

Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2010

Present:

Councillor Commons – In the Chair
Councillors Akbar (CI/10/57 – CI/10/60) Boyes, Cameron, Hitchen, Rahman (CI/10/56 – CI/10/60), Tavernor and Taylor

In attendance:

Councillor Ali – Executive Member for Employment and Skills
Councillor J Battle – Deputy Leader
Councillor S Murphy – Deputy Leader

Val Armstrong – NHS Manchester
Superintendent John Graves – Greater Manchester Police
Zahid Hussain – Regenesis Squared
Tim Kyle – Greater Manchester Probation Trust
Khan Moghal – Manchester Council for Community Relations
Sam Priestley – Independent Choices
Claudette Webster – NHS Manchester

Apologies

Councillors Carmody and Chohan

CI/10/53 Urgent Business

Reports on Domestic Abuse, Agenda 2010, Performance and Risk Management in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the site visit to Hindley were submitted as urgent business.

Decision

To note the Chair's decision to accept these items as urgent business.

CI/10/54 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 November 2010 were submitted.

Decision

To approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting.

CI/10/55 Information and Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted providing details of a future key decision relating to the Committee's remit and tracking the actions arising from the Committee's recommendations last month. The Committee's latest work programme was submitted for approval.

Decision:

To note the information in the report and agree the work programme.

CI/10/56 Domestic Abuse

A report of the Head of Crime and Disorder was submitted updating the Committee on actions to tackle domestic abuse. Manchester's second Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy was launched on November 29 following consultation with domestic abuse survivors carried out over the last 12 months. The Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2010-2014 aimed to:

- put tackling domestic abuse as a strategic priority for all the agencies involved in the strategy, for example children's services and the NHS
- improve early identification and prevention of domestic abuse,
- reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse,
- ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children are adequately protected and supported and
- hold perpetrators to account through effective and early interventions.

Members discussed the intelligence that the Council had about domestic abuse nationally and locally. Members noted that domestic abuse was seen as a choice on the part of the perpetrator. Alcohol was not seen as a causal factor; intelligence showed that it could make somebody less concerned about the consequences of their actions, but that domestic abuse could not be blamed on alcohol as large numbers of people who consumed excessive amounts of alcohol had never committed domestic abuse. The links between levels of deprivation or debt and domestic abuse were interesting, but again did not establish a causal link.

A member stressed the importance of an approach to tackling domestic abuse which took the circumstances of the whole family into account. Research showed that if a child grows up in a family where abuse takes place, they are more likely to cause domestic abuse when they grow older. Sam Priestley, from the domestic abuse organisation Independent Choices, stated that they had recently surveyed users of their services on how they wanted to access support and there was growing call for support by e mail and text particularly in relation to newly emerging forms of abuse, such as through social networking sites on the Internet.

The Committee explored the role of domestic abuse counselors in Hospitals. The Deputy Leader advised that the NHS were asking women in maternity wards, when they were on their own, whether they had suffered any forms of abuse. This had led to the disclosure of a lot of abuse that might otherwise be unreported. Val

Armstrong from NHS Manchester advised that some counselors were working at St Mary's Hospital in the city centre. This had provided a valuable opportunity to speak to Asian women, many of whom were in a forced marriage, on their own about whether they had suffered any abuse.

The Committee heard that the Home Office had recorded that there had been over 7,000 calls to the Police in the North West about incidents arising from forced marriages. A member suggested that the Committee might wish to explore how public services were reacting to forced marriages at a later meeting.

Members stressed the importance of providing proper support to victims to give evidence in court so that perpetrators were held responsible for their crimes. There had been improvements here, including Manchester having special domestic abuse court status. This status supported better co-ordination of support services for survivors, to act as witnesses and to recover from their experiences and this made it more likely that perpetrators would face justice.

Decision

1. To thank Val Armstrong from NHS Manchester and Sam Priestley from Independent Choices for attending and contributing to the discussion.
2. To note the contents of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2010-2014 and support the implementation of the minimum standards and the delivery plan and the work of the Domestic Abuse Management Group.

CI/10/57 Agenda 2010

A report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) was submitted providing feedback on the outcome of the Agenda 2010 conference and the proposed future approach for addressing racial equality. The Committee welcomed Zahid Hussain from Regenesi Squared, Khan Moghal from Manchester Council for Community Relations and Claudette Webster from NHS Manchester who attended the meeting to contribute to this item.

The report was introduced by the Deputy Chief Executive (Performance). He illustrated how the conference had focused on good performance and areas where progress was disappointing in the four priority areas: crime, education, health and employment. Particularly good progress had been made in health. He stressed the importance of local leadership from Elected Members to achieve further improvements, and asked for the Committee to comment on the proposed priorities for tackling racial equality in the future. The proposed future direction involved ensuring service commissioners such as the Police and GP consortia took racial equality fully into account in their commissioning decisions. The Council was also keen to set a good example as an employer.

Mr Moghal felt that the programme had been valuable, particularly the development of race equality action plans for each agency involved setting out their commitments. Ms Webster added that relationships with GP consortia would be important and that

she had spoken with them about Agenda 2010 and its legacy. She also added that she felt the future direction required a localized focus.

Mr Hussain felt that there had been a lack of groups that represented BME communities at the conference, and he added that he did not feel that the full range of health issues that remained to be tackled were included in the report. He said that further work to address lower life expectancies and poorer dental and mental health than the Manchester average was necessary. The Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) advised that BME groups had been involved at grass roots level in the agenda 2010 programme since its beginning but that he would welcome suggestions on how the engagement could be improved upon. He also advised that, rather than trying to capture all the discussion points from the conference around health, he had tried to add in the most pertinent ones. The key to addressing many of the future challenges in health was through liaising with service commissioners to ensure they commissioned services in a way that would tackle some of the issues that agenda 2010 had been concerned with.

Officers from the Council covering the priority areas of education, crime and employment attended the meeting and advised the committee about progress and the current challenges in each of the priority areas. Access to good ESOL courses (English for Speakers of Other Languages) was very important in the effort to reduce the gap between employment in BME communities and the Manchester average. Regarding education, good improvements had been made amongst Pakistani and Somali communities, yet attainment in school remained low and exclusions from school were high for black Caribbean pupils. It was felt that aspirations in some black Caribbean communities were lower, but it was hoped that the new Academies that had been set up might address this.

Racially motivated crimes were still at their highest in areas where deprivation was high and there was no history of diversity such as in many parts of North Manchester, however a downward trend had still been achieved here. Good progress had been made in reducing crime in the wards around the city centre.

Mr Hussain added that cuts to services and under-reporting of hate crime would still present significant challenges to further improvements. The Deputy Leader added that through working with community groups, confidence in public agencies had risen and that this would create a good platform to improve reporting of hate crime.

The Chair concluded by requesting the Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) ensure that the Agenda 2010 steering group take account of the views raised in the Committee when agreeing the future approach for addressing racial equality.

Decision

1. To thank Zahid Hussain from Regenesi Squared, Khan Moghal from Manchester Council for Community Relations and Claudette Webster from NHS Manchester for attending the meeting.

2. To note the progress in the priority areas of agenda 2010 and the proposals for addressing racial equality in the future.
3. To request that the Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) ensure that the Agenda 2010 steering group take account of the views raised in the Committee when agreeing the future approach for addressing racial equality.

CI/10/58 Local Area Agreement Quarter 2 Performance Report

A report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Performance and Finance) was submitted setting out performance in the Local Area Agreement indicators that related to the Committee's area of interest for the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2010. Members noted that performance in the targets for Serious Acquisitive Crime and the percentage of Vulnerable People Achieving Independent Living had improved whilst a number of issues had resulted in underperformance in target NI 45, Young Offenders in Education, Training and Employment.

Decision

To note the report.

CI/10/59 CDRP – Performance and Risk Management

A report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) was submitted providing an overview of the performance in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership's (CDRP's) targets and activity aimed at improving performance. The report also outlined the CDRP's approach to risk management and what it sees as its most significant risks.

The Committee welcomed Superintendent John Graves from Greater Manchester Police and Tim Kyle from Greater Manchester Probation Trust, both of whom were members of the partnership. Superintendent Graves spoke about how performance in target NI 16 (serious acquisitive crime) was positive, but that whilst vehicle related theft and robbery had reduced, similar reductions for burglary had not been achieved. The Committee agreed that they would look at burglary next year, particularly work with students to ensure they were security conscious and took precautions to protect their property.

Mr Kyle advised that community payback projects had been a great success, and there were now over 100 projects in Manchester taking place. This had supported reduced reoffending rates and members paid tribute to the value of this work.

The Deputy Leader added that the Chief Constable had confirmed that neighborhood policing would still be a priority for Greater Manchester despite reductions in funding.

Decision

1. To thank Superintendent John Graves and Tim Kyle for their contribution to this item, and to note the performance and risk monitoring arrangements.

2. To request an item on burglary and work with students for the Committee in the New Year.

CI/10/60 Business Plans

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) and the City Treasurer. The report outlined the Council's business and budget planning process for 2011 –2014, and identified the business plans that relate to each overview and scrutiny committee. The Committee were invited to select business plans and individual equality action plans for scrutiny in January 2011.

Decision:

1. To note those plans which relate to the work of this Committee.
2. To agree to consider the Crime and Disorder Business Plan and the Housing Equality Action Plan in January 2011.

CI/10/61 Visit to Hindley Young Offenders Institute

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted setting out the findings of those members of this Committee and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (CYPOS) who visited Hindley Young Offenders Institute (YOI) on 3 December 2010. The report recommended a series of further matters for the Committee to explore with members of CYPOS.

The Committee discussed social work support at Hindley. Members noted that social work staff at the prison are provided by Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, but that each local authority with young people in Hindley is billed according to the number of young people they have in Hindley for social work support and guidance.

A member who had attended the visit felt that it was important that the Committee looks at how young people are provided with accommodation after they leave Hindley, and how this supports them to enter productive occupations. On the visit members noted that one young person who they had spoken to was due to leave Hindley and return to an area where he had previously been associating with other young criminals.

Decision

1. To request that the Chair writes to Hindley YOI to express the thanks of those members who attended the visit.
2. To request that a similar visit be organised for members to see how the prison service and its partners treats young women in custody, and how they try to reduce reoffending levels.

3. To add a further item to the Committee's work programme looking at how the Council and the Connexions service are supporting young offenders into employment, education or training upon their release from custody.
4. To add an item to the Committee's work programme on accommodation for young people leaving Hindley, and how this supports reducing levels of reoffending.
5. To add an item to the Committee's work programme looking at the evaluation of the enhanced support project between Hindley YOI and a range of agencies including the Council once it has been completed.