

**COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 6th September, 2012 at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Kettle (Chair)
Councillor Branwood (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Burston, Caunt, Cotterill, Harley, Ms Nicholls, Perks and Russell.

OFFICERS

Assistant Director of Corporate Resources (Customer Services), (Directorate of Corporate Resources), (Lead Officer to the Committee), Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager, Performance and Commissioning Manager and Domestic Violence Co-ordinator (Chief Executive's Directorate), Principal Solicitor/Team Manager and Miss K Fellows, (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Acting Chief Superintendent Johnson.

11. **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An Apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor K Finch.

12. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of any matter to be considered at the meeting.

13. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 7th June, 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this Agenda item.

15. THE POLICE REFORM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT 2011

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Police and Crime Panel and changes to the Community Safety Partnership landscape under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

In presenting the report submitted, the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager made particular reference to the Action Plan for Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) advising that an information pack had been prepared for Police and Crime Commissioner candidates and she would make this available to Members. She also indicated that the pack provided an overview of the work conducted in the Dudley Borough and that the Home Office would conduct a national advertising campaign in October, 2012.

Acting Chief Superintendent Johnson advised that the Dudley Community Safety Partnership was further advanced in the preparation for the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner than other authorities. He also reported that at Force Level an implementation group had been established and although political interest had been generated in relation to the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner, communication in relation to the role and the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner should be further considered and it was likely that it would take time to reflect on how the Police and Crime Commissioner would operate.

Councillor Caunt advised that the West Midlands area would be divided into the seven Metropolitan Districts serving a population of approximately 2.6 million.

The Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager advised that she would clarify the term of appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager advised that the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner would be for a term of four and a half years.

In responding to a Member's question the Drugs and Alcohol Team Manager stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be responsible for the policing budget.

Acting Chief Superintendent Johnson stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner would become responsible for the Annual Policing Plan in the future.

It was noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be based at Lloyd House in Birmingham and that the four Black Country Boroughs would have five representatives on the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel.

The Drugs and Alcohol Team Action Manager stated that she would advise Members whether the consent of the Home Secretary in relation to the composition of the West Midlands Panel had been obtained.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, the information contained in the report, submitted on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, be noted.
- (2) That the Drugs and Alcohol Team Manager be requested to advise Members of the composition of the West Midlands Panel following consent to its composition by the Home Secretary.

16. DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REVIEW UPDATE

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the Domestic Abuse Service Improvement Review. Appended to the report was an action plan to address gaps in service provision.

Arising from the presentation of the report and appendix to the report submitted, Members asked questions and made comments and the Performance and Commissioning Manager responded stating that:-

- In relation to the British Crime Survey this had been published in 1999 utilising data obtained in 1995 and had only received 15,000 responses nationally.
- That the crime of domestic abuse remained under reported as victims had to deal with various issues before reporting crimes of this nature, however Dudley Borough continued to attempt to increase reporting and bring perpetrators to justice and in 2010 the Council had met the target set under the Local Area Agreement regarding increasing reporting.

Acting Chief Superintendent Johnson reported that the role of the Police in the way that they dealt with domestic abuse had changed over recent years and crimes of domestic abuse were treated as a priority by the Police and the Community Safety Partnership.

He also reported on detection rates stating that they were the best in the Borough, advising of the support network offered to victims of domestic abuse which would continue up until conviction and assured Members that domestic abuse would continue to be treated as a top priority by the Police.

In responding to a question from a Member, the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator advised that the Ofsted inspection referred to in the report submitted had been a planned inspection and this had not revealed any serious inadequacies in the service with recommendations arising from the inspection being implemented immediately.

In responding to a concern raised by the Chair, regarding the number of those requiring re-housing and whether their needs had been met, the Drugs and Alcohol Team Manager advised that she would obtain further details from the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services and forward further information to the Chair.

The Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager confirmed that when reporting on the Domestic Abuse Service Improvement Review in the future mapping would be provided of areas where domestic abuse provision was required in order to identify gaps in the service, although it was noted that this would not provide a completely accurate guide of gaps in the service.

It was noted that the Council were not charged for the provision of the perpetrator service in Walsall.

In responding to a question from the Chair, the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager advised that there was provision for statutory purposes in relation to the perpetrator programme and the Probation Service operated an independent service, however there was no provision for voluntary programmes and these provisions were being investigated.

The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator advised that the Domestic Abuse Forum usually met at Saltwells Education Centre in Netherton on a quarterly basis.

She also advised that in relation to cases where children were involved in cases of domestic abuse Barnardos provided a service, the Council also had a Domestic Abuse Response Team which worked with education, health, social care and the police which met three times each week in order to examine cases and ascertain whether children had been involved in order that appropriate interventions could be put into place.

The Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Manager reported that additional funding had been obtained to continue the Barnados service provision and as a result the waiting list had been reduced.

She also undertook to provide Members with details of the number of children currently on the waiting list.

In responding to a question from the Chair the Performance and Commissioning Manager advised that each time the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services received a referral this was scrutinised in order to ascertain whether intervention was required and following this the relevant referrals would be made. He also stated that details of the sources of injuries were also captured.

The Performance and Commissioning Manager undertook to provide Members with details of the number of referrals made following the review of the service provided by the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services.

In responding to a concern raised by a Member in relation to intervention where children were involved with domestic abuse cases the Principal Solicitor advised that the Children Act 1989 had been amended to include in the definition of significant harm children who had witnessed significant harm which had resulted in the intervention of Children's Services and Court Proceedings being issued where necessary.

It was noted that such intervention could result in a child being permanently taken into care which could in effect punish the victim as well as the perpetrator.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and the Appendix to the report, submitted on the Domestic Abuse Service Improvement Review update and the progress made to date in improving service delivery of domestic abuse services, be noted.
- (2) That the Drugs and Alcohol Team Manager be requested to email to Members:-

- (a) Details of the number of those who were not re-housed and that required re-housing due to domestic violence.
 - (b) Details of the number of children who remained on the Barnardos waiting list.
 - (3) That the Performance and Commissioning Manager be requested to provide Members with the number of referrals made following the improvements made to the Domestic Abuse service provided by the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services.
 - (4) That the Chief Executive be requested to submit maps in relation to Domestic Abuse Service need and provision to future meetings of the Committee when considering the Domestic Improvement Service Review further.
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17. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO REQUEST THE ATTENDANCE OF ANY SAFE AND SOUND BOARD MEMBER OR THE PROVISION OF ANY INFORMATION AT A FUTURE MEETING IN RELATION TO THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME.

Following discussion on this issue it was:

RESOLVED

That the attendance of any Safe and Sound Board Member or the provision of any information at the next meeting be not pursued.

The meeting ended at 7 p.m.

CHAIRMAN