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SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Panel held on Tuesday, 11 April 2017 at 3.00 pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Simon Boshier (in the Chair)

Councillors Ian Lyon
Ben Dowling
Steve Hastings
Stephen Morgan
Darren Sanders
Tom Wood

5. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Alicia Denny and Scott Harris.

6. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2017 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 February 2017 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

8. Update on Scrutiny Review - "Revitalising Local High Streets and Secondary Shopping Areas in the City" (AI 4)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Chair advised that the two reports that were before the Panel today were those that members had voted to look at. He invited the Assistant Director of Culture and City Development, Claire Upton-Brown to present her report which she then did.

With regard to the recommendation concerning traders' associations, efforts had been made to re-establish historical trading groups and a series of meetings had been set up with traders' groups hosted by PCC. These had met with varying degrees of success. The City Centre Association was getting stronger and was encouraged by recent improvement work. It met on a regular basis and was proactive. Cosham traders did not attend the meeting. Only two people attended the Southsea meeting and there was no appetite for a formal trading group to be set up there. Active traders' groups included Albert Road, Castle Road, Fratton and North End. Ms Upton-Brown

said that no major issues had been identified by these traders' groups but PCC has regular dialogue with some of them.

The Chair said that it would be useful for the traders' groups to approach the Council with suggestions and ideas so that these could be looked at and supported where possible. Ms Upton-Brown agreed saying that if there was an issue that was of concern, then the City Council would try to help. For example the fountain in Commercial Road had been found to have mould in it and so PCC had arranged for COLAS to deep clean it.

Ms Upton-Brown confirmed that cleaning and maintenance work was part of an ongoing programme and the Council welcomed matters being brought to its attention. The appearance of the city is very important as people enjoy visiting places that looked well cared for.

In response to queries, the following matters were clarified

- With regard to putting forward bids for external funding, Ms Upton-Brown said that in order to put forward a bid that has any chance of succeeding within the city centre other changes and improvements must first be made. Ms Upton-Brown said that vacancy rates and footfall are monitored. In the city centre, vacancy rates were just above average. In Southsea, vacancy rates were higher.
- Feedback from traders was that the move to anchor some cultural venues and events in the tertiary shopping areas was seen as beneficial as this increased footfall.
- It was confirmed that some work was being carried out with national marketing assistants to look at where the city stands in terms of improving shops and trading and the outcome is expected to be reported to the Planning Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio in due course. Part of that work would be to consider what to focus on - markets or events and also care would be needed as to where these would be sited.
- Members said that a major issue in shopping areas was parking and people living in the North of the city may go to Petersfield because of that.
- Members noted that it may be that an area could be helped as much by a cultural event or attraction as by an anchor store and that wider analysis is needed about this.
- With regard to tickets for PCC-led events at PCC venues and facilities in the shopping areas (item 6 of the update on implementation of recommendations in the report), members asked how many tickets had been sold through libraries and also whether the Council receives a percentage of the ticket sales. Ms Upton-Brown said she would find out and arrange to advise members of the panel.
- Members suggested that it might be useful to have different plans for different areas and these could include a Farmers' Market or a Craft Fair - but not the same thing in different areas.
- Members suggested that the Council needs to look at how it communicates with traders as anecdotal evidence suggests that the relationship between some traders and the Council could be very much improved. Other local Councils such as Petersfield appeared to be

more helpful to traders for example by providing details of available grants.

- It was confirmed that the "Quieter Routes" initiative mentioned under item 3 of the update had been launched on 11 April 2017. Members said that a further piece of work on analysing the Quieter Routes could be done to see if this was safer for cyclists. Also if railings were provided to lock bikes to, these would need to be carefully sited so as to avoid obstructing pavements.
- With regard to the process of accessing CIL money, Ms Upton-Brown confirmed that this was an officer led process and officers would have conversations with all Ward members where there was CIL money. However officers did not create a list to guide members to specific projects.
- Members said that often officers and members had different ideas on where CIL money should be spent as there were competing priorities.

There followed a general discussion on the scrutiny process and whether it had made a difference or would the actions have been implemented anyway. The following points were made during the discussion:-

- Some members said that when a scrutiny review is undertaken it highlights areas that are going to be looked at and consequently officers also look at those areas and if they can, they will address any issues during the course of the review. It is often difficult therefore to be clear about cause and effect as by the end of the review many of the recommendations may already have been implemented.
- Members asked whether it would be possible to show the recommendations that the scrutiny report had influenced. Ms Upton-Brown said that would be very difficult as it would mean trying to ascertain whether the recommendation had been particularly influenced or not influenced at all plus all the stages in between.
- Members said that they liked the format of the second report that showed in tabular form each recommendation, who would carry out the action, who was the Lead Officer and gave a Red Amber Green (RAG) rating.

The Chair thanked Ms Upton-Brown for the report.

The Scrutiny Management Panel noted the report.

9. Update on Scrutiny Review - Domestic Abuse (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Bruce Marr, Hidden Violence Service Manager, introduced the report. He explained that the scrutiny report was published on 29 April 2014 with 20 recommendations. These were reviewed by the Domestic Abuse Commissioning Review group on 16 January and 6 May 2015. He explained that of the 20 recommendations, 16 were rated green ie had been achieved, 3 were rated amber and 1 was rated red. Appendix 1 set out the recommendations and recorded what had been done for each one.

Members commented that the format of the report and appendix was easy to understand and suggested this should be used as a template going forward.

In response to queries

- Mr Marr said that the review mentioned in the report was around provision and intervention. 20 years ago, little was done about domestic abuse. Around the late '90s, the profile of domestic abuse was raised significantly and police handling of domestic abuse improved dramatically. At the time, it was regarded as being a gender issue, with men being the perpetrators and women being the victims. The issue is now viewed differently by some and is seen as being much more complex. Domestic abuse covers many aspects of where a person has power over another and includes unhealthy relationships generally.
- The Domestic Abuse strategy is being updated and the scrutiny review into domestic abuse is being used to inform that.

Mr Marr went on to say that the recommendation that was still on Red in the Appendix to the report was "Access to specialist mental health services be improved." He said that the threshold for Mental Health provision continues to be high however this continues to be addressed.

Members expressed concern about paragraph 3.3.1 of the cover report that states:-

"The CCG representative on the Domestic Abuse Commissioning Review group changed due to capacity, at the time a meeting was held with CCG commissioners and Mental health providers to explore how to improve access and more recently as a result of no ongoing funding for domestic abuse provision on 9th February 2017 Jo York (Director of Better Care, Portsmouth CCG) met with Rachael Dalby (Director of Regulatory Services and Community Safety) and Bruce Marr to consider how CCG can improve their response and commitment to supporting victims of domestic abuse in line with NICE guidance."

Members said that if the CCG was not going to provide any funding for domestic abuse, they had concerns about the efficiency of the revised Domestic Abuse Strategy going forward.

In response to further queries

- Mr Marr said that after the report from the scrutiny panel went to Cabinet, there were further challenges to contend with. Funding cuts led to a review of provision. The outcome is that Portsmouth City Council will employ 7 IDVAs (independent domestic violence advocates) who support those most at risk which will be funded by the Local Authority via cash limits and funding from the Children and Social Care portfolio. Portsmouth City Council and the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner have started the process to jointly recommission the refuge and outreach provision. Funding levels for this have not yet been finalised.

- Mr Marr explained that there was some available lottery funding - until March 2018 to deliver Up2U, the City's bespoke programme to work with perpetrators of domestic abuse. Most of the money would go to fund staff. 3.5 extra staff would be employed and will work in Fareham, Havant and Gosport as well as Portsmouth
- Mr Marr said that Portsmouth receives income from the Police and Crime Commissioner of £60k for 2016/17 - £40k was used for an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) plus £20k for Up2U. There will be some funding for 2018, but how much and for how long is not yet known
- Mr Marr said it is difficult to quantify the effect of the funding cuts.
- Mr Marr explained that only around 40% of victims of domestic abuse share their experience outside family and friends. Sometimes the domestic abuse is not considered by the victim as being their priority need. Substance misuse and housing are often considered to be more urgent. Consequently victims of domestic abuse may already be accessing services but not necessarily in relation to domestic abuse. The intention is to train officers to be aware of issues other than just the priority need and the revised strategy supports co-location of services.

Members were very concerned that no funding was being made available from the CCG who are one of the key players. Mr Marr confirmed that funding was mostly being made available from the LA via cash limits from the Children and Social Care portfolio with a contribution from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner but confirmed that no funding was being made available by the CCG.

Members of Scrutiny Management Panel wanted to add a recommendation to the report to say

"the Panel is disappointed at Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for refusing to provide ongoing funding for domestic abuse provision and asks the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety to write to the organisation expressing the Panel's unhappiness at the situation"

Advice was given that this had been brought as an information report and as such, there had been no provision on the agenda to give notice that a recommendation (effectively a new proposal) would be considered. The City Solicitor advised against proceeding on this basis. A debate followed after which in light of the City Solicitor's advice

It was proposed by Councillor Simon Boshier, seconded by Councillor Ian Lyon that a further meeting of the Scrutiny Management Panel be convened to formally adopt the recommendation that the SMP wished to add to the report (as set out above).

Upon being put to the vote this was LOST.

It was proposed by Councillor Darren Sanders, seconded by Councillor Tom Wood that the recommendation the SMP wished to add to the report (as set out earlier) be put to the vote immediately.

This was CARRIED.

Upon the recommendation set out earlier being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Panel

(1) notes the report

(2) is disappointed at Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for refusing to provide ongoing funding for domestic abuse provision and asks the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety to write to the organisation expressing the Panel's unhappiness at the situation.

The meeting concluded at 5.30 pm.

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Chair