

**Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on  
26 September 2017**

Present: John Francis (Chairman)

**Attendance**

Syed Hussain	Kyle Robinson
Trevor Johnson	Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)
Jason Jones	Victoria Wilson
Natasha Pullen	Mike Worthington

**Also in attendance:** Mark Sutton

**Apologies:** Paul Snape

**PART ONE**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were none at this meeting.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 July 2017**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 13 July 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Staffordshire, to include progress against the CSAF Action Plan and information regarding Revenge Porn & Sexting**

*[Superintendent Tim Martin (Staffordshire Police), Robert Simpson (Regulatory Services Group Manager, Stafford Borough Council) and Dave Anslow (Manager, Children & Young Peoples Voice Project) in attendance for this item.]*

The Select Committee received regular reports on the work the County Council and its partners undertake to address Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). CSE remains a priority for both the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB). The Child Sexual Abuse Forum (CSAF) was established jointly by the two LSCBs and their partners as an effective way to share information, coordinate and drive the work to address sexual abuse and to hold agencies to account for promoting effective local working together arrangements.

Members watched a DVD entitled “For the Whole World to See”, produced by Burton and South Derbyshire College, which showed the possible consequences of sexting. The Select Committee felt this was an excellent tool to use in schools and more broadly within the community to help raise awareness of the consequences of sexting and specifically the illegal nature of taking, owning and sharing such pictures. They were informed of the breadth of work undertaken to address the current perception that

sexting was “normal” and the importance of delivering the message in an age appropriate way and in a format that young people take note of, ie not using posters or leaflets but making good use of social media. In general delivery of awareness raising in schools via a third party worked better than delivery from school staff as pupils tended to find this less awkward.

Whilst it was important to ensure young people were aware of the illegal nature of sexting there was no intention to criminalise them. However once an image was shared on social media it became available world wide and there were examples of blackmail and exploitation resulting from sexted images. It was important for young people to understand the implications of how these images could be used. Members also felt that it was crucial for parents to be educated on this issue.

Members were aware that schools had the discretion to determine what issues were raised within their Personal, Social, Health & Economic (PHSE) lessons and the manner of delivery. However they felt strongly that use of the DVD should be encouraged. It was suggested that one way to support the awareness raising and use of the DVD was via the Governing Body, with governor training raising awareness and advising governors to check how their schools were addressing the issues and challenge where this work wasn't being done.

Members also heard that whilst every effort was undertaken to work together to remove on-line images, technology advanced at such a pace it was not always a straight forward process. Operation Safenet continued to work to address this sort of issue, however preventing the images being taken and/or shared was key to reducing the risks involved in sexting.

Members noted that there was an identified inconsistency in the delivery of PHSE education across Staffordshire schools. The need to develop better relatable and interactive resources to help support the delivery of PHSE around safeguarding issues had been agreed and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was now funding a post to take this work forward. Members asked to be kept informed of progress made on the production of this resource and the take-up by schools. It was anticipated that development of this resource would take between 6 and 12 months.

The Select Committee raised the issue of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community which was not explicitly mentioned within the report. There was a concern that staff in schools may be unsure how to deal with LGBT pupils which by default made them vulnerable. It was recognised that this group of young people were a potential vulnerable group and that this would be recognised within future reports.

The Select Committee heard that since the last update on 16 January 2017: the CSAF had held two meetings; the temporary post of CSE coordinator for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent had been filled; and Staffordshire's Children's Social Care Services had engaged in a pilot “Inspection of Children's Social Care Services”, which had identified that the strategic and operational work to manage CSE was effective and timely in Staffordshire. A review of the CSE Action Plan had also been undertaken by the CSE coordinator and presented to the CSAF at their meeting on 25 April 2017. The revised

action plan had been extended to 2017-2020 and was aligned with the requirements set out in the CSE Strategy.

Following a mapping exercise around governance it had been agreed that the CSAF should focus on CSE and intra-familial CSE. Whilst the governance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage should sit with the newly established Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board. This Board was undertaking a scoping exercise in respect of the delivery of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. As an interim measure during this exercise the Joint LSCB FGM Policy and Procedure was updated and disseminated to front line staff, including a recent LSCB briefing on FGM to help frontline staff recognise and respond to children at risk of FGM.

The Select Committee had previously heard that some aspects of the CSE Outcomes Framework had been piloted for a five month period in East Staffordshire, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent. A trial dataset had been produced and reported to the Framework Steering Group highlighting differentiations in data recording across organisations, resulting in a sub-group established to clarify required datasets and reporting mechanisms.

Members noted that as a result of evidence gained from a consultation with 200 young people the OPCC had financed a campaign to challenge young people's attitudes towards parties and help them stay safe, address the perception that sexting was normal, improve understanding of what constituted consent and support and encourage parents to talk to their children about staying safe. Members were particularly pleased to note the development of a new immersive 360 degree/smart phone technology app that gave a virtual reality video to help young people analyse the potential risks of a party.

Members noted that funding for the Staffordshire Police Preventing CSE Team had finished in March 2017. However from 1 September 2017 Catch22 were providing lower level CSE Prevent interventions as well as dealing with all missing children return interviews.

The Select Committee noted the recent pilot Ofsted inspection of Staffordshire's Children's Services, achieving a "Good" grading again, with progression in all areas since the last inspection in 2014. The following section of the Ofsted report was shared with Members:

*"When social workers identify concerns regarding children at risk of sexual exploitation, they take timely and effective protective action. Clear processes are in place to ensure strategic oversight of concerns relating to sexual exploitation, through the child sexual abuse forum. District child sexual exploitation panels ensure a coordinated multi-agency response to managing risk.*

*The response to children who go missing is rigorous. The 'missing' coordinator proactively tracks and monitors all 'missing' incidents, including those of children placed in the area by other local authorities. A commissioned resource and an in-house service provide 'return' interviews. Most 'return' interviews are detailed and analytical and include the right information to inform subsequent intervention to help safeguard children. The strategic*

*missing board oversees practice effectively, identifies themes and trends and considers wider planning. "*

Members congratulated the Service for this achievement.

Where a young person was subject to a protection plan a member of the Voice Project visited them at school to ensure that their voice was heard as part of that plan. However Members shared concerns that this was only done where parental consent was given. They felt that those young people whose parents refused consent were likely to be those children who most needed their voice to be heard, but understood that the majority of parents gave their consent.

The Select Committee received an update to the report from Mr Robert Simpson, which outlined the process for the CSE inter-authority audit on the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Responsible Bodies Group (SSRBG). The Audit reports were to be submitted by 31 December 2017 in order for a summary report to be taken to the 12 January 2018 SSRBG. Mr Simpson also wished to record his gratitude to Staffordshire Police for their support in this work and in organising sting operations to back up the work of the SSRBG.

Members noted that of the 2,700 applications to work on the Council's regulated activity home to school contracts 550 individuals had been identified with DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) traces which resulted in the individual being interviewed. Of the 550 interviewed, 103 applicants were deemed unsuitable to work on the Council's contracts. On seeking clarification Members were informed that the DBS "trace" meant that there was something flagged on their DBS check as worth note, which could include points on a driving licence. The DBS enhanced system with the new add-on update service now allowed checks to be made at any time and therefore the most current information could be accessed.

There was some concern over the checks on escorts employed as part of the Council's passenger system. Members understood that all escorts were DBS checked but had concerns that there was no way to stop identification cards being swapped. Identification cards all included a photograph of the individual. "Soft intelligence" from the driver and the school also helped to inform officers about any potential risk or possible difficulties with individuals.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- a) schools be encouraged to use the DVD "For All the World to See" in their PHSE lessons;
- b) School Governor training includes the issue of sexting, with Governors made aware of the resources available and encouraged to investigate the work undertaken by their school in addressing this issue;
- c) the Select Committee receive an update in 6 months on the OPCC funded post to develop PHSE resources around safeguarding in its broadest sense and the take-up by schools; and
- d) LGBT groups are addressed within future reports.

#### **4. Cabinet Response: Preventing Low Level Neglect of Children in Staffordshire'**

The Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee formed a working group to consider Low Level Neglect with the focus of their report being around early identification and prevention. The Working Group's report was endorsed at the Select Committee meeting of 8 June 2016. The report was then submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People who verbally confirmed he accepted the vast majority of the recommendations at the Select Committee meeting of 8 July 2016, with a formal written response and progress report on implementation of the recommendations at their 6 March 2017 meeting.

The Select Committee now received details of the progress made and Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his work in addressing the Working Group's recommendations.

The Select Committee requested an organogram showing the governance model for this area of work and identifying the relationship between the different groups involved.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- a) the Executive Response and progress with any outstanding items on the Action Plan be noted;
- b) the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People be thanked for the progress made in addressing the Working Groups recommendations; and
- c) an organogram of the governance model and relationship between the groups involved in this work be forwarded to Select Committee Members.

## **5. Work Programme**

The Select Committee noted that a request had been made for the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board Annual Report to be moved from the Select Committee's November meeting to their December meeting to enable the Board to agree their annual report before this was shared with the Select Committee. This would also enable the Adult and Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board Annual Reports to be presented at the same meeting.

At the Chairman's request the December meeting had been moved from 11 December, 2.00pm, to Tuesday 12 December, 10.00am to avoid an afternoon meeting.

Members also noted that their proposed scrutiny review into Children's Centres would be postponed as centres were currently undergoing considerable change and the review would be more apt after the changes had taken place.

Members raised concerns over a local newspaper report from 14 September that had suggested there had been a significant rise in the number of children suffering neglect in Staffordshire, with an increase of 255 in 2016/17. The article had been based on the NSPCC national report showing the number of cases of neglect reported to them, however whilst the number reported through the NSPCC had risen, the number overall within Staffordshire had stayed the same. It was the method of reporting that had changed in that, following a successful advertising campaign, more people were reporting cases of neglect through the NSPCC rather than routes previously used.

### **Edge of Care - Scoping Report**

The Select Committee received a scoping report setting out details of a proposed scrutiny review into why more children were entering care in Staffordshire, the impact this had on the Council and the mechanisms in place to prevent children from coming into care. Members agreed to undertake the scrutiny review.

#### **RESOLVED – That:**

- a) the amendments to the Work Programme be noted; and
- b) and the scoping report and terms of reference for the Edge of Care Scrutiny review be agreed.

**Chairman**