

**EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE 21 JUNE 2010**

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Morgan (Chairman); Janio (Deputy Chairman), Davis, Drake, A Norman, Rufus, Smart and West

Also present: Councillors Simpson, Watkins and Phillips

PART ONE

**9 REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE
VICTIMS OF SERIOUS SEXUAL ASSAULT**

[This report was considered after item 6 on the agenda.]

9.1 Councillor David Watkins the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel on Support Services for Victims of Sexual Assault introduced the report. He said the recommendations, which included four on commissioning, reflected the seriousness of the evidence that had been received. The information had been particularly disturbing. Women men and children could be affected and often had to live with the effects for many years. There were high levels of under-reporting locally and nationally. Councillor Watkins commended the work already in progress and said it was important that all agencies were fully aware of what goes on in the community.

9.2 Councillor Watkins especially thanked all those who gave information to the scrutiny review, colleagues who had also served on the Panel and also the Scrutiny Assistant.

9.3 ECSOSC Chairman also thanked the Panel Members who had worked on such a serious matter. He said this was one of the finest examples of what scrutiny can achieve.

9.4 Members of the Committee discussed possible measures to help prevent sexual violence, clarification of the personal and financial cost estimates, and the levels of under-reporting. The Head of Community Safety noted that sexual violence had been a priority within the Community Safety Strategy only since 2008. Alcohol misuse was also recognised as a high priority for the Community Safety Partnership. There was no research-based evidence that economic changes were an additional factor; however in the context of domestic violence poverty had been shown to increase stresses in families. Working towards developing training and employment opportunities would help sex workers move away from prostitution.

9.5 Councillor Alex Phillips who had been a Member of the Scrutiny Panel referred to: the estimated £60 million total monetary cost of sexual offences for 200708 with each rape estimated to cost £76,000; no stability in funding for support services; and recommendation 6 which asks for the capacity of local independent support services to be strengthened.

9.6 Councillor Phillips asked that an extra recommendation be added; that the Chief Executive be asked to write to the Government to request yearly ring-fenced funding to support those who experience sexual violence.

9.7 The Head of Community Safety commented that intelligent commissioning pilot work on domestic violence and alcohol and drugs, to be run during the summer would include comprehensive needs analysis of sexual violence in the city as well as making recommendations about levels of investment that in the most cost effective way could address concerns about funding levels.

9.8 Some Members argued that the scrutiny report should include a recommendation on funding of these support services. However it was agreed that the financial implications were not within the direct remit of this Committee. Actions supported by evidence and recommended by scrutiny were to be funded in ways to be identified by the Executive and partner agencies. Report paragraph 5.1 refers.

9.9 The Committee agreed that the minutes of this meeting including Councillor Phillips' comments at 9.5 and 9.6 above would be taken forward.

9.10 **RESOLVED** (1) That subject to 9.9 above the Scrutiny Panel report as attached at Appendix 1 be endorsed.

(2) That the report recommendations be referred to the councils' Executive and to the appropriate partner organisations.

(3) That monitoring of outcomes of agreed recommendations be added to the ECSOSC work plan.