



Report of the Director of Communities and Environment

Report to Executive Board

Date: 20th July 2020

Subject: The Managed Approach Independent Review

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Beeston and Holbeck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- This report documents the findings and recommendations from the Independent Review (IR) of the Managed Approach ('MA') to on-street sex working in Leeds.
- The MA represents a multi-faceted, multi-professional, and co-ordinated approach to managing on-street sex work in Leeds and the issues and problems associated with it.
- The MA was developed and introduced by the Safer Leeds Partnership in October 2014, initially for a one-year trial period, as a response to the various issues concerning pre-existing on-street sex work in the Holbeck area of South Leeds, particularly the high number of reports of sex work in residential areas and the low rate of reporting crimes to police.
- On 14th November 2018 the Council voted in favour of an independent review of the Managed Approach to street-based sex working. The University of Huddersfield was successful through the tender process and has now completed the research and submitted the MA Independent Review Report.
- There have been several small-scale reviews comprising of residents and business surveys (in 2016 and 2018 whose findings helped to shape the current MA model), this is the first comprehensive review of its performance conducted by an independent party.

2. Best Council Plan Implications

- Leeds has an ambition to be a strong economy and a compassionate city. A key dimension of this is tackling poverty and inequality. The MA is a strategic response to managing pre-existing on-street sex work with the ambition of reducing the prevalence of street-based sex working in Leeds, reducing the problems caused by on-street sex working to residents and businesses which currently suffer from such nuisance. It also seeks to improve engagement with street sex workers to facilitate the provision of appropriate support to improve their safety and health and enable them to exit on street work.
- The objectives of the MA supports the strategic objectives of Safe, Strong Communities as part of the focus on keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

3. Resource Implications

- The resources for the current MA delivery are in place. There are no direct resource implications outlined in the MA Independent Review report. Further work will be completed subject to the recommendations of the Executive Board and there may be moderate future resource implications which would be reported back to the Executive Board.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Members of Executive Board are recommended to:

- a) Receive the Managed Approach Independent Review noting the key findings and recommendations;
- b) Note that the Director of Communities and Environment and where appropriate partner representatives will be responsible for considering the recommendations and implementing any changes proposed, reporting to the Safer Leeds Executive partnership, and;
- c) That Members of Executive Board be kept informed and updated on any key changes proposed arising from the independent review.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report documents the findings and recommendations from the Independent Review (IR) of the Managed Approach ('MA') to on-street sex working in Leeds.
- 1.2 The Executive Board is receiving this report in order to ask officers to proceed with considering the report key findings and recommendations. The Independent Review of the Managed Approach to on-street sex working in Leeds 2014-2020 completed by the University of Huddersfield is attached in appendix 1.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The MA represents a multi-faceted, multi-professional, and co-ordinated approach to managing on-street sex work in Leeds and the issues and problems associated with it.
- 2.2 The MA was developed and introduced by the Safer Leeds Partnership in October 2014, initially for a one-year trial period, as a response to the various issues concerning pre-existing on-street sex work in the Holbeck area of South Leeds, particularly the high number of reports of sex work in residential areas and the low rate of reporting crimes to police.
- 2.3 On 14th November 2018 the Council voted in favour of an independent review of the Managed Approach to on-street sex working. Safer Leeds developed a tender specification in consultation with relevant stakeholders and the invitation to tender was published on YorTender on the 7th May 2019.
- 2.4 Four tenders were received in June 2019 and consultees from West Yorkshire Police, representatives from Voice of Holbeck and a representative group of on-street sex workers from the MA cohort worked with the evaluation panel to identify strengths and weaknesses of each submission.
- 2.5 The evaluation panel scored the submissions in line with the recognised and accredited evaluation guidelines. The contract was awarded to the University of Huddersfield Enterprises Limited, with the review being undertaken by academics in their Applied Criminology and Policing Centre.
- 2.6 The contract required the University of Huddersfield to evaluate progress made against the three strategic objectives:
 - To reduce the prevalence of on-street sex-working in Leeds.
 - To reduce the problems caused by on-street sex-working to residents and businesses which currently suffer from such nuisance.
 - To better engage with on-street sex workers to improve their safety and health, with a view to enabling them to exit this way of life;
- 2.7 As well as to:
 - Seek and understand the views of a wide range of residents, businesses, sex workers and other stakeholders;

- Provide recommendations for the future

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The MA Independent Review has been undertaken by the University of Huddersfield for the Safer Leeds partnership to provide evidence concerning the extent to which the MA has achieved its objectives. The Independent Review report includes a review of other schemes and approaches in response to the problems associated with on-street-sex working in the UK and abroad. The Review draws conclusions from the evidence gathered and suggests recommendations informed by that evidence and through consultation with stakeholders, to inform future decision-making. The Safer Leeds Executive will be considering and accepting the report on the 26th June 2020
- 3.2 The Independent Review utilised a number of methodological approaches: focus groups and interviews (with residents, support service professionals, on-street sex workers, local Elected Councillors, Police, Safer Leeds, residents' groups, prominent community members, Leeds City Council representatives, and a local Member of Parliament); local resident and business surveys (on-line and face-to-face); attendance at 'Listening Well' community and MA strategic leads (e.g. the Director of Communities and Environment, the Chief Officer of Safer Leeds, the Executive Member for Communities, the Leeds WYP District Commander and local Elected Members).; analysis of police and Safer Leeds data; and evaluation with key stakeholders to reflect on the implications of the findings
- 3.3 The key findings of the MA Independent Review are outlined in the Executive Summary in full. Briefly they include:
- The MA reflects a move away in thinking about on-street sex work from an 'enforcement led' approach toward an 'adult protection/safe-guarding' approach. All of the residents interviewed showed sympathy towards on-street sex workers and acknowledged that help and support for them were key to reducing the problems caused by on-street sex work.
 - Almost 70% of those residents and community members who were interviewed said that the MA should remain but needed to change in some way. Through the review process there appeared to be a realisation that whilst the MA may not be considered ideal, it comprised a joined-up approach for targeting important resources, such as a dedicated police presence, support for sex workers, and street cleansing, without which the problems associated with on-street sex work, as the impact on local residents and the negative impact on the wellbeing of on-street sex workers would increase significantly.
 - Communication and co-operation between Holbeck residents and those governing the management of the MA has improved immensely with regular 'Listening Well' sessions and resident representation in the management and governance of the MA.
 - The summary view of on-street sex workers is that the MA has significantly improved their health and safety.

- The summary view of allied professionals working with on-street sex workers is that the MA has helped support service provision become more professional, better targeted, more holistic and improved relationships.
- Resourcing of the MA has improved with a dedicated police team since 2016 and a dedicated line for reporting on-street sex work related problems. There has been a steady increase in reporting.
- The systematic review of research literature and surveys of other police forces in England and Wales, did not identify any more effective interventions or ways of reducing the problems associated with on-street sex work within the parameters of existing UK law.

3.4 The MA Independent Review report outlines some emerging questions from the research and proposed recommendations for consideration, the full details of which are included in the Executive Summary. Briefly they include:

- The MA was found to be more effective at reducing the impact of problems associated with on-street sex working than any other approach or model. The MA must continue to evolve and adapt to changes in on-street sex work or changes in UK law.
- It is recommended that at least the same level of investment and organisational support is necessary to achieve and sustain progress to better engage with on-street sex workers to improve their safety and health, with a view to enabling them to exit this way of life.
- There is a need to clarify what 'reducing the prevalence of on-street sex work' means in terms of a strategic aim and to explain more widely the complexity of prevalence reduction and 'exiting from on-street sex work' to a wider audience (including Holbeck residents, businesses and the media).
- Much work has been done and progress made in bringing local residents and businesses on board with the MA. It is recommended that more be done to ensure that the residents and community continue to be brought along on in the evolution of the MA. Responsibility also needs to be shared with the community so that there is a shift in the thinking that solutions to the problems caused by on-street sex working lie solely with police and LCC.
- To consider forming and developing a representative 'MA Future Planning Group' (MAFPG) whereby changes in on-street sex work and their effects can be predicted and planned for in advance according to accurate data and feedback.
- Devise and stage a positive campaign amplifying the positive aspects of being part of Holbeck, including respect for all in Holbeck (not about the MA). This should be jointly developed and presented by residents and businesses of Holbeck.
- To help counter some of the negative perceptions of the MA, it is recommended that the positive aspects of 'Holbeck life' be rigorously promoted, such as the fact that it is home to diverse and vibrant communities. Moving forward, to develop an inclusive and co-ordinated PR and media strategy for the whole of

Holbeck to promote its strengths and successes and help to shift perceptions away from Holbeck being solely about the MA.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 The methodology for the review is outlined in the report and included significant consultation with the community and a wide range of active stakeholders. Any further developments as a result of the findings and recommendations of the Independent Review would be developed with appropriate consultation and engagement with local elected members, the community stakeholders and wider partners.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 The Managed Approach is located in small area of Holbeck. The wider Holbeck community is vibrant and diverse and is also identified as a community where many residents experience poverty. The Independent Review report is not seeking to reduce existing service provision and has focused on listening to the views of the key stakeholders as identified and is outlining recommendations which would seek to sustain and improve the current arrangements for the Managed Approach if adopted. Due regard to equality will be considered during any further developments and where appropriate an equality impact assessment will be completed.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 Leeds has an ambition to be a strong economy and a compassionate city. A key dimension of this is tackling poverty and inequality. The MA is a strategic response to managing pre-existing on-street sex work with the ambition of reducing the prevalence of street-based sex working in Leeds, reducing the problems caused by on-street sex working to residents and businesses which currently suffer from such nuisance. It also seeks to improve engagement with street sex workers to facilitate the provision of appropriate support to improve their safety and health and enable them to exit on street work.

4.3.2 The objectives of the MA supports the strategic objectives of Safe, Strong Communities as part of the focus on keeping people safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

Climate Emergency

4.3.3 The report is asking the Executive Board to receive the MA Independent Review and ask officers to consider the recommendations and report back. There are no climate emergency implications.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.4.1 The original procurement exercise was done in accordance with Council procurement guidance using 'YorTender'. There are no further resource implications at this stage.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 There are no legal implications at this stage and the report is open for call-in.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 The Managed Approach is not identified as a corporate risk. The key risk was to ensure that the MA Independent Review process was inclusive of all key community stakeholders and wider partners and that the findings are reported in an open and transparent way.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The MA Review has used an inclusive, rigorous and wholly independent methodology. The researchers have worked openly and transparently with all of the stakeholders involved. The final report outlines key findings and recommendations to be considered as part of the ongoing development and evolution of the Managed Approach in Leeds.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Members of Executive Board are recommended to:

- a) Receive the Managed Approach Independent Review noting the key findings and recommendations;
- b) Note that the Director of Communities and Environment and where appropriate partner representatives will be responsible for considering the recommendations and implementing any changes proposed, reporting to the Safer Leeds Executive partnership, and;
- c) That Members of Executive Board be kept informed and updated on any key changes proposed arising from the independent review.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 There are no background documents relevant.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.