

**Subject:** Commissioning of Domestic Violence and Abuse Services – Extract from the proceedings of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee meeting held on the 11 March 2021

**Date of Meeting:** 18 March 2021

**Report of:** Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities

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**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**Action Required of Policy & Resources Committee**

To consider the report and the recommendations from the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee.

**Recommendations:**

That the Policy & Resources Committee be recommended to approve the establishment of a Cross Party Member Working Group to:

- (i) Carry out a thorough investigation into the events leading to changes to Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence service arrangements.
- (ii) Review the Council's policy and practice regarding social value and community wealth building from a commissioning and procurement perspective including the above-mentioned services.
- (iii) Recommend any necessary changes and actions for improvement.

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**TOURISM, EQUALITIES, COMMUNITIES & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 11 MARCH 2021**

**VIRTUAL**

**MINUTE EXTRACT**

**Present:** Councillor Powell (Joint Chair), Osborne (Joint Chair), Ebel (Joint Deputy Chair), Evans (Opposition Spokesperson), Nemeth (Group Spokesperson), Grimshaw, Mac Cafferty, Mears, O'Quinn and Simson.

**Other Members present:** Joanna Martindale, Lola Banjoko, Nick May and Stephanie Prior.

**84. COMMISSIONING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE SERVICES**

- 84.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities which sought to inform members of the process regarding the re-commissioning and recommending that a further report goes to Policy & Resources Committee requesting that a member oversight group is set up. The report was provided by the Head of Safer Communities.
- 84.2 Councillor Evans expressed support for the working group.
- 84.3 Jo Martindale noted that social value was key and requested that the working group focus on collaborative commissioning and to be more creative in developing a strategy while making sure the voluntary sector was included. Support regarding financial assistance was expressed. It was noted that there was an opportunity to make an investment in to refuges services and to bring cohesion to these services.
- 84.4 The Head of Safer Communities stated that BHCC were committed to support organisations through the transition period.
- 84.5 The Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities stated that work was undertaken to make sure no one fell through any gaps.
- 84.6 Councillor Evans proposed the Labour Amendment to amend recommendation 2.2 and include a new item 2.3 as shown below in strikethrough and bold italics:
- 2.1 Notes the contents of the report.
- 2.2 Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee the ***immediate*** establishment of a cross-party Member Working Group to:
- (i) Review the Council's policy and practice regarding social value and community wealth building from a commissioning and procurement

perspective including the ~~Domestic abuse contract~~

**(ii) Including reviewing in full detail the sequence of events around the procurement of the Domestic Abuse contract;**

(iii) Recommend any necessary changes and actions for improvement.

**(iv) Consider the imminent new funding of £606k awarded to BHCC by MHCLG to meet our obligations under the new Domestic Abuse Bill and make a recommendation to TECC Committee on the process for awarding this funding.**

**2.3 That the Committee recommends to P&R that the Cross Party be made up of five members in a 2/2/1 configuration**

84.7 Councillor Grimshaw formally seconded the Labour Amendment.

84.8 Councillor Simson proposed the Conservative Amendment to insert a new recommendation 2.2 and to amend the wording preceding the recommendations in item 2.3 as shown below in strikethrough and bold italics:

2.1 Notes the contents of the report.

**2.2 Expresses concern that Audit & Standards Committee has declined to carry out a thorough investigation into the events leading to changes to Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence service arrangements over which tens of thousands of residents have petitioned the Council for action.**

2.3 Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee the establishment of a cross-party Member Working Group to:

**(i) Carry out a thorough investigation into the events leading to changes to Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence service arrangements.**

(ii) Review the Council's policy and practice regarding social value and community wealth-building from a commissioning and procurement perspective including the ~~Domestic abuse contract~~ **above-mentioned services.**

(iii) Recommend any necessary changes and actions for improvement.

84.9 Councillor Nemeth formally seconded the Conservative Amendment.

84.10 Councillor Evans clarified that the Chair of Audit and Standards did not decline a full investigation and quoted his comments at Audit and Standards to the effect that given the reports going to TECC and P& R and the proposals to set up a working group to review the Council's approach, he did not consider it necessary or proportionate to establish yet another work stream but that they would keep this under review and should issues come to light which were of legitimate interest to Audit and Standards Committee they would look at them.

- 84.11 Councillor MacCafferty thanked the survivors who attended the committee and provided a brief overview of the events leading to the issue. It was clarified that the Green Party had met with campaigners and the Chief Executive of Rise to help develop a way forward. It was stated that the focus was on working collaboratively with all parties to find answers and solutions that asserted the importance of domestic violence services.
- 84.12 Councillor Powell noted the myriad of issues highlighted by public speakers and noted that it would be the focus of the Member Working Group to scrutinise what had happened.
- 84.13 Joanna Martindale expressed support for the third sector and stated that this had occurred during NICE Committee not TECC. It was clarified that the Labour Party had decided to close the NICE committee.
- 84.14 Councillor Ebel noted concern with regard to the Labour Amendment which would limit the ability for the Policy & Resources Committee to set up terms of.
- 84.15 Councillor Simson noted that it was important that this be non-political.
- 84.16 The Chair then put the Labour Group Motion to the vote that failed.
- 84.17 The Chair then put the Conservative Group Motion to the vote that passed.
- 84.18 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote that were agreed.
- 84.19 **RESOLVED** – that Committee:
1. Notes the contents of the report.
  2. Expresses concern that Audit & Standards Committee has declined to carry out a thorough investigation into the events leading to changes to Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence service arrangements over which tens of thousands of residents have petitioned the Council for action.
  3. Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee the establishment of a cross-party Member Working Group to:
    - (i) Carry out a thorough investigation into the events leading to changes to Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence service arrangements.
    - (ii) Review the Council's policy and practice regarding social value and community wealth-building from a commissioning and procurement perspective including the above-mentioned services.
    - (iii) Recommend any necessary changes and actions for improvement.