

ACTIVE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 17th June, 2015

Present:-	Councillor Mrs Gillian Williams – in the Chair
Councillors	Councillors Miss Cooper, Mayor's Consort Hambleton, Mrs Heesom, Plant, Tagg, Miss Walklate and Miss Winfield
Officers	Executive Director Operational Services Partnerships Manager Scrutiny Officer

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Eastwood and Woolley.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (24TH MARCH 2015)**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 24th March 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

4. **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

Members were presented with the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults report by the Partnerships Manager.

Members had previously been provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy during June 2014.

The Partnership Manager updated Members on the Peer Review of Safeguarding and the high risk areas, particularly child exploitation.

Safeguarding Policy

The Policy had been approved by Cabinet during 2014 and is currently being reviewed and revised by the Partnerships Manager to take account of recent developments and recommendations from the Section 11 self-assessment audit (December 2014), Peer Review of Safeguarding in Recruitment (January 2015), changes to Safeguarding Champions and contact information and most recently an internal Audit of Safeguarding which was due to conclude June 2015.

No questions were raised by Members.

Section 11 Self-Assessment Audit

Working Together (2013) recommends that all partners in Staffordshire agree to complete and submit a self-assessment and to provide evidence of how they comply with Section 11 when carrying out their day to day business.

The self-assessment audit was completed by the Partnerships Manager and signed off by the Chief Executive in December 2014. The areas identified for improvement included:-

- Completion of safeguarding training to all staff. Training had been carried out to ensure all staff were aware of the Policy and were confident in reporting any incidents.
- Include role of Deputy Designated Officer and Safeguarding Champions in job descriptions.
- Further promotion of Policy and Safeguarding Champions.
- Development of quality assurance for service contracts and distribution of promotional materials for contractors.
- Testing of staff awareness and use of information sharing Policies in Audit.
- Ensure that all staff were confident in reporting incidents/making allegations against people working with children. Ensure that escalation contacts are promoted and support is given to whistle-blowers.
- More intensive training to be identified at time of the induction if appropriate for certain roles.
- Identify further training and development opportunities for Safeguarding Champions e.g. specialist areas.
- Consider incorporating CSE and extremism into training for Champions.
- Formalise safeguarding within the supervision/annual review process for staff that may be reasonably expected to have contact with children or vulnerable adults. Ensure that record keeping with supervision is managed effectively and action appropriately.

No questions were raised by Members.

Peer Review of Safeguarding in Recruitment

A Peer Review was carried out with the assistance of Staffordshire County Council in November 2014. The review highlighted a number of suggested areas for further strengthening of the Council's processes and procedures.

Training

Significant progress had been achieved in training of staff in an awareness of safeguarding children. A compulsory on-line Level 1 training module was rolled out to all PC based staff in Summer 2014. To date approximately 300 staff have completed the module and face to face training was also being

provided to operational teams without access to a computer at the depot, Jubilee 2 and Kidsgrove Sports Centre.

The following questions were raised by Members and answers provided by the Partnerships Manager:-

Q1: How much training do Members require?

A1: All elected Members would be Level 1 trained, delivered by the Community Safety Officer.

Q2: Are taxi drivers required to undertake the Safeguarding training? Also the report identified a number of services that could be vulnerable; leisure and cultural, licensing and taxi and environmental health food and safety teams.

A2: It had been arranged that the Partnerships Manager would meet with these service areas next month for training.

Q3: Were DBS checks regularly updated?

A3: No. They are in place for a period of time. There was a need for the procedure to be improved, for example whistle blowing.

Q4: Was Newcastle Borough Council linked with Patchwork?

A4: Patchwork was a shared database which the Borough Council did not use. There was a weekly partnership hub that met every Monday.

Q5: What consultation is carried out concerning Contractors?

A5: Contractors were asked to sign up to a safeguarding policy and spot checks were carried out.

Q6: Was there a Policy in place whereby Community Centres ask outside Contractors if they had a Safeguarding Policy?

A6: Community Centres were not asked for Safeguarding certificates. The Partnerships Manager advised that she would look into how they were managed.

Resolved:-

The Committee received the report.

5. PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONING IN PARTNERSHIP

The Partnerships Manager provided an update on the Public Sector Commissioning in Partnership (PSCiP) programme.

The focus for Newcastle had been linked to two specific services areas: Infrastructure Support and Volunteering Services awarded to VAST and Debt, Benefits and Consumer Advice Staffordshire South West Citizens Advice Bureau.

Since May 2013 VAST had been commissioned to provide infrastructure and volunteering support across Staffordshire.

The cost of delivery for Newcastle was £12,000 per annum for an initial period of two years with an option to extend. The County and Borough Councils have recently agreed to extend the contract for a further twelve months to the end of April 2016.

Staffordshire County Council were now looking to re-commission its support for the voluntary sector in Staffordshire from May 2016. A Prior Information Notice was recently issued by the County Council describing their intention to tender. There was a planned engagement and consultation by the County with partners in the public and private sector about how best to commission this support moving forward. The Borough Council intends to be further involved in the planned engagement. A decision as to whether to collaborate on a future infrastructure project with the County Council would be considered at a later date.

Resolved:-

That Committee received the report.

6. **WORK PLAN**

Resolved:-

That the following items are added to the work plan:-

Monday 5th October 2015

Current Sports Development Activity within Newcastle Borough

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to present to Committee an update on progress/issues on current activities for sports development in the Borough.

Britain in Bloom

Newcastle in Bloom campaign is a borough wide partnership which includes residents, businesses, schools, community groups and a wide range of volunteers. The Committee will receive a presentation showing how the campaign operates and the Borough's aim to get more people involved to help improve their local area.

7. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

8. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

9. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 5th October 2015, 7.00pm in Committee Room 1.

COUNCILLOR MRS GILLIAN WILLIAMS
Chair