

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB COMMITTEE

(Committee Room 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

19 April 2018

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Councillors: C.J.Jones, D.M.Peters, R.L.Taylor, O.S.Davies
and R.W.Wood

Officers In Attendance N.Pearce, C.Jones, S.Morris and J.Davies

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors D.W.Davies

Observers Councillor N.T.Hunt

1. **RESOLVED TO ACT AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN LINE WITH SECTION 19 OF THE POLICE AND JUSTICE ACT 2006**

Members resolved to act as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

2. **MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2018.**

The Committee noted the Minutes.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18.**

Members were informed of a workshop that had been arranged on the 10th May for the Committee to discuss items for inclusion on the scrutiny forward work programme for the civic year 2018/19. Members were also informed of a training session for the Committee on the 15th May with Ian Botterill.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

4. **REGENERATION & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CABINET BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (2017/18)**

The Committee noted the Cabinet Board Forward Work Programme.

5. **SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

The Committee received a presentation in relation to Substance Misuse.

Officers informed Members that the current Substance Misuse Strategy was set by the Welsh Government (WG) and covered the years 2008 to 2018. Officers reported that it was not clear when a new strategy would be published. Officers explained that the current strategy focused on four action areas which included preventing harm, support for substance misuse to improve their health aid and maintain recovery, supporting and protecting families, and tackling availability and protecting individuals and communities via enforcement activities.

Officers reported that the Community Safety Partnership had the statutory responsibility for the local substance misuse strategy, but the Western Bay Area Planning Board (APB) had been created to fulfil these responsibilities at a regional level. Officers stated that as such the APB was created in 2010 by the WG, and was responsible for delivering the “Working Together to Reduce Harm” strategy, and worked at a regional level across Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea local authority areas. Officers informed Members that partners of the APB included Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU), the three local authorities, Public Health Wales, South Wales Police and the Probation Trust. Officers explained that the APB did not have any decision making powers and could only make recommendations. Officers stated that the APB was Local Authority and Health Board led, and governance arrangements were due to be reviewed.

Officers informed Members that the APB received £3.6 million Substance Misuse Action Funding (SMAF) from WG, and a £721,000 joint contribution from the three local authorities and ABMU, resulting in an annual revenue budget of £4.3 million. Officers reported that the SMAF had been protected but had not been increased.

Officers commented on the statistics surrounding substance misuse, and stated that the age bracket which experienced the highest number of referrals were those aged between 31 and 50 years old.

Officers explained that further work would be required to attempt to understand the reason behind the statistics for this age category.

Officers reported that the highest referral source was now self-referrals, and that there had been a large decline in GP referrals. Officers commented that the majority of service users in the Neath Port Talbot area were male, but in recent years the number of female service users had increased. Officers mentioned that alcohol was the primary dependency in Neath Port Talbot followed by heroin and then cannabis. Officers reported that there were 296 drug recorded crimes in Neath and Port Talbot in 2016-17, and 251 in 2017-18. Officers informed Members that work was currently being undertaken by the Community Safety Team to identify hot spots for instances of substance misuse in the county borough.

Officers informed Members that there were a number of services in Neath Port Talbot that provided support to individuals such as the Welsh Centre for Action on Dependency & Addiction (WGCADA), Community Drug and Alcohol Team in Tonna Hospital, Detox Ward Calon Lan in Neath Port Talbot Hospital, and NPT Forum. Officers reported that support service providers found that clients often had other health problems and vulnerabilities in addition to substance misuse issues, and required access to dental treatment, counselling and therapy, and prescribing services.

Officers explained that regular involvement with service users was an ongoing priority and provided the opportunity to try and engage with hard to reach service users regarding issues such as drug related litter.

Officers updated the Committee on the integrated model called Newid, which the APB were developing to ensure that various services worked together to provide a holistic treatment package tailored to the needs of each individual client. Officers stated that clients were allocated a key worker from a lead agency who would co-ordinate their care plan, and could provide them with access to a range of services provided by various agencies. Officers explained that AADAS was the first point of contact service for clients. Officers stated that clients were able to turn up to various venues at certain times without an appointment. Officers explained that following an assessment clients were then referred to the relevant support service and that whilst waiting for prescribing services, clients could access services like therapy and counselling in the meantime. Officers stated that the rate of clients that did not attend after initial assessment was

a concern, and that this was currently being reviewed to determine the reason why. Officers informed Members that provider services were available in the town centres, and that WGCADA and CDAT operated satellite bases.

Officers reported that the APB held a development event on the 9th February and following feedback there were areas which were highlighted for improvement. Officers explained that the governance arrangements and priorities needed to be clearer, and that important links had been lost. Officers informed Members that as a result a governance review was currently being undertaken, and that three immediate priorities had been identified for the APB which were; drug related deaths, dual diagnosis and Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol.

Officers reported that Neath Port Talbot had the highest rate of drug related deaths per 100,000 population by Local Authority in Wales, and between 2014 and 2016 had the second highest mortality rate in the UK. Officers added that Neath Port Talbot was reported as one of the top ten worst places in Wales and England for heroin deaths.

Officers informed Members that the WG were keen to see an improvement in the co-ordination of services for dual diagnosis, which dealt with clients with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse problems. Officers cited research that indicated that those with drug use problems and mental health issues were less likely to engage with support services, and more likely to fall through the gaps between the two services. Officers added that a working group had been set up to look at the communication and working relationship between drug misuse and mental health services.

Officers re-iterated that alcohol dependency was the biggest issue in the Western Bay area, and across Wales. Officers reported that the new Minimum Unit Pricing legislation had been laid before the National Assembly for Wales in October 2017 in order to address the issue. Officers informed Members that the WG had stated that there were clear links between excessive and hazardous drinking and the availability of cheap alcohol.

Officers stated that the next steps for the APB were;

- to improve the evidence base around drug related deaths by analysing the data from the local authorities and the Office of National Statistics in further detail, and to improve the way that information was recorded in order to identify trends

- to regularise contracts and make service improvements;
- to undertake a governance review;
- to reduce drug related deaths;
- to improve access to dual diagnosis services, and improve access to services generally
- to continue to improve links with the Community Safety Partnership and to ensure that there is an emphasis on treatment, prevention, education and enforcement;
- to prepare for MUP and to understand the implications.

Members referred to the statistics in the presentation where Neath Port Talbot was named the second highest local authority area in the United Kingdom between 2014 and 2016 for drug related deaths, and queried whether this statistic was for heroin alone or drugs in general. Officers confirmed that the statistic was drug misuse in general, not specifically heroin.

Members commented that the electoral division of Aberavon in particular was experiencing a lot of drug litter, in particular used needles. Members stated that the area had very little recreation facilities and green spaces, and queried whether there could be a correlation between the two issues. Officers stated that they were unable to comment on the potential link between the lack of recreational facilities and high levels of drug misuse, and commented that it was a subject for wider debate and required evidence to support this. Officers explained that work was currently being undertaken to identify the “hot spot” areas for drug related litter with the intention of targeted intervention where possible in partnership with local agencies. Officers stated that any cases of drug littering should be reported to the Environment Directorate for clearing. Officers informed Members that information on what to do and who to contact when drug litter was discovered needed to be easily accessible to citizens, and that the Council’s web pages needed to be updated to reflect this. Officers added that a task and finish group had been set up and was in the process of developing an action plan to address this issue. Officers reiterated the importance of reporting any instances of drug littering, and stated that they would circulate the contact details to Members after the meeting.

Members commented that it was important that all statutory partners worked together to deal with the issue of substance misuse.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the presentation be noted.

(b) To scrutinise information and monitoring issues being reported by:

6. **QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (2017/18)**

The Committee received information in relation to the Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring of 2017/18 as contained within the circulated report.

Officers reported that the figure for indicator PPN/008ii (Local) regarding the number of new businesses requiring a risk assessment or returned a self-assessment questionnaire was slightly lower than in 2016/17, due to instruction from the Food Standards Agency requiring the authority to prioritise low risk category businesses.

Officers informed Members that a systems review was currently taking place in the Environmental Health and Trading Standards teams and that the findings would be reported back to the Committee. Officers also stated that a Japanese knotweed treatment service was being launched for residential properties within the county borough as part of our income generation aspirations. It would be appreciated if Members could spread the word within their constituencies about this new service

Officers informed Members that anti-social behaviour in the borough was generally under reported and did not match the public's perception. Officers offered to circulate monthly statistics to Members regarding anti-social behaviour instances broken down to ward level.

Officers reported that the Community Safety Team had noticed an increase in the number of referrals to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and were now only able to deal with high risk cases due to the increase in demand. Officers stated that lower risk cases were no referred to other services. Officer added that case loads for the IDVAs were expected to reduce as a result and become more manageable in future.

Members queried whether the Community Safety Fund was still in existence. Officers reported that the Community Safety Fund was still available, but informed Members that securing grant funding each year was becoming more difficult. Officers explained that the funding was means tested and prioritised for citizens who were considered vulnerable, and had experienced incidents such as domestic abuse or burglary. Officers continued by informing Members that the fund

could pay for items such as locks and chains for doors and security lights. Officers added that the renewal area teams were also offering a similar service.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON