



MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **Tuesday 9 February 2016 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Kelcher (Chair), Councillor Colwill (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Daly, Farah, Long, Miller, Stopp and Tatler, together with Ms Christine Cargill and Dr J Levison

Also Present: Councillors Denselow, Moher and Perrin

Apologies were received from: co-opted Members Mr Alloysius Frederick and Iram Yaqub and appointed observer Jean Roberts

1. Chair's introduction

Councillor Kelcher reported that he had attended a meeting of the London Scrutiny Network and it was clear that the Council was in the minority in having only one scrutiny committee. He hoped this would soon be addressed by Full Council agreeing to establish two scrutiny committees, covering broad themes around health and place.

Councillor Kelcher referred to discussion at the previous meeting on charges for recycling and green waste collections when it was discovered that approximately one third of the finance raised above the cap had been fed back to the contractor to buy another vehicle. He expressed concern over this and asked the committee to support him in calling for a review of the current decision making arrangements for this contract. The committee supported this.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Miller declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 due to being employed by the charity Rethink Mental Illness.

3. Deputations

None.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes had been made available shortly before the meeting.

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 January 2016 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. **Matters arising**

None.

ORDER OF AGENDA

The committee agreed to take the items in the following order:

CAMHS in Brent
Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report
Task Group – CIL and Section 106 in Brent
Task Group – Housing Associations in Brent

6. **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services in Brent: Current provision and future developments**

Dr Sarah Basham, introduced the report and Duncan Ambrose (Assistant Director, Brent CCG) explained how the plan had evolved. He stated that the plan was to be seen through two different perspectives – the view of the eight boroughs involved and Brent specific. The plan represented joint working between sixteen different organisations, co-ordinated through the Children's Trust. He outlined the eight priorities contained within the plan and flagged the challenges, which included attracting the appropriate staff as all CCGs were implementing similar plans.

Members asked questions regarding the funding available and Mr Ambrose expressed the hope that the funding identified would be sufficient. However, he was asked to compare the level of funding with that available to support services for adult mental health and inform members of the committee. Members also asked for what percentage of the CCG's budget did the contribution being provided by the CCG amount to. The request was also made for the financial amount of the services commissioned by the CCG.

In the context of the category of those most at risk of suicide being men under 35 years of age, Mr Ambrose was asked why there was no reference to suicide in the plan. He explained that deliberate self-harm was referenced with it being closely linked to suicidal tendencies, however it was difficult to identify the numbers involved. A request was made for figures showing how many children had died from suicide in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Members questioned how referrals were made. It was explained that referrals were made by GPs with urgent cases being seen the same day, otherwise there was an eighteen week target to see all referred cases. However in Brent there was an average wait of 25 weeks with the longest wait being 10 months. It was agreed that this was not acceptable and members were assured that this was being addressed.

The spike in caseload for boys aged 10 and girls aged 15 was noted as the common theme over a long time. Referring to the ethnicity graph, it was commented that the caseload was not representative of the local population. In response Dr Basham stated that further outreach work needed to be developed across a broader area of provision. Gail Tolley (Director, Children and Families) explained some of the work being carried out with schools to address this. It was felt that the work with schools would be a useful area for the Scrutiny Committee to

look at. It was pointed out that eating disorders were relatively rare in Brent but self harm was on the increase. It was asked how self harm was defined. It was recognised that it was too narrow for it to just refer to cutting and that eating disorders could be put under the description of self harm.

It was commented that it was good to see more openness on the development of child and adolescent mental health services and that it would be good to see implementation of the transformation plan over the next few years. Dr Basham added that the support of the Council was welcomed.

Requests for information

- Level of funding compared to that supporting adult mental health
- Percentage of CCG budget allocated to CAMHS
- The financial amount of services commissioned by the CCG
- How many children had died from suicide in 2013/14 and 2014/15

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the report and attached CAMHS Local Transformation Plan be noted;
- (ii) that the comments of the committee be taken into account in taking forward the CAMHS Local Transformation Plan in Brent in 2016/17.

[During discussion of the above item, Councillor Miller took no part in the discussion and left the meeting room.]

7. **Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2015**

Chris Williams, Head of Community Safety, introduced the report. Councillor James Denselow (Lead Member for Stronger Communities), Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive and chair of Safer Brent Partnership, and Chief Inspector Nick Davies, Metropolitan Police were also present. Chris Williams drew attention to the six strategic priorities contained in the report and pointed out that performance of the partnership was excellent with it being in the third of the Most Similar Group for overall crime rates.

The Chair acknowledged the strong position of the partnership but asked how the fear of crime could be tackled. Chief Inspector Davies replied that it was important to get the message out that crime rates had reduced. He acknowledged that performance of the partnership was below average in improving the confidence of people that crime was being tackled. Councillor Denselow (Lead Member for Stronger Communities) added that it was important that a true partnership approach was taken to address the perception versus the reality over the level of crime in the borough. The committee recognised that the perception of crime related to a more general negative view of the borough and that a push needed to be given on promoting the borough as a good place to live and work in. It was agreed that the figures from the Council's survey in 2014 on attitudes to crime should be circulated so that a broader perspective could be viewed on how people felt about crime in their area.

The issue of working with schools was raised and it was felt to be important to find out what schools were already doing in the areas such as promoting respectful

relationships and dealing with domestic violence. If it was found that extra work in this area was needed then opportunities could be explored with head teachers for incorporating it into the SRE programmes.

The impact of the Prevent duty was raised. Councillor Denselow stated that there had been a period of introduction to implementing this statutory duty and there were false perceptions of what it was. It tied in with safeguarding duties. Members suggested that the influence of gangs and radicalisation might have similar themes and at the Committee's request Carolyn Downs undertook to take back to the partnership consideration of putting work on Islamophobia and hate crime alongside Prevent.

Following on from concern expressed by members of the committee over the rise in incidents of Islamophobia, the issue of such incidents taking place on public transport was raised. The question was asked if this was an increasing trend and what instructions bus drivers operated under when such incidents took place on their bus. Chief Inspector Nick Davies re-assured the committee that the partnership had considered the impact of Islamophobia but he could not say if incidents on buses were increasing or what action the bus drivers were meant to take. It was agreed that the partnership would further consider the issues around Islamophobia and would request from Transport for London what its instructions to drivers were and to share the response with the Scrutiny Committee.

Reference was made to the MOPAC seven targets for the Mayor's priority crimes and Carolyn Downs explained that some of these were not necessarily priorities for Brent. She had discussed this with both the Metropolitan Police and MOPAC and believed they would be reviewed by the new Mayor. She felt that there should be flexibility to allow local priorities to be set.

The treatment of rough sleepers was raised and it was suggested that they were not always treated fairly. Chris Williams expressed surprise at this because the Council and the police worked well with St Mungo's to assist rough sleepers and he asked if any councillor had any concerns that they send him the details and that he would look into the issue seriously.

Members raised the attendance records for meetings of the Safer Brent Partnership meetings. Carolyn Downs re-assured the meeting that attendance by the CCG had now improved but she expressed her strong concern over the view received from the Community Rehabilitation Company that because of cuts in their funding they would no longer be able to attend the meetings. She stated that all partners were having to manage with less resources and she had taken the matter up with the Lord Chancellor, Michael Gove.

Arising from discussion about the operation of gangs in the borough, a particular aspect was raised around fixed odds betting machines located within betting shops which might be used to launder money and the fact that the Council's licensing powers were limited in trying to deal with this. It was felt that this was not a significant issue as far as dealing with gangs went but the police were alert to it. Councillor Denselow felt this was an area in which the police and the Council using its licensing powers could work more closely as part of the crime and disorder strategy. Chris Williams explained that there were 18-20 gangs operating from Brent with about 250 of their members on the Trident matrix and about 1,000

included on a local list. Committee members asked to be circulated with a map of the borough showing the spread of gangs on a ward basis.

In response to questions around the use of 101, Chief Inspector Nick Davies explained that this number represented a large part of the operation of the Metropolitan Police. He wanted to re-assure the committee that anyone using the number got through to the same people covering 999, it was just dealt with as a different priority. He stressed that it was very important that people used it in cases where it was not an emergency.

Turning attention to the priority within the strategy around violence against women and girls, the Chair raised the confusion that existed between forced marriages and arranged marriages. It was acknowledged that a clear distinction was not readily available and it was agreed that the partnership would consider this.

Councillor Denselow, Chief Inspector Davies, Carolyn Downs and Chris Williams were thanked for their attendance.

Requests for information

- figures from the Council's survey in 2014 on attitudes to crime to be circulated.
- what schools are doing in areas such as promoting respectful relationships and dealing with domestic violence within their current curriculum.
- map of the borough showing the spread of gangs on a ward basis.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Safer Brent Partnership annual report 2015 be received and noted;
- (ii) that arising from discussion of the annual report, the partnership be requested to:
 - consider further the issues around Islamophobia and request from Transport for London what its instructions to drivers are in cases where incidents take place on buses
 - consider the suggestion that the influence of gangs and radicalisation might have similar themes
 - clarify the difference between forced marriages and arranged marriages

8. **Proposed Scope for Scrutiny Task Group on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 in Brent**

Councillor Farah stated that he would be happy to hear from any councillor who might want to add to the issues to be looked at by the task group.

RESOLVED:

that the scope, terms of reference and time scale for the task group, as set out in Appendices A and B attached to the report be agreed.

9. **Proposed Scope for Scrutiny Task Group on Housing Associations in Brent**

Councillor Miller stated that he would be happy to hear further suggestions from members of the committee on what the task group might look at. He wanted to review the list of organisations shown in the terms of reference and clarified that in considering possible solutions for housing associations, the council and the local community to ensure good quality and efficient repairs would not include consideration of rising rents.

10. **Scrutiny Forward Plan**

Councillor Kelcher asked that members of the committee submit suggestions for the work programmes of each of the two new committees subject to the new scrutiny structure being agreed by Full Council. Councillor Tatler suggested that more scrutiny around schools was needed, whilst noting that the next meeting of the committee would be considering the School Achievement Report.

Councillor Kelcher asked that if any member had specific questions they wanted answered on any topic included in the work programme that they give advance notice of this so that the report on the topic could address them.

11. **Scrutiny key comments, recommendations and actions**

Noted.

12. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm

M KELCHER
Chair