

**Minutes of a Meeting of the External
Partnerships Select Committee held at
Surrey Heath House on 27 June 2017**

+ Cllr Robin Perry (Chairman)
+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram (Vice Chairman)

- Cllr Dan Adams	+ Cllr Jonathan Lytle
Cllr Ian Cullen	- Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper
+ Cllr Paul Deach	+ Cllr Max Nelson
+ Cllr Ruth Hutchinson	Cllr Chris Pitt
- Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans	+ Cllr Joanne Potter
- Cllr David Lewis	+ Cllr Nic Price
+ Cllr Oliver Lewis	+ Cllr Ian Sams

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Councillor Lytle for Councillor Adams

In Attendance: Jayne Boitout, Community Development Officer
Karen Kendall, Camberley Street Angels
Louise Livingston, Executive Head: Transformation
Fiamma Pather, Your Sanctuary

1/EP Chairman's Announcements and Welcome to Guests

The Chairman welcomed Fiamma Pather, Your Sanctuary, and Karen Kendall, Camberley Street Angels, to the meeting.

2/EP Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee held on 16 February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3/EP Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4/EP Your Sanctuary Domestic Abuse Outreach Service

Fiamma Pather, Chief Executive, gave a presentation in respect of the Your Sanctuary Domestic Abuse Service.

Your Sanctuary was a Woking based organisation that provides a range of services to adults and children who were either experiencing or were at risk of domestic abuse.

The service, originally set up in 1977, provided community based outreach services to women in the Woking, Runnymede and Surrey Heath local authority areas and to men from across Surrey who experienced domestic abuse. Referrals to the service were

received from a wide range of agencies including: the police, health providers, children's services and children's centres as well as an increasing number of self-referrals. The outreach programme provided group workshops to adults to help them come to terms with and move on from their experiences and a dedicated children's outreach worker provided one to one support to the children of adults referred to the service.

Your Sanctuary operated two refuges in north-west Surrey accommodating women and their children from outside the local area. There were reciprocal arrangements with refuges located outside Surrey to ensure that vulnerable women that approached Your Sanctuary were able to be accommodated safely outside their local area.

A telephone helpline provided advice to anyone anywhere within Surrey 24 hours a day, seven days a week with trained staff and volunteers providing assistance and advice not only to those experiencing domestic abuse but also to people concerned about someone else and professionals seeking advice or wanting to make referrals.

The organisation received funding from Surrey County Council, Woking Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey Community Foundation and BBC Children In Need. Surrey Heath Borough Council did not provide the organisation with direct core funding however funding was provided through the Safer Surrey Heath Partnership to help meet the costs of advertising and promoting the annual National Domestic Abuse Awareness Week campaign.

It was reported that in 2016/17 Surrey Police recorded 7,719 incidents of domestic abuse across Surrey with 545 of these incidents taking place in the Surrey Heath area. However national research has found that a person will have experienced an average of 35 assaults before they contacted the police for the first time. Females were the victims of domestic abuse in 70% of the cases reported and 36% of the victims were aged between 18 and 29 years old.

In 69% of reported cases the victim's ethnicity was categorised as being white however it was stressed that research had found that there were a range of factors that could deter black and minority ethnic groups from reporting domestic abuse including language barriers, cultural and socio-economic factors and concerns about immigration status so this figure could not be considered a true reflection of the situation on the ground. Similarly, research had found that male victims, and particularly those in gay relationships, were less likely to report incidents of domestic abuse and when they were reported incidents were often miscategorised because they were sometimes seen as just being 'two men having a fight'.

Key areas of work for Your Sanctuary over the coming year included:

- Being a pilot area for the Women's Aid National Project Change that Lasts. A programme that used a strengths-based, needs-led approach to support domestic abuse survivors and their children to help them build resilience and independence.
- Participating in a Transforming Women's Justice pilot project which aimed to stop the 'revolving door' of low level re-offending by women and get them out of the criminal justice system by offering women who admitted their offences appropriate support to tackle the behaviour which led them to offend.
- Providing input into Surrey Police training on domestic abuse.
- Working towards the joint commissioning of domestic abuse services.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Using social media to deliver campaigns was a new area for Your Sanctuary and expertise would be brought in from partners if it was decided to make more of the medium.
- Domestic Abuse Champions provided support and guidance to their colleagues however experience had found that their success very much depended on the support that the champions themselves received from their managers.
- It was an aspiration to have peer mentors in Surrey however they required ongoing support and this could only be delivered through the employment of paid staff.
- Mediation started from the assumption that all parties were equal. Consequently mediation was never considered as an option when domestic abuse was present in a relationship as the parties involved were not equal.
- Although levels of domestic abuse were rising year on year the rise was not considered to be significant and the rise was attributed in the main to a greater awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and a decrease in tolerance levels towards accepting domestic abuse.
- The cases that were being dealt with by Your Sanctuary staff and volunteers were increasingly becoming more and more complex as statutory services reduced the levels of support that they provided to non-critical cases.

It was agreed that a small working group would be set up to explore ways in which the Council might help Your Sanctuary take forward and develop their work.

The Committee thanked Fiamma Pather for her informative presentation.

5/EP Camberley Street Angels Report

Karen Kendall gave a presentation in respect of Camberley Street Angels, a voluntary group set up to provide assistance to members of the public after the pubs and clubs in Camberley town centre had shut.

Camberley Street Angels was a voluntary group which operated under the umbrella of Churches Together Camberley. All volunteers were subject to Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks and received training and ongoing support to help them with their role. The organisation worked in collaboration with Surrey Police, South East Ambulance Service, the Camberley Town Centre Management Team, Pub Watch and door staff. The service operated on Friday and Saturday nights between the hours of 10.30pm and 3am. With volunteers working in mixed sex pairs to ensure that people were kept safe, that people got home safely and to help prevent people getting criminal records as a result of any actions committed whilst intoxicated; actions that enabled the police to focus on more serious matters.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- The age of volunteers ranged from mid-twenties to mid-eighties. However the majority of volunteers were aged between 55 and 65 years old.
- When Camberley Street Angels was originally set up it had been a requirement that all volunteers had to provide a reference from a church leader however changes had been made to enable volunteers to be drawn from a wider cross section of the Community.
- Volunteers carried police radios and were able to communicate directly with the police, door staff and the CCTV control centre in Woking.
- All outgoings were funded by the Churches allied to Churches Together Camberley.

- If there was any risk of violence then volunteers would call the police and withdraw from the situation. However it was rare for volunteers to experience direct threats.
- Although the group was well supported more female volunteers were needed.
- A recent incident had cumulated in an ambulance struggling to access the High Street. It was agreed that this would be followed up with South East Coast Ambulance Service to ensure that all paramedics and ambulance staff were aware that they needed to access the High Street from the bottom of the High Street on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Councillors were welcome to come along on a patrol to see the service in action.

It was acknowledged that the decrease in police presence on the street was impacting on the service provided by Camberley Street Angels and it was agreed that the matter would be followed up with the Police.

The Committee thanked Karen Kendall for her informative presentation and commended the Group for the work they did.

6/EP Committee Work Programme

The Committee received a report setting out its proposed work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year.

It was noted that it was proposed to focus the majority of the Committee's time scrutinising those organisations which received grant funding from the Council.

It was requested that any suggestions for future agenda items be forwarded to officers and the Chairman for consideration. It was agreed that the agenda for the Committee's meeting in September would go ahead as listed.

Chairman