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Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee

8 DECEMBER 2015

PRESENT: Councillor M Winn (Chairman); Councillors S Jenkins (Vice-Chairman), M Bateman, A Bond, S Chapple, A Cole, S Cole, B Everitt and A Hetherington

APOLOGIES: Councillors T Hunter-Watts

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE UPDATE

The Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from the Community Safety Manager who gave an update on Domestic Violence and Abuse in Aylesbury Vale. It was noted that domestic violence was underreported. It was estimated that a person would be the victim of an average of thirty five incidents of domestic violence before making an official complaint. Buckinghamshire County Council led on domestic violence, and employed a Domestic Violence Coordinator. Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) were also available to assist victims through the court process.

One Councillor questioned whether there was budget sharing between the authorities regarding preventative work. The ongoing cost of the effect of domestic violence was huge and impacted on many service areas. Reducing the demand on these services by investing in preventative measures could lead to future savings. It was noted that there was no calculation regarding investment in prevention, but that strategies highlighting risk areas were developed. The Police and Crime Commissioner funds most of the work. Aylesbury Vale District Council would contribute to services within the district, and would also take part in awareness raising campaigns. Council employees would be made aware of warning signs of domestic violence, as many services areas interacted with members of the public.

It was questioned whether the Fresh Start initiative could be considered a success. Councillors were advised that the scheme was being evaluated. Officers would ask that Buckinghamshire County Council Officers share the results of the evaluation with the scrutiny committee.

Support was available for victims of domestic violence and abuse. IDVAs would support victims before the trial, as a victim may change their mind during the time it may take for a case to be heard in court. It is possible for prosecutions to take place without the testimony of the victim, but it was noted that this was difficult. It was noted that of 637 reported domestic violence cases in Aylesbury Vale since April 2015, 36% had resulted in a positive outcome with the offender being charged. This was higher than the average in the Thames Valley Police Area. 25% of incidents were reported by repeat victims.

Domestic violence and abuse was noted to impact every level of society, and it was not possible to label a particular age, race or social class as being at a higher risk. It was asked whether there was a correlation between domestic violence and drug and alcohol

use and Councillors were advised that there was no evidence that drug or alcohol use caused domestic violence.

In cases where a victim decides not to prosecute the individual would remain on the police radar. Information and evidence would be retained, and this included footage from police body worn cameras. Victims would also be referred to partner organisations. Work was also undertaken to contact hard to reach groups. Women's Aid employed an outreach worker from the Asian community to carry out work with the Mosque.

Children were often present in homes where there were incidents of domestic violence, and it was noted that, if they were at risk of harm, they may be removed from the home by the police. Any incidents where children were present would also be reported to Buckinghamshire County Council. Children taken away from their homes may be placed into care, and may suffer ongoing emotional problems.

The Citizens Advice Bureaus in Aylesbury and Buckingham reported that a number of domestic violence and abuse victims also had financial and housing problems. It was questioned whether Aylesbury Vale District Council had been correct to reduce the grant given to these organisations. The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Communities and Civic Amenities advised the committee that it had been a difficult decision to reduce the grant. The two organisations had been asked to look at working more closely together to achieve economies. It was noted that both Citizen Advice Bureaus had applied to the Aylesbury Vale Lottery for funding.

RESOLVED:

That the Domestic Violence and Abuse update be noted.

4. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE 2015

Members received a report providing information about current crime levels in Aylesbury Vale, a summary of activity on the delivery of the Aylesbury Community Safety Partnership (AVCSP) Plan in 2015/16 and an update on some of the recent and future changes taking place in connection with community safety. Chief Inspector Neil Kentish was in attendance at the meeting.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 required Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership to produce a three year partnership strategy and annual action plans to achieve the priorities set in the strategy. The Committee noted that the current strategy (2014-2017) had two key priorities, which were;

- (i) Safe and secure town centres
- (ii) To reduce ASB and crimes that are of most concern to the public and to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

Several projects had taken place in 2015/16, including supporting the Thames Valley Police campaign #consentiseverything, which likens consent to a cup of tea, Chelsea's Choice, a play about how a young girl becomes the victim of child sexual exploitation (CSE), and R U Safe, which would follow the play to give practical advice to young people with concerns about themselves or friends. In addition to this, Aylesbury town centre had applied to renew its Purple Flag status relating to its night time economy, which it had held since 2010. A waste amnesty project had also been carried out alongside the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, which aimed to raise awareness about fly tipping and contaminated waste. Councillors were advised that there were several upcoming projects, including the annual wintertime burglary campaign, which would run through to January 2016. The Community Safety Partnership would also be launching the Barnardo's 'Say Something' campaign, which aimed to raise the awareness of local

businesses about how to spot risk factors associated with CSE and what to do if they suspect CSE related activity. The Community Safety Partnership would also be working with housing providers to raise awareness of partners about e-safety by arranging some session for tenants.

The Committee were advised that the new community safety action plan for 2016/17 was being drafted and would be in place by 1 April 2016. A strategic assessment (2014-15) identified that the points of the strategy currently in place were still valid. It was noted that violent crime accounted for 20% of all reported crime in Aylesbury Vale, which was an increase of 6% on the previous year. Sexual offences rose by 36% compared with the previous year. 5% of all crime in Aylesbury Vale took place in Aylesbury town centre. 24% of the crime in the town centre was violence related and primarily occurred at the weekends between 1 and 4am. Emerging areas of crime included Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation and other forms of exploitation such as slavery. Work was being undertaken to help the partnership understand the scale of these crimes in Aylesbury Vale.

Crime figures had been falling annually in the Vale for the last few years however it was noted that the number of crimes recorded had increased 2015/16. This had been expected, as the way in which crimes were recorded had changed. There had been an increase in violent offenses, but it was noted that this rise was particularly caused by incidents at Aylesbury Youth Offenders Institute and the Whiteleaf Centre. There was an increase in thefts from motor vehicle comparing the year to date with the previous year. However, since one offender was caught, incidents had decreased and it was possible that there would be no overall rise in incidents for the year as a whole. There was also a rise in reporting of serious sexual assault. It was noted that there was still an increase in reporting of historic crimes.

Councillors stated that in villages where there was little crime, PCSOs were not attending Parish meeting. It was noted that the fear of crime in villages was higher than the risk of crime, and that the vast majority of incidents occurred in Aylesbury and it was necessary to ensure that Officers were stationed in areas where crime occurred. Thames Valley Police remained committed to Neighbourhood Policing, and there were no plans to decrease the number of Police in villages.

A community trigger had been received following anti-social behaviour stemming from a residential home for young people in Fairford Leys, which had led to a review. It was noted that since the conclusion of the review, there were still reports of anti-social behaviour, and it was asked when another community trigger could be launched. It was noted that a lot of the anti-social behaviour was noise related, and that the police had not received a report of anti-social behaviour since October 2015. It was stated that the use of a Closure Order was not suitable for this case, and that it was important that the noise issues were dealt with. It was asked that residents address complaints to Benjamin UK and also send them to the Community Safety Team at the Council. Meetings were still ongoing with Benjamin UK, and it was noted that a letter had been sent from Environmental Health regarding the noise complaints.

Mediation had been offered to residents as an outcome of the review, and Benjamin UK had offered to be involved in the mediation sessions. Work was also ongoing with county placements to ensure that Buckinghamshire County Council was matching children correctly. It was noted that the residential homes also housed children from outside of Buckinghamshire.

CCTV made a positive contribution to Aylesbury town centre, and it was noted that there was a lot of interaction between the CCTV personnel and Police Officers on duty. A review was being undertaken, and there was a possibility that the CCTV control room may be relocated to Milton Keynes. This review was being undertaken as a result of

budget pressures, and was looking to see whether there were more efficient ways of working. Interaction with Police would still be possible if the monitoring of the CCTV moved location. Street Angels, Pub watch and Shop watch were also in touch with the monitoring team regularly.

Members were informed that there were three Neighbourhood Action Groups in operation across the Aylesbury Vale. It was noted that, while the Buckingham Neighbourhood Action Group was well attended and was affective, neither the Wing nor the Aylesbury West Neighbourhood Action Group were well attended and were therefore not very effective. Councillors and members of the public were welcome to attend the meetings of the groups.

It was stated that the PCSOs in the Vale did a good job. A coffee morning was held in Fairford Leys at the Community Centre, but it may be more beneficial if it were held at the weekend occasionally. It was important to keep a PCSO presence in rural areas. It was noted that there was also good contact with the Neighbourhood Watch.

The Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee extended their thanks to Chief Inspector Neil Kentish for attending the meeting, and

RESOLVED

That the Community Safety Partnership Update 2015 be noted.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee considered the work programme, and

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

Domestic Violence and Abuse in Buckinghamshire

Teresa Martin & Faye Blunstone



What is Domestic Violence?



- 'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:
- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional



DVA Strategy 2015-2018:



Coordinated Community Response	To continue to support, develop and implement the Coordinated Community Response
Safety, Support and Harm Reduction	To improve the victim journey by identifying gaps, areas of good practice and improve the victim experience with our partnership services
Prevention and Early Intervention	<p>To support the safeguarding agenda and continue to enhance the current training and awareness raising to ensure that professionals and the public are well informed.</p> <p>To support, encourage and provide information to children, young people and families around healthy relationships and to provide services to those who have experienced Domestic Violence and Abuse. To ensure that those who are vulnerable are supported appropriately.</p> <p>This priority has three sections:</p> <p>A) Training of Professionals B) Children and Young adults C) Adults</p>
Local Communities	To engage with communities at a local level, including those who are harder to reach to ensure they are getting the services they need and that communities are equipped to help



How big is the issue?



- 7,687 incidents of DVA reported to TVP (7,454 in 2013/2014)
- 2,616 Aylesbury Vale

Tip of the iceberg.....

- Based on a female population of 256,937, estimated 16,958 females experienced DVA in the past year
- Estimated 10% of victims high risk = 1,695
- In Aylesbury Vale, based on a female population of 87,896 this equates to 5,659 female victims of DVA in the past year



Demand for services in Aylesbury Vale:



	2014/2015		
	Clients	Children	
IDVA	342	492	
Male IDVA	16		
Outreach	235	390	
Freedom Programme	99	124	
Counselling	39		
Refuge	71	74	* 30%
Helping Hands	19	32	



Costs of DVA in Bucks:



The cost of services DV and SV in an area with this population size

These figures show the estimated cost of domestic and sexual violence in an area of this size. The figures do not include additional costs from stalking, female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based violence, and forced marriage.

	Total costs (not including human and emotional costs)	Physical and mental health care costs	Criminal justice costs	Social services costs	Other costs (incl. housing, child care & employment costs)	Human and emotional costs
Domestic and Sexual Violence	£ 48,261,801	£ 10,399,691	£ 6,550,408	£ 1,233,569	£ 30,077,934	£ 154,089,485

The costs for local areas are derived from the national estimates of cost published by Järvinen et al (2008), and given by the proportion of the national population resident in your area. The HM Treasury GDP deflator multiplier of 1.136 has been used to bring the costs up to 2008/09 levels. More details on the services included in each category can be found in Waddy (2004).



What can Members do?



- Assist in promoting DVA messages on social media platforms
- Supporting residents in the community who may be victims and signposting to appropriate services
- DVA Champions



Any Questions?



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