

ITEM 4

Commenced – 6.00 pm
Concluded – 7.15 pm

Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Board
29 April 2014

Present: Councillor Stanton (Chair)
Councillors Barker, Keith, Pegg, Poulter, Redfern

63/13 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Councillors Naitta, Nawaz and L Winter

64/13 Late Items

In accordance with Section 100(B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to admit the following late items on the grounds that they should be considered as a matter of urgency because a decision was required before the next meeting:

Report of the Chair of Neighbourhoods Board – Scoping Report for Review on Domestic Abuse.

65/13 Declarations of Interest

None.

66/13 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

67/13 Update on Neighbourhood Working

A report was presented to the Board on behalf of the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods, entitled an Update on Neighbourhood Working. The report furnished the Board with an overview of Neighbourhood Working since the new framework was agreed for implementation in August 2012 by the current Labour administration; who made a commitment in their 2012 manifesto to: 'revitalise neighbourhood working' and to work with local people to tackle the issues that matter to them. Council Cabinet approved in August 2012 a change of approach to neighbourhood working which was as follows:

- a dedicated neighbourhood officer in each neighbourhood, forming a team of 17.
- to move to an area based neighbourhood approach with four neighbourhood managers.

- to establish a lead officer post for community cohesion and integration and a lead officer post for public protection
- neighbourhood devolved community budgets
- support of the elected members in their community leadership and case work role
- community engagement, consultation and communication (including Neighbourhood Boards and Forums)
- tasking and Co-ordination of local issues and problems
- responsive and reactive problem solving
- area-based strategic management and planning.

Following a restructure of staffing and resources to deliver the new service and implementations which began operating in April 2013 the new structure is:

- Four Neighbourhood Managers (covering four areas of the city)
- 17 Neighbourhood Officers created from previous roles of Anti-Social Behaviour Officers, Derby Homes Officers and Partnership Development Officers. 15 of these posts are from existing resources, two further posts are funded from the Administrations' priority fund. The neighbourhood officers to split their time between activities and projects as tasked by their respective Boards, and the rest of the time supporting other neighbourhood workers and the neighbourhood manager on projects within their area.

A key focus of the change was to remove some of the bureaucracy and red tape Neighbourhood Officers had in their previous roles, to enable them to spend a greater proportion of their working week in the community and be more visible and responsive to local problems. This has been achieved, with on average around 20% of their working week spent in the office. Due to recruitment and sickness some neighbourhoods have not benefitted from dedicated officers, however, by working as an area team each neighbourhood has continued to receive the service.

In conjunction with this the devolved budgets (including community budgets and devolved Streetpride budgets) were re-distributed based upon the index of multiple deprivation so those neighbourhoods with the highest level of need and demand received a greater proportion of the budget (Appendix 2).

Board members questioned officers at length regarding:

- i) the allocation of Neighbourhood Officers
- ii) the work carried out by them
- iii) how their time was accounted for.

Officers informed the members that due to a staff member being absent on long term sick leave they weren't able to recruit to cover the absence which resulted in differentials in Neighbourhood Officer time spent in some Neighbourhood Boards compared to others.

In the report the work carried out by Neighbourhood Officers was recorded in terms of "jobs" and was stated by officers to be a "snapshot" of tasks completed and problems resolved, it was not an exhaustive or comprehensive record of jobs

completed. Members were concerned that in some Neighbourhood Board areas, Councillors were carrying out work and completing tasks that were in other Neighbourhood Board areas being done by Neighbourhood Officers and this wasn't reflected in the figures contained within the report.

The Board commented on the huge disparities between the budget devolved to one Neighbourhood Board and another. Mickleover Neighbourhood Board had been allocated £5,401 for 2013/2014 compared to Derwent which had been allocated £51,119 for the same period. This was explained in the report; "devolved budgets (including community budgets and devolved Streetpride budgets) were re-distributed based upon the index of multiple deprivation so those neighbourhoods with the highest level of need and demand received a greater proportion of the budget (Appendix 2)", officers said they couldn't comment on the distribution of the devolved budget.

Members discussed and gave examples of the work carried out in the different areas covered by Neighbourhood Boards and how it varied greatly according to how much devolved budget had been awarded.

Resolved to note the report and requested:

- i) the work of the City Wide Neighbourhood Board be more transparent, the minutes of the meetings are circulated so Local Neighbourhood Boards are informed of decisions.**
- ii) there is greater consistency in the way that work undertaken by Neighbourhood Officers and Neighbourhood Boards is logged and reflected in reports.**

68/13 Forward Plan April 1 April 2014

Resolve to note the Forward Plan

69/13 Scoping Report for Review on Domestic Abuse

The Board received a Report of the Chair of the Neighbourhoods Board entitled the Scoping Report for Review on Domestic Violence. The report set out the scope for an on going programme of work to review domestic abuse. It stated that the recently issued National Crime Survey showed that, although not exclusive to women, around 30% of the female population has been subject to some form of abuse since the age of 16 including domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

The report explained in Derbyshire, domestic violence crimes now account for around 1 in 10 crimes, in 2007/08 it was 1 in 20 recorded crimes, and Derby has the highest recorded rates, followed by Chesterfield, Erewash and South Derbyshire. The Council therefore resolved at its 5 March 2014 meeting, to request the Council

Cabinet to work in partnership with Neighbourhoods Board and the Police and Crime Commissioner to conduct a review on domestic abuse to:

- a. consider and evaluate the levels of domestic abuse within the City
- b. 'dip sample' the way that cases have been managed and their outcomes
- c. discuss and disseminate the best possible levels of professional practice within the City
- d. consider setting up a strategic countywide group to enhance the work of domestic abuse specialists, such as the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates
- e. make recommendations to Cabinet about future resources, training and awareness
- f. urge Government to consider seriously the call by domestic violence specialists that 'coercive control' be made an offence'

The Board discussed the importance of raising the profile of domestic violence and how they would be actively involved in doing so. The Members of the Board were eager the work should commence as soon as possible by looking at the work undertaken by other authorities, which groups are active in Derby aimed at tackling domestic violence by involving them and Police and Crime Commissioner in this process.

Resolved to note the report and requested:

- i) all members of the Board are given opportunity to provide recommendations**
- ii) the report be included as part of the Work Programme to enable work to commence immediately when the Board meets in the next municipal year.**

MINUTES END