

Decisions of the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee

8 March 2021

Members Present:-

Councillor Reuben Thompstone (Chairman)
Councillor Roberto Weeden-Sanz (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Jennifer Grocock	Councillor Sara Conway
Councillor Helene Richman	Councillor Danny Rich
Councillor Nizza Fluss	Councillor Zakia Zubairi
Councillor Lachhya Gurung	

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Cllr Rich asked for a correction under item 3: he is a magistrate and sits on the Youth Bench but is not a 'youth magistrate'; this role doesn't exist.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020 were approved subject to the above amendment.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (IF ANY)

Apologies were received from Cllr Charlie O-Macauley.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS (IF ANY)

Cllr Grocock noted that she is the Chairman of the Finchley and Golders Green Area Committee and of the East Barnet Community and Police Panel Ward.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

A Member's Item was received in the name of Cllr Zakia Zubairi – Hendon Library and Hendon Hub

Cllr Zubairi stated that assurances need to be given that Hendon Library will remain in its current historic building. Members have received many calls from residents opposing the proposed changes to the Hendon Library, which has been in its location since 1929. Cllr Zubairi commented that Barnet Council has wasted £500,000 on reducing the library's floor space by 13% and had also cut staffed opening hours. Residents have expressed concerns that its temporary move to a portacabin would result in the loss of this library altogether.

The Chairman noted that a consultation process is currently underway and requested that Cllr Zubairi forward her comments to the Governance Service so that they could be included in the response.

Action: Cllr Zubairi

The Chairman added that the Hendon Library would be considered when it returns to CLLC following the consultation. CLLC would interrogate the findings on the library services aspects of the consultation but not on the wider Hendon Hub, which would be considered by Policy & Resources Committee.

The Director of Assurance, Ms Clair Green stated that the item that had been previously presented to CLLC set out the wider consultation around the Hendon Hub. A link would be sent to all Members on the consultation, which is currently on the 'Engage Barnet' section of the website. Ms Green would confirm the arrangements outside the meeting and with the Chairman, to ensure that it is brought back to CLLC. She would ensure that Members are clear of the next steps.

Clerk's note: Due to technical difficulties the Assistant Director: Commissioning and Business Improvement was unable to comment at the virtual meeting so has added the following comment:

Phase 1 of the consultation regarding Hendon Hub of which Hendon Library is a part is still on-going and will close on the 21 May 2021. In addition to the main consultation process, the library service is also asking residents to provide feedback on what they would like to see within any new building. This survey also closes at the end of May. A second phase of consultation will follow in early summer. The Assistant Director: Commissioning and Business Improvement contacted Cllrs Thompstone and Conway on the 9 March to clarify consultation arrangements.

Cllr Conway stated that Barnet Council did not appear to always listen to the responses to its consultations. She added that there are fears that as part of the wider Hendon Hub plan, this precious local and iconic resource would be lost.

The Chairman noted that over 3000 responses had been received on the previous libraries consultation and this feedback had dramatically changed some of the original proposals. He did not see the Hendon Hub project as an intention to remove Hendon Library.

Cllr Sara Conway – Engagement with residents in a world living with Covid

Cllr Conway thanked officers for the governance review on community safety, and for their time in callover the previous week. She felt encouraged by the positive work such as that around the Census, Community Strategy and the Health Champions. She suggested a review be carried out, to look at the lessons learnt including receiving feedback from other organisations, which would be relevant for the Community Participation Strategy.

Cllr Conway noted that currently engagement remained difficult for residents who did not have internet access, particularly in the absence of face-to-face ward surgeries and other meetings, as well as consultations being online. She stated that she has noticed a lack of

response to some consultations recently and suggested a closer look at the Resident Forums and other ways of reaching those who may be disengaged.

The Chairman reported that the committee would be feeding into the Participation Strategy very soon. He added that he has been impressed with officers and the many voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) organisations that have set up joint working in very difficult circumstances during the pandemic and agreed that the pandemic had highlighted where further work is needed. He invited the Community Engagement, Participation and Strategy Lead, Mr Will Cooper, to speak on the Community Participation Strategy.

Mr Cooper noted that the consultation aspect of the Strategy would be considered by Policy & Resources Committee (P&R). The Consultation and Engagement Strategy would be part of this and its refresh would be considered by CLLC. Mr Cooper agreed that different ways of working could be discussed to try to get residents more involved and to ensure that those without online access can be reached. The successes from working with partners during the pandemic should be built on and would be considered as part of the Community Participation Strategy, including trying to formalise some of the relationships built during this time.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report.

7. DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY

Mr Peter Clifton, Community Safety Manager, noted that domestic abuse services had been reconfigured over the past year to ensure continued support for victims during the pandemic. There had also been a fourfold increase in the MARAC meetings and a communications campaign on how to report domestic abuse, emphasising that people could still leave home despite lockdown if they are at risk.

In addition, the allocation of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) has been increased and information sharing with the MARAC Group has been enhanced. Additional training on domestic abuse risk identification has been carried out in primary care settings, resulting in an increase in the number of referrals. In Barnet there does not appear to have been an increase in domestic abuse cases during lockdown.

Cllr Rich enquired whether reports were presented elsewhere in the council on girls and gangs and women and slavery. The Community Safety Manager reported that this was reported in the Domestic Violence and VAWG Group as part of its Strategy, which included themed work on modern day slavery and criminal exploitation of young people. Reports are also presented to the Vulnerable Adolescents Risk Panel. The Community Safety Manager would bring more information on the different areas looking at these topics back to the Committee.

Action: Community Safety Manager

Cllr Conway asked about access for residents to the One Stop Shop as this had been busy during lockdown. She reported that Jewish Women's Aid had provided an excellent half day's training on domestic violence and recommended that this be offered to all Councillors. The Community Safety Manager responded that Jewish Women's Aid is a valuable member of the Domestic Abuse and VAWG Forum. He would discuss options for training with the Domestic Abuse Strategy Coordinator.

The Community Safety Manager noted that the One Stop Shop had moved to a telephone triage service during the pandemic and he had heard positive feedback so it may be continued in this format in the future.

Cllr Gurung asked who the agencies are, as referred to in 2.22 of the report. The Community Safety Manager responded that these are Barnet Council (Community Safety, Adults and Children's Social Care), Barnet Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust, DV services such as SOLACE, the police, probation services and VCS services. He would provide a full list following the meeting.

Action: Community Safety Manager

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the progress made by the Safer Communities Partnership on delivering the four priority objectives of the Barnet Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

8. BARNET ZERO TOLERANCE TO HATE CRIME PROJECT UPDATE

Mr Sam Rosengard, Prevent Coordinator, presented his report. He noted that the project's objective is to reduce hate crime in Barnet, improve support for victims, and raise awareness about how to report hate crime and safeguard the most vulnerable victims of it.

The multi-agency response to hate crime in Barnet is overseen by the Safer Communities Partnership Board and the Access to Justice Committee, which receive quarterly updates on the progress of the project and on hate crime figures in Barnet, locally and nationally.

The Prevent Coordinator reported that awareness raising on hate crime is led by Reshma Hirani, who has delivered training to several organisations in Barnet.

Currently the Reporting Centre Network is being increased to ensure that residents can access support when reporting hate crime. Also, additional Hate Crime Reporting Champions have been recruited.

Mr Rosengard reported that because it has been recognised that hate crime might impact disproportionately on vulnerable groups like disabled people, Barnet is actively asking statutory professionals and community groups to think about safeguarding actions that might be necessary. In November 2020 during Safeguarding Week a webinar had been held for Barnet staff.

Cllr Conway noted that she was pleased to hear that the team had contacted some communities, and that this had been fed back to her as a positive experience. She suggested that knowledge from the reporting centres might help with the community engagement work. The Prevent Coordinator would contact the Community Engagement, Participation and Strategy Lead to discuss this. He added that the team hopes to expand the reporting centres across the community.

Action: Prevent Coordinator

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the progress made in delivering Barnet's Zero Tolerance to Hate Crime project.

9. ITEM REFERRED FROM ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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The Chairman introduced an item in the name of Cllr Jo Cooper. He noted that Appendix 1 should have read '8th February 2021' rather than '8th February 2020'. Cllr Cooper was not in attendance.

Cllr Conway stated that she had been advised by governance that it would not be possible to use CIL funding towards community safety issues. There are safety and maintenance concerns around some of the parks, and she suggested piloting an action plan in Montrose Park prior to the end of lockdown.

The Director of Assurance reported that work is underway to clarify where cross-cutting issues such as this should be brought, and how issues can be communicated between the different committees that share an interest. This would be brought back to a future meeting of CLLC. She added that work is ongoing to look at Barnet's parks from a Covid perspective. A project is underway looking at how the council can work with residents and the voluntary sector to help maintain the parks and make them safer, and at the use of Section 106 funding. The Head of Governance would bring a report to Policy and Resources Committee in the near future.

Action: Governance Officer, Director of Assurance

Cllr Grocock reported that the Area Committees have been invited to look at their 2021/22 priorities. Suggestions would be put forward at their next meetings, and issues that concern residents and Members will form part of these discussions.

Cllr Conway stated that some pilots to try out different approaches with partners would also be helpful. This was being looked at prior to the pandemic and a renewed focus on this would be welcome.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Conway reported that some Member training on community safety issues would be helpful to help them to deal with serious incidents in their wards. Ideally a dedicated person to contact at the Council in such incidents could be provided as this can be a difficult time for Members.

Cllr Conway noted that the fly tipping taskforce is a positive step but this continued to be a huge problem in Burnt Oak. She requested a discussion on environmental crime at a future meeting.

Ms Green responded that governance is looking into future training needs and other support that can be put in place in relation to community safety. This would be a positive addition to the member development programme; she noted that any other suggestions from Members on development needs are welcome.

Ms Green noted that the issue of fly tipping is shared with Environment Committee, There is a dedicated team that is tasked to clean up fly tipping as it appears. Further

clarification on communication between the different committees on areas of shared interest would be brought back, to ensure that committees are kept informed.

The Chairman noted that a future CST report to CLLC includes details on fly tipping enforcement.

Action: Director of Assurance

11. ANY ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

The meeting finished at 8.14 pm