



**MINUTES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND PLACE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Thursday 29 March 2012 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Van Kalwala (Chair), Councillor Clues (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Hirani, Naheerathan and HB Patel

Councillor CJ Patel also attended the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Brown, Harrison and RS Patel

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 February 2012 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

Policing priorities in Brent

Members enquired about the numbers of police community safety officers on a ward by ward basis and were informed that there was currently a shortage of approximately 40 however the police were due to make an announcement the following week on how to fill the gaps, which would be circulated. The numbers fluctuated as some PCSOs were being trained as police constables for the Olympics. Members asked to receive the latest information when any appropriate caveat.

On stop and search figures members asked to receive the breakdown of figures of cautions and convictions.

4. Brent's Council for Voluntary Services

The committee received a presentation from Danny Maher, Chair of CVS Brent, a charitable organisation which started approximately 11 months previously, to give a unified voice to individuals and organisations working in the voluntary sector. Danny Maher outlined the values and principles of the organisation and indicated that they were also willing to work with the private sector and was open to new funding sources. Local groups would be encouraged to be more sustainable and to move away from traditional sources of support. He was pleased to announce the appointment of the CVS' Chief Executive, Tessa Awe, due to start on 1 April 2012

the appointment of whom was seen to be a significant achievement and to introduce her to the meeting. Other newsworthy items were the start of the Transforming Local Infrastructure (TLI) programme, a project to enable groups to access services through digital platforms and IT. Additionally, negotiations were taking place with the council over a venue for the service. Danny Maher also looked forward to the forthcoming annual meeting and the handover from the steering group to a Board. He thanked the council for its support.

Members in discussion asked how the CVS would identify and meet challenges in Brent and address the loss of confidence. Danny Maher responded that there were many opportunities in Brent which was seen to be one of the least lottery funded authorities. The concern was over capacity to access. An increase in CVS membership would provide evidence of an attitudinal change and the service aimed to bridge the gap and raise awareness. There were a number of projects/groups in Brent and the CVS competing for funding would encourage partnerships and joint bidding. There was already evidence of increasing confidence with the CVS with regular attendance at meetings of 85 organisations. The service would provide strong leadership and number of events and initiatives were already planned, for example, the TLI which had to be delivered within 18 months.

On a venue for the service, Danny Maher stated that the service was keen to move away from large, spacious accommodation which was recognised as being unfeasible. What was needed was a flexible start up accommodation, even private sector rental was not ruled out, from which staff would hot desk and which could provide training opportunities. Jo McCormick (Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement) confirmed that consideration was being given to a venue with a robust business case. Tessa Awe would be working from a location in Kilburn.

Members also asked questions on the membership criteria, available options for mentoring and how would the CVS measure success. Danny Maher advised that there were different levels of membership which was fee based. Larger organisations had indicated a willingness to mentor and to encourage other organisations to be more outward facing. A successful CVS would have earned increased funding, a reduction in the number of problems. He also confirmed that in order to identify organisations' needs, skill audits would be conducted and that the anticipated staffing level was two, with a maximum of five.

The committee thanked Danny Maher for his introduction to the service which was both interesting and challenging and wished them every success.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the role of a CVS and its importance in the present policy context to represent and support the development of the voluntary sector to the benefit of Brent residents be noted
- (ii) that the business plan and strategic and operational plan underpinning the work of CVS Brent as the umbrella representative organisation for the voluntary and community sector in Brent set out in appendices 1 and 2 of the report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement be noted.

5. **Complex Families**

Phil Newby gave an overview of the Complex Families Project being developed by the council and partner agencies aimed at piloting multi agency early intervention with a group of families across the borough. Phil Newby introduced the Troubled Families initiative following on from complex families work as central government's response to the riots in 2011 looking multiple causes based on families. 152 pilot authorities across the country were taking part, and the council was working with 810 families in Brent on a reward basis. Attention would be focused on crime, school attendance, workless in the family and local concerns. The project was based on the key worker approach used in Hackney which had seen vast improvements. Central government funding would be available to support five out of six families. Jo McCormick (Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement) set out the Brent context referring to levels of child poverty, parents on low incomes and the impact of financial capability and debt on life chances being worsened by increase house price and child care costs and national policy to reduce benefit levels. The risk factors that gave rise to the project included the factors that influence families' resources currently, and also influence their ability to enter and sustain paid employment and also to escape poverty in the future. These include childcare, health care, job availability, access to services, teenage pregnancy domestic violence and mental health. The project's approach was to focus on adults knowing that this would impact positively on the children with an innovative use of proactive key workers with consequences for non-compliance and children's centres for early intervention. A package of support would be available however to ask local authorities to tackle the climate of unemployment was considered to be a significant challenge. Other challenges included capturing savings to reinvest and striking the right balance between incentive and consequence.

Members raised questioned how funding would be identified. Phil Newby responded that there was an assumption of savings, match funding and pulling funding sources together. The committee noted that previously there was strong support from other agencies. Schools were also pooling funding to procure better services. The committee agreed that provision needed to be sustainable starting with early years. The funding was mainly to ensure key workers, many of whom were already in post, were able to work more effectively. It was felt that the biggest risk was the size of the task and the timescales involved. Phil Newby advised that Roger Whitmore had been appointed to head the Trouble Families Unit with the aim of developing social work with key staff who have renewed confidence and skills. Partner agencies would work in a hub to whom social workers could refer families. It was noted however that the on-going re-organisation within the health service and the current demands the Olympics were placing on police time were challenges to the success of these arrangements. Members considered the link between gang membership and troubled families noting that there were common indicators such as low levels of immunisations indicating a lack of care when young, domestic violence and illiteracy. Families were currently being identified.

Members thanked Phil Newby and Jo McCormick for the presentation.

6. **Community Safety Updates**

Members had before them a report on crime performance indicators and a briefing paper on the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime. Genny Renard outlined planning

taking place for the period 2012-2015. There was a degree of uncertainty over central government and pan London requirements and latest information was that a formal strategy as previously produced was no longer required. She referred to the areas of residents' concern which were mainly neighbourhood crime and anti social behavior. Genny Renard outlined the resources being committed and to various projects in a number of areas. Growing Up Safely in Brent which aimed at reducing the number of young victims and level of involvement in criminality. CAGGAK (Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives) project would now be delivered by central government, funding had been taken back. Work would be modelled on a successful and worthwhile project with gang members in Kilburn aimed at reducing offending. Reference was made to Building Safer Businesses in Brent and businesses 'Tow Bar' scheme as getting young people into work was seen to be important as employment was found to be the best way of reducing offending.

Genny Renard circulated statistical information on crime in Brent in 2010-2012 advising that all councillors would be sent separately information relevant to their wards including key contacts. Genny Renard summarized what was available and referred to difficulties in getting reliable data for a variety of reasons including budget cuts within the police service Data Teams, lack of availability either nationally or locally, differentials in definitions and lack of co-ordination. The crime data set out key crimes grouped into themes. Personal robbery and residential burglary were increasing however police numbers continued to decrease. Efforts were being made to obtaining funding from the European Union to tackle hate crime. The chair referred to efforts to design a matrix to establish the direction of travel and also *bespoke work with pupils - to get funding*. It was noted that sanction and detection data was not necessarily an indicator that the correct person had been convicted. Genny Renard also reminded members that frequently data needed to be interpreted and also could contain double counting. This would be avoided by improved coordination.

The committee received and noted the briefing note on the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime which replaced the Metropolitan Police Authority in January 2012 on how it would oversee the police service, deal with complaints and problems.

RESOLVED;

that the report be noted.

7. **Policing and Community Safety in an era of public spending cuts**

The committee received a report which set a draft scope for a proposed a task group established to look at the changing context within which police and community safety was delivered highlighting the key issues the task group could address.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that agreement be given to set up a task group based on the scop attached to the report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement.

- (ii) that the group offices are approached for nominations for membership of the task group.

8. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting would be agreed by the Annual Meeting of Full Council in May 2012.

9. Vote of thanks

Members on all sides thanked staff in the Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement Unit for their work throughout the year.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Z VAN KALWALA
Chair