

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**NEIGHBOURHOODS, INCLUSION, COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 2 JULY 2018**

**HOVE TOWN HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER - HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Daniel (Chair) Marsh (Deputy Chair), Nemeth (Opposition Spokesperson), West (Group Spokesperson), Cattell, Morgan, A Norman, K Norman, Page and Peltzer Dunn.

**Also in attendance:** Chief Superintendent Lisa Bell, Sussex Police, Joanna Martindale, Hangleton and Knoll Project, Aunsree Biswas Sasidharan, BME Police Engagement Group, Ian Wilson, Clinical Commissioning Group.

**PART ONE**

**1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**1a Declaration of Substitutes**

1.1 Councillor Page was present in substitution for Councillor Phillips. Ian Wilson was welcomed who was in attendance on behalf Chris Clark of the CCG.

**1b Declarations of Interest**

1.2 Councillors Cattell and A Norman declared an in interest in, Item 10 on the agenda, "Domestic and Sexual Abuse: Future Commissioning Options" by virtue of their work as volunteer caseworkers with RISE. Neither had any involvement with the management of that organisation and both confirmed that they were of a neutral mind in considering the report, did not therefore have a prejudicial interest and would remain present at the meeting during the discussion and decision making process.

**1c Exclusion of Press and Public**

1.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("The Act"), the Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, that there would be disclosure to them of

confidential information, (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information as defined in section 100(1) of the Act).

- 1.4 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded during consideration of any item appearing on the agenda

## **2 MINUTES**

- 2.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **3 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting stating it was a busy time of year and that she would like to use her Chair's Communications to thank the wonderfully diverse communities, and community and voluntary groups of Brighton and Hove for their hard work and dedication and their efforts make our city the amazing place it was, so she wanted to thank:

### **Blindveteran's UK**

- 3.2 Blindveteran's UK for organising such a successful and well attended Armed Forces Day the previous day; demonstrating the city's gratitude to the dedication of our armed forces and their families. Also to the WW1 centenary planning group for organising such a moving interfaith and drumhead service Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the end of WW1.

### **Collaboration of Local Groups for World Refugee Day, 20 June 2018 and On-going Work**

- 3.3 There had been a wonderful collaboration of local groups – Sanctuary on Sea (the local group of the national Cities of Sanctuary network), the Crossing Borders music festival, the European and Mediterranean Resources Network the Hummingbird Project and the local Syrian community group for a fantastic range of music, performances, and film showings to mark Refugee Week and in particular World Refugee Day on 20 June. The purpose of both the day and Refugee Week in the UK was to commemorate the strength, courage, and perseverance of millions of refugees. It also marked a key moment for the public to show support for families forced to flee and for the promotion of events which brought together refugees who had settled in a new country with other residents.
- 3.4 The largest events had taken place at Brighton Dome and at Brighton Museum also on Sunday 24 June. Called 'Together', this free community led event had been part funded by the City Council and had also formed part of the national "Great Get Together" which honoured the memory of Jo Cox MP. A 'Refugees Welcome' parade started the event and inside the Dome workshops, performances, stalls and activities provided opportunities for people from all backgrounds to get together. On World Refugee Day the City Council had also announced that it had signed an international statement of solidarity for refugees, joining 50 other cities from around the world who signed up to the UNHCR statement. The Council had also agreed to continue its participation in the

national refugee resettlement programme for refugees from Syria and others who were in very difficult and unsustainable situations in the Middle East and North Africa. The Council had also renewed its appeal for private landlords to provide self-contained properties at affordable rents for the refugees when they arrived in the city.

### **Building a Stronger Britain Together Bids**

- 3.5 Earlier in the year the council's community co-ordinator had supported 10 community groups from Brighton and Hove in applying for Home Office funding under the "Building a Stronger Britain Together" programme, to develop projects which tackled hate and built community cohesion. Whilst the bids were still in the process of being assessed, the Chair was pleased to announce that there had been an early success with the announcement that Brighton Table Tennis Club had been awarded funding. They were one of 10 sports-based bids nationally that had been announced as successful and this funding would allow them to roll out their successful approach in bringing people together through providing table tennis in schools; she wanted to place on record her congratulations to the club. Also, "Brighton and Hove Faith in Action" had been successful in its bid for £75,000 worth of in-kind communications support including website development and branding to help them maximise their reach with positive inter-faith messaging.

### **Volunteers Week**

- 3.6 Early in June as part of Volunteers Week a cross sector celebration event had been held for a few (100) of the many 100s of volunteers in the city it was but a small thank you for their time and kindness in providing support for many organisations and initiatives in the city on a regular basis.

### **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Funding**

- 3.7 The Chair stated that she would also like to thank officers, members and the council's partners for their hard work in successfully securing £495,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to reduce rough sleeping in the city. The money would fund:

3 additional outreach staff (1 to focus on women)

A Hub for outreach staff to take people who are rough sleeping (building and staffing costs)

21 bed temporary accommodation service (staff)

Post to support the expansion of the Churches Winter Night Shelter

Expansion of the psychological support service to focus on people rough sleeping with personality disorder, trauma and complex needs

An Occupational Therapist to support re-ablement when people move into accommodation

A floating support worker to work with people in emergency accommodation (in city and out of area) at risk of rough sleeping

Dedicated funding to support reconnection work

- 3.8 The Chair stated that she would like to conclude by looking forward and offering thanks to all those working hard on the city's 4th Annual Trans and Non Binary conference and its 5th Annual Trans Pride event. As Chair of the NICE Committee, she believed she had support of all other committee members when stating:

"I want everyone – Trans, non-binary, cis – to know they are welcome in our city and we will do our utmost to provide a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for everyone, and we understand that anti-Trans hate speech is harming both individuals and wider communities and we commit to challenge the narrative of exclusion and hatred at each and every opportunity. We will not tolerate bullying and harassing behaviour in our city.

Some days it's easy to only see and hear the negative and the sad and the frustrating but there is so much good and kindness that I wanted to use my privilege as Chair to take this opportunity to say thank you."

- 3.9 **RESOLVED** – That the content of the Chair's Communications be received and noted.

#### 4 **CALL OVER**

- 4.1 All items appearing on the agenda were called for discussion.

#### 5 **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

##### 5a **Petitions**

- 5.1 There were none.

##### 5b **Written Questions**

- 5.2 It was noted that one written question had been received. The question and response given to it are set out below:

##### **Question on Behalf of Friends Families and Travellers (FFT)**

- 5.3 Mr David Thomas of the Housing Coalition was invited to put his question and also had the opportunity to ask one supplementary question should he so wish.

"On 21 February 2018 FFT wrote to the Chief Executive, pointing out that the Statutory Guidance on the use of PSPOs had changed to make it absolutely clear that they should not be used to target homeless people setting out the way that the Brighton & Hove Park and Open Spaces PSPO breached the new Guidance and Equalities Act, and demanding that the PSPO be withdrawn. The recent council report (16/03/18) on its operation makes clear that the PSPO is used only to target homeless people and travellers. What changes is the council proposing to make to its operation."

5.4 The Chair gave the following response:

“The claim that the way the council implemented PSPOs breaches the specific guidance you are asking about is completely refuted. I responded to a similar question at the meeting of the Committee held in March making it clear that a further letter from our Chief Executive had been sent out refuting this as well. I will explain why we refute this now:

The PSPOs prohibiting amongst other things, vehicles and encampments on public spaces are limited to 12 specific sites and are not a general citywide prohibition as some local authorities have brought in. They were brought in because some communities were unable to use their public spaces for significant periods and experienced significant anti-social behaviour.

These sites were chosen and this policy brought in after extensive consultation, including with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

They said they recognised that we were in a difficult place, needing to balance two sets of rights, those of residents to use facilities and those of ethnic travellers and gypsies.

In reviewing responses to that consultation and making decisions they advised we needed to be certain that we were having regard to genuine loss of amenity and not responses that were purely driven by prejudice. In my view the review on the agenda for the March meeting and the original paper had been very careful to take an evidence base that was extremely secure on loss of amenity.

They also agreed that the safest way forward to have regard to undue impact and to the council’s role in creating an environment which protects Gypsy/Traveller rights is to ensure that any PSPO relating to encampments is not a blanket ban across all public spaces. As I have already said, this is limited to 12 sites.

This duty and best practice includes specifically signposting to transit sites or stopping places when warning on PSPOs. To my knowledge, this is how we behave and take a strong welfare role too. The EHRC also recommended that we did not implement these PSPOs until we had our transit site fully open after refurbishment. We ensured this policy was not live until it was re-opened.

There is a lot of confusion over these PSPOs and it is important to clarify that they are only on limited sites. They have improved the lives of residents, that our implementation takes due regard to the rights and welfare of gypsies and travellers and, that the term PSPO covers a range of interventions not just these specific ones. We have PSPOs prohibiting dogs off leads and also gating orders.

We have not implemented our PSPOs in any way that contravenes the guidance issued last winter and, the voluntary review which was discussed at our last committee meeting is part of our commitment to openness and transparency on how they are working.”

5.5 Mr Thomas demurred stating that he disagreed with the response provided by the Chair. However, the Chair, Councillor Daniel stated that a light touch approach had been

adopted in Brighton and Hove which was completely legal and sought to be sensitive to the needs of all.

**5c Deputations**

5.6 There were none.

**6 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

**6a Petitions**

6.1 There were none.

**6b Written Questions**

6.2 The Chair noted that four questions had been received and the questions and the responses given to each are set out below:

**Councillor West - The Bridge**

6.3 Councillor West asked the following:

“Last month, when the shocking news broke that the Bridge Community Education Centre was being forced to close due to financial difficulties following loss of funding, I wrote to Cllr Yates, as incoming Leader of the Council, and yourself Councillor Daniel, as Chair of NICE Committee. I’m disappointed to say that I received only a referred reply from the Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing and no acknowledgment from either yourself or Cllr Yates. In the Executive Director’s reply she states that officers were unaware of the financial crisis faced by the Bridge before the Board sought emergency funding at the eleventh hour. However, I understand that the Chair and CEO of the Bridge met with Cllr Yates and Cllr Meadows Chair of Housing on the 11th April to brief them about the situation, but there was then no follow up from either of these leading councillors. The Bridge also inform me they engaged with funders and a number of other high profile figures in the city.

Chair, did Councillor Yates inform you of the perilous situation facing the Bridge, and if so what did you and the rest of the Administration decide to do to help save the Bridge?

6.4 The Chair, Councillor Daniel, responded that:

“Councillor Yates provided this response for you Councillor West:

They didn’t tell Councillor Meadows or I that they were going to close – simply that some of their services were going to be affected. I even have emails where I asked how precarious things were and was only told ‘very’ but never received a more detail;

I followed up that meeting with meetings with a range of other community groups as I promised the chair and CEO I would;

As soon as the news ‘hit’ the whole community sprang into action and the majority of funded services and projects have now established themselves elsewhere in our community – St Georges Hall, The Bridge, the Library, The Hillview Centre, The Bevendean *Foodbank* all came forward to offer to take on the work and many services are already rehomed

The council’s Communities, Equality and Third sector team (that administers the council’s Third sector Investment programme) was not approached by The Bridge – staff or trustees – regarding its financial situation or received any requests from The Bridge for support ahead of its insolvency announcement and nor was I.

I was informed as was the team I mention, for courtesy, of this organisations decision, which had already been taken, to go into insolvency about two days prior to the public announcement.

Despite offering free access to me via my voluntary sector surgeries this wasn’t taken up and nobody from the Bridge contacted me to warn me directly that they were in a perilous funding position.

Had this organisation come forward however, given the size of the gap they had it is unlikely we could have helped prevent the insolvency. This was caused by the diminished funds available for community adult education nationally and via trusts. This means that all providers of this type are in a perilous position. What we do in these situations, is look to our internal team and the voluntary sector infrastructure providers we fund to support organisations in the voluntary sector, to identify funds, partnerships and expertise where possible.

As spelt out in Cllr Yates response I read out, what we are doing, as looking to save the service provision we can in different locations and with different organisations.

- 6.5 Councillor West stated that he remained deeply concerned in respect of this matter considering that those at the Bridge had been placed in an untenable position and that action should have been taken at an earlier point following the discussions which had taken place.
- 6.6 The Chair, Councillor Daniel, stated that the position was as stated and as set out in the paperwork which had been circulated to Members separately and that she had nothing to add to her earlier statement.

### **Councillor West - Community and Voluntary Sector**

- 6.7 Councillor West asked the following:

“We understand a number of community voluntary organisations are struggling and vulnerable as a result of funding cuts and loss of contracts. We are aware of valued community learning services at Whitehawk Inn, a threat to Brighton and Hove Food Partnership work through loss of Public Health funding, the loss of a key contract for Direct Payments held by local group Possibility People, and concern expressed by RISE about likely contract changes, as well as Brighton Women’s Centre. As with The Bridge,

these highly respected organisations provide vital services that support and enhance the lives of thousands of vulnerable people in the city.

Chair, what consultation are you making with Community Works to establish the financial vulnerability of community voluntary sector organisations providing essential services in the city, and what lead is the Administration as a whole taking to ensure these organisations will be supported to not only survive but to thrive?"

6.8 The Chair, Councillor Daniel, responded that:

"The council has a three year funding agreement with Community Works Partnership which includes Community Works, Trust for Developing Communities, Resource Centre, HKP, Serendipity, Faith in Action, LGBT Switchboard, LGBT Working to Connect, Friends Families and Travellers, Clare Project, Sussex Interpreting Services.

Together the partnership works to provide seamless and co-ordinated infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector in the city and engage with communities with shared protected characteristics. The council's Third Sector Policy advocates and endorses that third sector support is best delivered to the third sector by the third sector.

Together the Partnership provides a wide range of activities to support the sector these include (not an exhaustive list):

Learning and development workshops on finance, fund raising, governance, H &S, GDPR, etc.;

Networking events to share experiences and learning between organisations on specific topics;

Skill exchange – where mentors from public, third and private sector are matched with needs of specific VCS organisations

The Partnership provides an annual monitoring report to the city council and also receives a six monthly monitoring visit from the council commissioner to feed-back on progress and sector concerns per se. Community Works itself has an ongoing relationship with the council's Communities, Equality and Third Sector team and within the boundaries of confidentiality, commercial sensitivity and GDPR shares intelligence about the sector.

Monthly reporting meetings are held with the chair of the committee to discuss progress across her portfolio including the third sector.

It would be inappropriate and not possible within the resources of Community Works to do a financial viability assessment of individual VCS organisations in the city. However, Community Works is undertaking Taking Account 4 – the fourth social and economic audit of the VCS in the city five years on from the last audit to ascertain the current contribution of the sector to the city, its strengths and its areas of vulnerability.

In addition, Community Works has a very wide membership and works hard to ensure its services are easily accessible to members and well communicated.

The budget for the third sector commission has been maintained for 2018/19 and indications are that this will continue to 2019/20“.

- 6.9 Councillor West whilst noting the content of the responses given stated that he still had major concerns in relation to this matter and the levels of support which would be available going forward.

**Councillor Nemeth - Street Homelessness**

- 6.10 Councillor Nemeth asked the following:

“Will the Chair list what actions this committee has taken to date in discharging its function of co-ordinating the Council’s policies and actions with a view to reducing and eliminating street homelessness?”

- 6.11 The Chair, Councillor Daniel responded that:

“On 11 July 2016 the committee approved the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016 and authorised the Executive Director Health Wellbeing & Adults and Acting Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture to carry out any actions necessary to implement the strategy and respond appropriately to related Fairness Commission recommendations (see section 5.12).

As part of its governance of the strategy at its meeting on 9th October 2017 committee considered a progress update on the implementation of the Rough Sleeping Strategy. This included a detailed strategic action tracker document. A progress report will be considered by the committee at its meeting on 8th October 2017 The committee noted the progress and welcomed the work which had been undertaken to date, this included:

Successful launch and implementation of an alternative giving scheme “Make Change Count”;

Successful launch of BThink – a system to effectively share information concerning rough sleepers to ensure that they get the best possible service;

Successful recommissioning of homeless support services;

Successful tender and appointment of a support service “The Passage” ”to co-ordinate and guide third sector voluntary services;

Successful initial phase of “Trailblazer” project to prevent tenancy breakdown and rough sleeping;

Successful funding application for Social Impact Bond to improve outcomes for entrenched rough sleepers – full roll out from October 2017.

At that time the Committee requested a further report in 6 months. At the Chair’s discretion and with her agreement an additional six months was given in order to give council officers and partners sufficient time to progress new actions. The report now was due to come forward to NICE Committee in October 2018.”

### Councillor Knight – Gender Neutral Toilets

6.12 It was noted that Councillor Knight had been unable to attend to put the question in person due to sickness, however with her agreement her question was put on her behalf and responded to in her absence.

6.13 Councillor Knight's question was as follows:

“Can the Chair confirm what progress has been made in installing gender neutral toilets in buildings other than the Brighton Centre, Hove Town Hall, University of Brighton and the University of Sussex? Additionally, please clarify whether current gender neutral toilets in the listed buildings are set up as facilities in their own right, and what provisions have been made for any signage denoting gender neutral facilities?”

Furthermore is there a means of sharing location information, to help alleviate concerns as mentioned in the Trans needs assessment 2015, about entering public buildings with no gender neutral toilet facilities? Additionally, please clarify whether current gender neutral toilets in the listed buildings are set up as facilities in their own right, and what provisions have been made for any signage denoting gender neutral facilities?”

6.14 The Chair, Councillor Daniel, responded that:

“A list printed separately for Councillor Knight and available for any Members of the Committee who should like a copy) details toilet facilities at 91 sites across the city has been collated in response to this question, gathering information from client officers, building managers, personal knowledge and information from council ‘corporate maps’. The list covers a wide variety of buildings including libraries, leisure facilities, museums, venues, parks and civic buildings. The majority have at least one gender neutral WC available. Often this is also a wheelchair accessible facility. The list indicates 142 gender neutral toilets. (54 of these are new (2016) are blocks of self-contained, individual, non-gender specific compartments on seven of the 8 levels within New England House. Some are also wheelchair accessible). It is understood from the Education Team that “it is believed that every BHCC school has accessible toilet facilities and that some have shared use facilities.”

Unless located within gender specific WC provision all wheelchair accessible WCs are intended to be gender neutral, however this is not always ‘spelled out’ in the associated signage - which may just be a wheelchair symbol – and sometimes people could assume that it should only be used by wheelchair users. However the larger size, provision of grab rails, increased privacy and gender neutrality of such compartments means they are the preferred choice for many users.

Hove Town Hall, Brighton Town Hall, Bartholomew House, The Brighton Centre, some libraries\*, some parks/open spaces\* have specific signage to indicate that facilities are gender neutral. (35) – i.e. ‘Accessible and for Everyone’

\*12 sites across the city have ‘individual gender neutral units’.

The majority of the 54 gender neutral WCs at New England House are not defined as such and are simply signed as 'Toilets'. (The wheelchair accessible compartments use the wheelchair symbol and a few compartments have a 'female' symbol to indicate the presence of a sanitary disposal bin)

The Sports Facilities Dept has recently purchased signs with the wording 'Accessible and for Everyone' to be used at all nine of their sports and leisure sites (19 accessible and gender neutral compartments)

\*There is currently a (not exhaustive or fully up-to-date) list of publically available toilets on the BHCC website page <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/public-toilets/accessible-public-toilets>

This can also be found using the key words 'Public Toilets' or 'Accessible Public Toilets' or 'Gender Neutral Toilets' in the Search box. This was last updated in June 2016. It lists facilities as either gender specific, gender neutral, or wheelchair accessible (which are always gender neutral unless located within gender specific provision).

The page states that *'All our new toilets are fully accessible, gender neutral units'*

A link to this information can be shared directly with LGBT and Trans and Non-Binary groups in the city for sharing with the participants of their groups/activities/services. In addition, the information can be shared with the Trans sub-group of the city's Equality and Inclusion Partnership that is working to deliver the recommendations of the Trans Needs Assessment. The group can also discuss how the information can best be shared with Trans and Non-binary individual."

6.15 **RESOLVED** – That the questions received and responses given to them be noted.

**6c Letters**

6.16 There were none.

**6d Notices of Motion**

6.17 There were none.

**7 UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE**

7.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Finance and Resources the purpose of which was to provide an update on the rollout of Universal Credit (UC) in Brighton and Hove and further intelligence on the impact of other associated welfare reforms.

7.2 It was noted that the Universal Credit Full Service had rolled out across Brighton and Hove between October 2017 and January 2018. It was payable to those of working age, those of pensionable age were excluded. According to published statistics there were 920,000 households nationally in receipt of Universal Credit (UC). There were currently 5,564 households in the city in receipt of Universal Credit Of those 1,266 were previously in receipt of Housing Benefit and had had their claim for that ended as a result of the claim for Universal Credit. The other claims were from people who had

made new claims or had not previously made a claim for housing benefit. The council estimated around 20,000 households would eventually move onto Universal Credit. The Head of Revenues and Benefits, Graham Bourne, explained that at present rollout only affected households who automatically moved to UC and that this only occurred when one or a number of changes to circumstances took place. It was the Government's stated intention to move remaining households onto UC between 2019 and 2023 and that claimants' would at that point be expected to make new claims rather than go through a process of automatic transition.

- 7.3 It was highlighted, that the report to the Committee of 3 July 2017 had set out what the council had considered were the key risks presented by the introduction of UC. Since that time the Government had made a number of changes to the way that the scheme operated as set out in the report, with further changes announced on 7 June 2018, although the legislation to enact them would not be brought to parliament until Autumn 2018. The council's own approach to managing the impact of UC had been to adopt a cross-service approach; the perspectives of third sector partners regarding the impact of UC measures being taken to mitigate that and to assist those who needed to make claims through Digital Brighton and Hove formed were the subject of separate presentations following consideration of this report.
- 7.4 The Revenues and Benefits Manager, Paul Ross-Dale, explained in answer to questions that whilst a significant programme of work had been undertaken within the council the changes presented by the introduction and scale of UC, had meant that council services and relevant stakeholders were dealing with a fundamental shift in the way that citizens on low incomes were supported, to illustrate that point a series of anonymised individual case studies had been set out in order to provide members with a flavour of the diversity of cases dealt with and details of how the council had sought to respond.
- 7.5 The clearest area of financial risk to the council had been the potential impact on rent collection for both Housing Rent account and temporary accommodation properties and in order to address that the council had taken a number of steps to support its tenants and to protect rental income. Whilst it was too early to provide meaningful figures for arrears enforcement action such as the serving of notices and evictions the council was strongly committed to taking action only as a last resort where tenants did not engage or accept the support which was offered to them. Tenants in arrears were always offered a payment plan which was tailored to the individual to ensure that they were able to repay their debt over a reasonable time period. In answer to questions, the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing, explained that currently, the figure for rent arrears had risen very slightly and that temporary accommodation was now exempt although there had been no evictions for temporary accommodation, nor had any tenants been evicted from permanent accommodation at present.
- 7.6 Councillor A Norman referred to those who were self-employed but might also be on a low income, although probably small in number, such individuals could be particularly vulnerable when seeking to make a claim. Also, to concerns which arose in consequence of financial considerations within the legislation being largely driven by a default position of rent being paid directly to the claimant rather than the landlord, with single large monthly payments being paid, five weeks after a claim had been made.

- 7.7 Councillor Morgan acknowledged all the work which had been undertaken and dealt with in a neutral, balanced manner whilst seeking to provide support to those who were the most vulnerable. It was concerning that the proposed changes had been announced in June but would not be effected in legislation until the autumn. Although these changes were intended as improvements it was difficult to judge what their impact might be at this stage.
- 7.8 Councillor Page welcomed the pro-active approach which had been taken and the input to the DWP which had taken place. He remained concerned however at the potential in-built delays that could occur and the impact that could have on some of the most city's poorest and most vulnerable residents.
- 7.9 Councillor Cattell, referred to the disproportionate impact on women and children, hoping that the changes made would address and improve on that.
- 7.10 Councillor Peltzer Dunn whilst welcoming the work undertaken continued to have severe reservations about how Universal Credit worked in practice and its impact overall. Clearly, as evidenced by the fact that changes had been made there was recognition that it was not working as intended and it was up to this authority and others to highlight areas of concern whilst continuing to seek to make the scheme work.
- 7.11 Joanna Martindale, Hangleton & Knoll Project referred to the pro-active approach which had been adopted and the collaborative work which had been carried out with third sector partnership organisations.
- 7.12 Councillor West stated that he considered it regrettable that Central Government was continuing with UC and was of the view that any dampening down of policy would still have a negative impact. It was important to continue to lobby against this draconian system and to highlight its flaws.
- 7.13 **RESOLVED** - That the Committee notes the latest available information as set out in the report regarding implementation of Universal Credit in the city.

## **8 PRESENTATION(S)**

### **8a Moneyworks - Partnership Working - Universal Credit**

- 8.1 A presentation was given outlining the work which had been undertaken and giving perspectives by the third sector of the impact that the rolling out of Universal credit had had across the city. It was noted that input and advice had fed into the work carried out to date and which would continue to/from a number of partnership organisations. These had included: Citizens Advice, Brighton & Hove; Money Advice Plus; BHT; Possability People; St Luke's Advice Service; Whitehawk Inn; the Hangleton and Knoll Project; Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project and East Sussex Credit Union.
- 8.2 Moneyworks had been commissioned by the council to deliver Department of works and Pension (DWP) funded digital and budgeting support (39 k Oct 2017 - March 2018) (64k April 2018 – March 2019). It had worked with libraries and East Sussex Credit Union and other Moneyworks partners to plan for provision and had planned for the roll out and key communications with DWP, the Welfare Reform Programme Manager, libraries

and Digital Brighton and Hove as well as with other Moneyworks partners. Information and resource sharing had taken place with partners and advice services and networking with other agencies. This had included shared training in respect of Universal Credit.

- 8.3 This work had been important because Moneyworks had been able to provide a single point of contact. Moneyworks had a trusted reputation amongst residents and professionals and people knew that they could come to Moneyworks for help and that there was strong local knowledge of services. A triage approach was often adopted because Universal Credit usually formed part of a cluster of issues which people might present with. There was the ability to provide assisted self-help if that was appropriate and the ability to refer or signpost clients to the most appropriate service to meet their needs.
- 8.4 Additionally, a digital and budgeting support service had been provided at Job Centre Plus offices. A digital and budgeting support worker was available in each Job Centre for 22 hours per week, 400 sessions had taken place between November 2017 – May 2018 and an excellent and mutually productive relationship and problem solving approach had been built up with Job Centre staff. It had been possible to take referrals directly from Job Centre Plus work coaches and there had been the ability to work with the most vulnerable in order to resolve issues quickly e.g., street homeless clients. Referral paths had been set up which had the ability to pick up clients who were not linked in with other services. Linkages to other funded partnerships and projects had been beneficial and greatly appreciated by clients.
- 8.5 Overall, holistic support had been provided which had included support with completing applications and critically on-going support in completing the required journal, help in searching for work, help with CVs, which was particularly helpful where clients had issues with literacy, were English speakers of other languages or where there were poor digital skills or low confidence. In casework terms assistance had been provided in accessing and submitting Employment Support Allowance (ESA) applications and in completing UC50 forms, in resolving complex issues around entitlement, challenging decisions and in resolving errors.
- 8.6 Moneyworks saw their role very much in the context of partnership working, solution finding and seeking to influence change. The Moneyworks coordinator was able to represent the partnership and to share issues that they were facing with a view to resolving issues. They also worked closely with Digital Brighton and Hove with job centre's and the council to seek to ensure that there was joined up digital provision and that they also fed into the Welfare Reform Working Group, Complex Needs Forum, Advice Services Network and undertook social policy work with national corporate appointees. On-going issues which had arisen to date and would continue to be addressed, liaison arrangements were in place with Mill View Hospital in instances where clients were being treated under the umbrella of their service for mental health, substance abuse problems; visits, corporate appointees, issues around explicit consent being given; lack of access to decision makers and in dealing with instances where there had been errors with claims, when errors had occurred it appeared to be very difficult to put them right.
- 8.7 Following the presentation members had the opportunity to ask questions.

8.8 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the presentation be received and noted.

**8b Digital Inclusion Update**

8.9 Richard Denyer-Bewick, Operations Director, Citizens Online and David Scurr, Project Manager, Citizens Online outlined their on-going work in working in partnership with community and the third sector in order to assist residents of the city in becoming more computer literate and accessing information and services on line. There had been particular emphasis over recent months which would continue in relation to helping individuals to process claims for Universal Credit. The overarching principle of their work was to help address digital exclusion.

8.10 Since 2015 the project had recruited 308 Digital Champions, helped 1978 individual learners and had engaged with 184 organisations including the council, the Department of Works and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Brighton Housing Trust, Community Works, Ability Net, the Carers Centre, Hangleton and Knoll Project, Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, Age UK and BUFCP. The 308 Digital Champions had been trained to include work in respect of the council's revenues and benefits, work of the Brighton Housing Trust and had provided work in concert with the library service across all sites. Overall, digital support provision had been enhanced by providing weekly services at the Barts House Customer Service Centre, food banks and as part of seniors housing schemes. Feedback received from those using the service had indicated that their sessions had helped them to find things on line and to find ways around things that they found difficult.

8.11 In total there were now 37 internet access points listed across the city, 39 digital support sessions listed and leaflets had been produced signposting the services available and in total 2500 had been displayed across the city.

8.12 Following the presentation members had the opportunity to ask questions following which there was a short break before proceeding to consider the remaining business on the agenda.

8.13 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the presentation be received and noted.

**9 COMMUNITY SAFETY & CRIME IN BRIGHTON & HOVE**

9.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing providing an update in respect of community safety and crime in Brighton and Hove.

9.2 It was noted that under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, there was a requirement for statutory and other partners to formulate and plan every three years to tackle crime and disorder and monitor progress. This report provided an update on the work which had been undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership (formerly known as Safe in the City Partnership in relation to the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy.

9.3 Councillor West referred the fact that recorded incidents in relation to domestic violence crimes and incidents, particularly sexual offences continued to rise. Given that demand for support to address these issues continued and was increasing the issues that he

had referred to earlier in relation to RISE, this was an area for significant concern, particularly as the level of resourcing available appeared to be diminishing. Chief Superintendent Bell stated that the police were aware of this and were seeking to target resources to address this. The police were not complacent but it was important to stress that the conviction rate for cases finalised at court (77%) remained relatively high although the solved rate for sexual offences in 2017/18 was marginally lower than for 2016/17 and poorer than for previous years. It should also be noted that there had been increased reporting in relation to stalking crimes and incidents.

- 9.4 Councillor West was pleased to note that robust structures were in place and that agencies were working very hard to encourage reportage of such crimes.
- 9.5 Anusree Biswas Sasidharan, BME Police Engagement Group, stated that where figures for reported crime appeared to be low it was important to seek to ensure that there was no hidden crime and that those who were vulnerable were not coerced either into crime itself or deterred from reporting it due to fear of reprisals. It was explained that intelligence gathering took place and feedback from that was used to address issues which emerged.
- 9.6 Councillor Nemeth referred to the work undertaken in his own ward in concert with his fellow ward councillor, Councillor Peltzer Dunn, the police and with local media to highlight the means of reporting crime which were available to the public. It was important for the public to know how issues could be reported via the web/social media for instance.
- 9.7 Councillor Marsh stated that as the lead on Community Safety she had met with the Police and had early discussions around strategies which were appropriate and fit for purpose. Chief Inspector Bell, reiterated that whilst on-going discussions and monitoring fed into the police' structures and processes and would continue to do so it was important to note that overall Sussex remained a safe place to live and work.
- 9.8 Councillor Daniel, the Chair referred to the rise of far right extremism enquiring regarding figures for that. The Head of Safer Communities, Jo Payer, explained that she would provide details to members separately.
- 9.9 Councillor Morgan referred to the "Prevent" initiative noting that it was anticipated that an updated strategy would be released soon, hoping that it would address this continuing problem.
- 9.10 Councillor A Norman referred to the apparent increase in stalking incidents, domestic and sexual violence. Whilst it was understood that in part increases in the number of this type of crime was due to more accurate recording and that this had resulted in better services and outcomes for victims. It was nonetheless a matter for concern.
- 9.11 Councillor Peltzer Dunn considered that the report was valuable in that it highlighted problem areas which had been identified and the solutions which were being put into place to address them. He asked whether feedback/input was received which indicated that the public were aware of these initiatives and considered that they were re-assured as a result. It was explained that this information was cascaded forward by a number of

means including via LAT's. Councillor Marsh stated that in her capacity as the Council's Community Safety Champion she was aware of the initiatives being undertaken.

9.12 **RESOLVED** – (1) that the information contained in the report providing an update on the work being undertaken by the Community Safety Team in relation to Community Safety and the Crime Reduction Strategy for 2017-20 be noted; and

(2) The Committee gives its support to the partnership work described in the report and the commitment to the work described within the council's remit, thereby contributing to the management of crime and community safety priorities for the city.

## **10 DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE: FUTURE COMMISSIONING OPTIONS**

10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing seeking approval to a joint commission of specialist and community based services for victims/survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) and Sexual Violence (SV) for Brighton and Hove by Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC), East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC). These services were currently collectively known as "The Portal". The report outlined the rationale for the joint commissioning arrangements, involvement of providers and beneficiaries and indicative timescales for the commission.

10.2 It was explained that the commission would include 1) a pan-Sussex initial needs and assessment centre with a specialist DVA and SV service 2) community-based DVA and SV services and 3) refuge provision. The refuge provision would be Brighton and Hove only. The tender and contract arrangements would be developed as part of the new commission. The Council was not committed at this stage to tendering or contracting with either OSPCC or ESCC.

10.3 In answer to questions, the Executive Director explained that there were a number of drivers which made a new commission appropriate. SV and DVA had increased substantially. Usually reporting to the Police as an example between 2013/14 and 2016/17 there had been an increase of 28% in reporting domestic violence and crimes and an increase of 115% in sexual offences in Brighton and Hove. Notwithstanding that this represented a significant increase it was accepted that police recorded data was likely to under represent the scale of violence and abuse. Details of those who had been supported by existing services was set out in the report. These crime types had an impact on victims/survivors, their children and the wider community and impacts could include poor mental, sexual or physical health,, reduced economic prop behavioural problems, substance abuse, poor school achievement, reduced economic prospects and the risk of further violence. Consultation was currently being undertaken by AVA a national organisation to inform the refresh of the VAWG strategy. The consultation would specifically seek the views of victims/survivors, their families and children, as well as what local provision was needed. This would be important information to help commissioners in understanding service users experience of current provision and to inform the new specifications for future provision. The consultation was due to be completed by the end of June with an initial report due at the end of July.

10.4 The proposed joint commission, process, timescale and principles were also set out in the report and it was proposed that a new contract to support victims of all crime types

would be in place by April 2019. The DVA, SV and stalking aspect of the model had been designed in collaboration with BHCC, ESCC and counterparts in West Sussex as well as other key stakeholders such as Sussex Police. That part of the model would need to work in conjunction with any local specialist support services and would build upon existing partnerships across service providers.

- 10.5 Councillor Marsh, stated that she was happy that the process was broken down into three constituent parts as there were a number of complex strands to service provision. She was pleased to receive re-assurance around the referral process and that clients would not be disadvantaged by any changes to the referral process. A new officer could be in place by July which would allow a six month engagement process to take place.
- 10.6 Councillor West stated that this was clearly very complex and represented an emerging situation. Considering that currently, there were potential gaps in the available information, it might be more appropriate to enable more time for the results of those needs and how they could best be delivered to be explored further, rather, than becoming locked into arrangements for a further five year period. To do so at the current time could be premature. Councillor West also sought confirmation regarding the costs/risk implications if any contract entered into required amendment subsequently. The Executive Director explained that the suggested approach would facilitate economies of scale, shared costs and shared expertise and information. Whilst the detailed financial arrangements were to be finalised, following sign up by all ESCC would carry half of the costs.
- 10.7 Councillor Nemeth stated that in his view he did not consider that the report contained sufficient information to enable the committee to make such a far reaching decision at this stage. In his view there were a number of question marks and uncertainties at the present time, he was not saying that these proposals might not represent an appropriate way forward, but that more information was required in order to make an informed decision. Members needed to be certain that a Pan Sussex Initial Needs and Assessment Centre would answer the needs of the city's residents. Whatever option(s) were ultimately pursued needed to address the specific needs of those in the city which might be different from those of the rest of Sussex. He would have been happier if a series of options had been set out rather than one fully integrated one. Councillor Nemeth also asked whether it was possible for charities to bid for service funding direct. He also considered it important that proper interim/change over arrangements were in place to ensure that current provision did not just "cease" at a given cut-off date.
- 10.8 The Executive Director explained that proceeding at this stage would not commit other than in the terms set out in the report and on the rationale set out for using joint commissioning arrangements. By not proceeding in that way it could increase the pressure on other local providers and result in increased costs. It was explained in answer to further questions that to enter into a separate consultation process focussing specifically on Brighton and Hove was unlikely to be beneficial as if carried out in tandem with or soon after the current consultation there was likely to be consultation fatigue. There would be elements of any provision which would need to be tailored directly for Brighton and Hove.
- 10.9 Councillor Page stated that whilst he had read the report and heard all that had been said but was still somewhat confused and was struggling to understand the urgency to

proceed at the current stage. The Chair, Councillor Daniel, stated that it was important for members to be mindful of the process.

- 10.10 Councillor West stated that he recognised that there were complex issues to be considered, the implication seemed to be to proceed for five years or go forward with nothing. He considered it was important to consider a full range of worked up options.
- 10.11 Councillor Peltzer Dunn sought clarification regarding the contractual arrangements that needed to be put into place and the implications of extending the existing contract. Councillor Peltzer Dunn sought clarification regarding deferral of the report before the Committee.
- 10.12 Anusree Biswas Sasidharan, BME Police Engagement Group stated that she found the report very challenging and was concerned that insufficient detail of past provision and potential future need had been included.
- 10.13 Councillor West stated that he was seeking to be helpful and did not feel able to support the report recommendations at the present time.
- 10.14 Councillor Nemeth concurred, stating that he had four concerns regarding the options set out as currently framed; possible disruption for service users and charities; potential loss of control; loss of opportunity to experiment and uncertainty regarding costs.
- 10.15 A vote was taken in respect of the recommendations as set out in the report and they were lost on a vote of 6 to 4. Notwithstanding that Members were of the view that further options to extend the existing contract for a suitable period should be explored and fully costed.
- 10.16 It was then agreed that a further report be provided for consideration by the Committee as soon as was practicable taking on board the concerns of Councillor Nemeth set out in paragraph 10.14 above, also detailing fully costed potential options for future commissioning arrangements and for extending the existing contract to enable suitable future arrangements to be put into including potential appointment of a Commissioner for Brighton and Hove.
- 10.17 **RESOLVED** - That a further report be provided for consideration by the Committee as soon as was practicable taking on board the concerns of Councillor Nemeth set out in paragraph 10.14 above, also detailing fully costed potential options for future commissioning arrangements including appointment of a Commissioner for Brighton and Hove.

## **11 REVIEW OF WARD BUDGET SCHEME**

- 11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law requesting that the Committee note the contents of the report detailing how ward budgets had been spent to date and requesting that they give consideration to whether they wished a similar ward budget scheme to be funded and included in the budget setting process for 2019/20.

- 11.2 The Head of Democratic Services explained that at its meeting on the 13 July 2017, the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee, following an amendment to the Provisional Outturn report had approved an allocation of 60k for a Ward Budget Scheme for 2017/18. It had been agreed that the scheme would be administered by the Democratic Services Team and that it would be allocated on a first come first serve basis. He noted that at its meeting on the 17 September 2017, the Leaders Group had agreed that an initial allocation of £1,000 per Member should be made, although the option to use funds collaboratively was also available to enable wider support to various projects that were identified. The report before the Committee for consideration provided a breakdown of how the Members' Ward Budget Scheme was co-ordinated and funds used by Ward Members to support local communities (set out in appendix 1).
- 11.3 Councillor K Norman stated that this funding had been able to be used to good effect in his own ward and in addition to the projects set out that funding had made available to purchase and plant 25 lilac trees at Surrenden Field and for visual improvements (£1252.87) and for footpath safety improvements at Westdene Children's Playground and Nursery.
- 11.3 Councillor A Norman commended the report stated that having pulled together information from several sources it showed clearly what had been spent and how, showed that this initiative had been welcomed, with funding utilised for a variety of improvements across the city. She certainly supported use provision of a similar scheme in future.
- 11.4 Councillor Cattell, stated that this scheme had been valuable in her own ward in supporting works carried out in Preston Park, a much loved and well used facility.
- 11.5 Councillor West agreed that this scheme had been beneficial and it was amazing what had could be achieved in consequence of small sums of money being targeted towards a specific end. He considered that it would be helpful if a greater degree of advice/assistance given when putting funding bids together considering that in future greater use could be made of using "crowd funding" which gave communities, the public and businesses the opportunity to assist. Councillor West considered that it was unhelpful that in several instances it appeared that budgets had not been spent whereas in several instances they had been earmarked for particular schemes and were awaiting being spent. He considered that the appendix needed to be updated to reflect that.
- 11.5 Councillor Nemeth referred to the benefits to which funding made available under this scheme had been put in his own ward confirming that in his view if the Committee were in agreement that a ward budget scheme be reinstated for 2019/20 that should be put forward as a positive recommendation rather than that committee being requested to "consider" doing so.
- 11.6 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that tangible positive improvements had been effected within local areas across the city out which were far greater than suggested by the relatively small sums involved. Local Ward Members were in tune with the needs of their local communities and it gave Members the opportunity to support them.
- 11.7 Councillor Page echoed all that had been said querying why it was proposed that implementation of any scheme should be held in abeyance until 2019/2010.

11.8 It was explained that that had been considered appropriate in the context that Council wide elections were due to take place in 2019 and there would be a number of newly elected members who would need to familiarise themselves with the manner in which the council operated.

**11.9 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the information as detailed in the report at Appendix 1 (including the additional information set out above) be noted; and
- (2) That a similar ward budget scheme (to that referred to in the attached report) be funded and included in the budget setting process for 2019/2020.

**12 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL**

12.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2018

