, to attend and submit relevant questions, but at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, I understand a decision was made to close its doors to the public forthwith. We've not yet had confirmation of this retrograde step, and I'd request this Scrutiny Committee for clarification.

I understand this decision was made by a show of hands of the members present, so I'd like to know if this statutory Partnership can legally make such a decision between themselves without wider consultation and scrutiny?

5.2 The Chair responded as follows:-

- The correct name is Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership
- It was necessary to exclude the public and press at meetings due to the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed.
- It was necessary for a member of the Police and Crime Panel to sit on the Board of the Partnership.
- Recommends that the Chair of this Committee in 2019/20 looks to clarifying the issues raised.
- Maxine Stavrianakos (Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support) would be requested to provide a more definitive answer, in writing, to Mr. Kewley, and that those responses would be published with the minutes of this meeting.

## **6. SHEFFIELD COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL REPORTING**

6.1 The Committee received a presentation on the Sheffield Community Safety Partnership which was given by Councillor Jim Steinke (Co-Chair of Community Safety Partnership and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety), with additional comments from Chief Superintendent Shaun Morley (South Yorkshire Police) and Maxine Stavrianakos (Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support).

6.2 Councillor Steinke explained that the Community Safety Partnership was a statutory requirement to have a local strategy for tackling community safety issues and was led by the Police and the Local Authority, which aimed to bring together expertise, knowledge and consistency. He said that it had been a successful year for the Partnership but realised there was still a lot of work to do. He referred to the performance comparison chart which showed that Sheffield favourably compared with other local authorities in that it was below average in terms of recorded crime. Councillor Steinke referred to the community safety plan priorities for 2018-20, and emerging issues such as gangs and youth violence; anti-social behaviour and crime, with the focus on the use of Spice; and knife crime and serious violence. He felt that the reintroduction of Police Neighbourhood Teams was key and the benefits these teams brought to communities was beneficial.

6.3 Members of the Committee asked a number of questions, and responses were given as follows:-

- The national picture on knife crime overshadows the fact that Sheffield is one of the few cities in England that has a 12% reduction in knife crime and those that carry a knife in the city were more likely to get caught. A lot of time and energy has been invested in this.
- The co-located team based at Moorfoot and the Police and Communications Unit were working to drip feed information to members of

the public to address perception of knife crime within the city.

- It was acknowledged that the different parts of the city were affected in different ways and social media had an impact on how information was communicated. During the week, The Star newspaper had ran an excellent campaign “Alive Drop The Knife” which had been very well received.
- The role that education plays throughout the city’s schools is vitally important. The aim was to make sure that, through activities in school, all pupils in Year 7 and above have an awareness of knife crime and what could happen if they make the wrong decisions. Both poverty and exclusion from school could lead to crime. It had been found that there were very clear links between exposure to adverse childhood experiences and criminal justice, employment and educational outcomes, and breaking the cycle across generations was vitally important.
- Assumptions were made about people who were considered to be vulnerable and often they could go through appalling circumstances but were still resilient and it was essential that these people receive the help they need.
- After the EU Referendum, South Yorkshire Police recorded a number of racist attacks and it is thought that, following Brexit, there could be a sustained spike in hate crime, bullying, offensive graffiti, online abuse and an increased threat of violence, and should Article 50 be extended the more tension could be created. There was a clear need to get the message across and make sure people report such incidents.
- Sheffield had a multi-agency approach to tackling organised crime and it was recognised that child exploitation was a well organised profit-making business.
- Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) were very useful in getting information into the communities with regard to tackling anti-social behaviour and community safety and it was felt there was a need to build on multi-agency meetings, although NAGs were no longer prevalent throughout the city.
- Operation Fortify, which was Sheffield’s multi-agency approach to tackling organised crime, had seized drugs, stolen vehicles and a firearm, had also carried out a number of arrests and made referrals into safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults. With regard to the proportion of drugs that had been seized and the large amount of cannabis compared to other drugs was mainly due to the fact that cannabis was more widely available.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Councillor Jim Steinke, Chief Superintendent Shaun Morley and Maxine Stavrianakos for their contribution to the meeting;

- (b) notes the contents of the presentation, and the Member and officer comments; and
- (c) requests that arrangements be made for Members of the Committee to visit Operation Fortify

## **7. ROUGH SLEEPER INITIATIVE**

- 7.1 The Committee received a presentation which gave background information on the Rough Sleeper Initiative which had been created in March, 2018 to identify and put in place actions to remove barriers and end rough sleeping in England.
- 7.2 In attendance for this item were Rosie Sheldon (Rehousing Service Manager) and Councillor Jim Steinke (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety).
- 7.3 In giving the presentation, Rosie Sheldon stated that the aim was to half the number of rough sleepers by 2022 and eradicate all rough sleeping by 2027. She added that a dedicated team of officers had been established to give support to rough sleepers by helping them overcome barriers such as debt, health issues, release from prison and discharge from hospital, with the overall aim of moving them into more settled accommodation and offer continued support to ensure sustainability even after being accommodated. Government funding had been made available to provide 12 emergency bed spaces and then carry out next day homeless assessments to try and plan successful moves into suitable accommodation. Future development was to increase accommodation quota; establish a Street Outreach Nurse, as had been set up and proved successful in Nottingham; provide a night shelter at St. Wilfrid's Centre under the "Safe Space" project; employ an In reach Prison Worker and also a Women's Health Worker.
- 7.4 Councillor Jim Steinke added that a civilised city was one that knew how to treat and look after the homeless. City Council officers go out at 6.00 a.m. each morning checking that those sleeping in doorways were alright.
- 7.5 Members made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-
  - One major challenge to the Team was that a number of rough sleepers already have accommodation but choose to live on the streets for a number of reasons, some might feel bullied or threatened where they live; family breakdowns; complex needs; those that are vulnerable etc.
  - Every case had not been successful, with some still returning to the streets, and the accommodation available was not a "one size fits all" scenario and accommodation was being tailored to fit individuals.
  - Funding had been received for the Street Outreach Nurse and Prison Worker and the scoping works for these posts was being developed.
  - Currently there wasn't a lot of detail regarding the Women's Health Worker

and the Team was still learning from other local authorities. Although the ratio for the number of men versus women who were homeless favoured men, it was stated that women tend to be exploited in the home but this did not necessarily mean they were living on the streets as a result of this.

- Funding from the NHS would pay the nurse's salary and provide premises for clinics to be set up and also the NHS has the knowledge of which areas of the city were the most in need of assistance.
- It was acknowledged that it was an ambitious target to eradicate rough sleepers by 2027 and progress would be reviewed annually.

7.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the presentation and answers to the questions raised; and
- (b) thanks Rosie Sheldon and Councillor Jim Steinke for their attendance.

## **8. STREET CULTURE - PROGRESS UPDATE**

8.1 The Committee received a verbal update on the progress made on responding to the recommendations made by the Street Culture Scrutiny Task Group in determining how joined up the street culture provision in the city is, what services are out there and what more might be needed to make a difference.

8.2 In attendance for this item was Councillor Jim Steinke (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety) and Tim Renshaw (Chief Executive, Cathedral Archer Project).

8.3 Tim Renshaw referred to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Task Group set out in Appendix 2 to the report, and provided an update:

8.3.1 Recommendation 1: Partners welcome the support from the Committee for HelpUsHelp. Tim Renshaw stated that the HelpUsHelp campaign run by local charities, the City Council and other local services, were making great strides in helping people who find themselves rough sleeping or begging for a variety of reasons, some often very complex, but added that there was still a great deal of work to be done. He mentioned in response to begging there was now interest from Student Unions to engage in raising awareness of HelpUsHelp campaign.

8.3.2 Recommendation 2: He said that the City Council had commissioned a psychology service to look at what it is like to be a rough sleeper, to see if the approach towards it could be done in a different way.

8.3.3 Recommendation 3: Tim reported that it was joined up, and that partners and services worked well to share information, and that the new and changing initiatives evidences this.

8.3.4 Recommendation 4: Safe Space, the project to come out of the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI), the previous item on the agenda, is a progressive piece of work,

an alternative to a permanent 'night café'.

- 8.3.5 Recommendation 5: There is ongoing work by all partners that improves provision.
- 8.3.6 Recommendation 6: Communication on Weatherwatch had improved and it was a successful initiative, especially with the additional space provided by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue. Provision was to be reviewed going forward.
- 8.3.7 Recommendation 7: This item on the agenda gives a multi-agency response to Scrutiny Committee recommendations.
- 8.3.8 Recommendation 8: Tim reported that partners and agencies are working with GPs on access to primary health care for homeless and how GPs deal with them, and added that there was to be a half day conference later this year to help GPs understand how to deal with the homeless. He stated that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) does contribute to homelessness and need services that can respond to this. Mr. Renshaw also stated that hospitals couldn't identify a good discharge process for homeless people and this too was something that needed to be addressed, as no fixed address was a particular issue within hospital discharge processes and systems.
- 8.3.9 Mr Renshaw referred to the new Archer Project campaign 'from sleeping bag to employment'. He stated, in response to a question, that rough sleepers are not choosing to rough sleep but regard it as the 'best option at time' for a safer place. That there was a concern in regard sector capacity to respond to growing issue, the impact of national policy and austerity impact was not over.
- 8.3.10 It was reported that there had been a reduction in anti-social behaviour on the Cathedral Forecourt, that the benches had been removed and flower beds put in their place and sessions had been held with retailers and other agencies to deal with the effect on them caused by the use of Spice.
- 8.3.11 Recommendation 9: Councillor Jim Steinke stated that the local authority felt the legislative Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was not the appropriate way forward and would not be pursuing that route. He said that the multi-agency group would give future consideration to begging and the impact on the economy, perception, image, safety and vibrancy of the city centre and shopping areas; the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act; with regard to Universal Credit, to lobby for the alteration and rent paid direct to landlords; and learning from other local authorities to understand and respond to street culture.
- 8.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-
- (a) notes the report and thanks Councillor Jim Steinke (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety) and Tim Renshaw (Chief Executive, Cathedral Archer Project), for their contribution to the meeting; and
  - (b) in view of the position reported in relation to PSPO, supports the

recommendation that the Council will not be seeking such Orders be put in place.

**9. GUN AND KNIFE CRIME REVIEW**

9.1 This item was withdrawn from consideration.

**10. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19 AND ONWARDS**

10.1 RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the Work Programme 2018/19 and considers it appropriate that Homelessness Reduction and Hate Crime be included in the Work Programme for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

**11. COUNCILLOR BEN CURRAN**

11.1 RESOLVED: That the thanks of the Scrutiny Committee be conveyed to the Chair, Councillor Ben Curran, for the work he has undertaken as Chair during the past year.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

12.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on a date to be arranged in the Municipal Year 2019/20.