

Minutes of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 24 October 2022

Present: Bob Spencer (Chair)

Attendance	
Gill Burnett (Vice-Chair (Overview))	Johnny McMahon
Janet Eagland	Gillian Pardesi
Richard Ford (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny))	Mike Wilcox
Derrick Huckfield	Conor Wileman

Also in attendance: Victoria Wilson

Apologies: Kath Perry, MBE

PART ONE

28. Declarations of Interest

Name of Member	Nature of Association	Minute No
Bob Spencer	Personal interest, having a masters degree from Cambridge University Criminology Department and being a member of their evidence based Policing Committee.	30
Bob Spencer	Personal interest as a past member of the Police Counter Terrorism Unit serving across four forces, including Staffordshire, with responsibility for delivery of the Prevent Strategy	31

29. Minutes of the Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny meeting of 1 September 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 September 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

30. Report on Action to Prevent Future Deaths Following the Inquests Arising from the Deaths in the Fishmongers' Hall Terror Attack

The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested detail on the Prevention of Future Deaths Report prepared by the Chief Coroner following the Fishmonger's Hall terror attack on 29 November 2019. Whilst the terror attack had taken place in London, the attacker had been a resident of Stafford at that time. Originally he was from Stoke-on-Trent and had been released from prison in 2018 on licence after serving a sentence for terrorist offences and was wearing an electronic tag. The Committee wanted to consider whether relevant lessons had been learnt and actions taken by appropriate agencies to prevent future similar events occurring.

The Fishmonger Hall event had been a conference to celebrate the fifth anniversary of Learning Together, a programme run by the Cambridge Institute of Criminology, to help offenders reintegrate into society following release from prison. Although the attacker had been banned from entering London under the terms of his release, he had been granted a one-day exemption to attend the event. The inquest held into the deaths of his victims had concluded that he had been insufficiently monitored, identifying contributing factors as an unreasonable belief in his rehabilitation, a lack of information sharing between agencies and inadequate security planning at the event.

The Coroner addressed his report to ten organisations that were required to provide a response to the matters of concern he had identified. Staffordshire County Council was not one of the listed organisations, however Staffordshire Police, West Midlands Police and the Probation Service were. These organisations responded to the Coroner in January 2022.

The Coroner's Report had made twenty-five recommendations regarding the matters of concern. Recommendations that had an impact on Staffordshire were around:

- a) the risk assessment process
- b) clarity over agency leadership
- c) prison actions to manage radicalisation
- d) procedural issues
- e) communications

The Scrutiny Committee considered details of changes made as a result of the Coroner's recommendations within the Probation Service, the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) and Staffordshire Police.

Some concerns were shared that the attacker's name and heritage had been identified within the report. This detail had been reported at the time of the incident and was in the public domain on the Home Office website. However, having discussed in detail these concerns, and acknowledging that there is threat from any form of extremism, it was

agreed that the words 'Pakistani descent' would be removed from the report in future.

Members were aware there had been ten organisations found collectively responsible, with 25 recommendations made. They received detail of improvements made around these recommendations, including data sharing; changes to counter terrorism policing with clearer lines of responsibility; clearer links into the local Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA); and extensive changes to the Probation Service.

Embedding change took time and Members sought reassurance that the disruption that change can bring would not in itself create risks. Many of the changes had already been made and were working well, with assurances through Contest (the counter terrorism strategy) that these have been managed well.

Members were aware that the Local Authority (LA) had a degree of scrutiny on the work of the Commissioner through the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. They asked what level of scrutiny the LA had on the Probation Service. The Probation Service was an integral partner on the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group which was chaired by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities and for which the Chairman and Vice Chairmen received a briefing.

Resolved: That:

- a) Whilst the contents of an agenda pack cannot be changed retrospectively after the meeting has taken place, the nationality of the attacker will be removed from future reports, and
- b) the changes made in response to the Coroner's recommendations be welcomed.

31. Prevent Activity

The Prevent duty is part of the Government's overall counter-terrorism strategy known as CONTEST. The duty was introduced into law as part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. It placed a duty on specified authorities to have due regard to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. The Prevent Duty is a statutory requirement for Staffordshire County Council.

The County Council has a co-ordinating role, with the implementation of Prevent overseen by a multi-agency Prevent Board chaired by the County Commissioner for Regulatory Services and Community Safety. The Board sits quarterly, receiving input and guidance from the Home Office Regional Advisor for Prevent, who acts as a critical friend to the Board. Members received details of the Prevent Board reporting mechanisms into the Staffordshire Contest Board, which oversaw all counter-terrorism

activity strands, as well as the Staffordshire Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group.

The Committee heard that priorities for the Prevent Board were informed by the annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP), with a delivery plan setting out how partners were working together to meet the requirements of the Prevent Duty, responding to, and managing risk. They also considered the work within schools to safeguard children and young people, with schools being an integral part of the work of the Channel Panel, a multi-agency approach which identified and provided support to individuals who were at risk of being drawn into terrorism. They also considered types of training for schools.

Some concern was expressed around alienation of young people and the possibility of stigmatising individuals.

Members had particular concern over the potential danger posed by the internet, particularly outside of education setting where access may be unregulated. In particular an initiative called Common Sense Media was shared, suggesting that this should be considered for use in schools to support safer use of internet and social media. Members also heard that pre-Covid Staffordshire Libraries had a learning opportunity that supported parents in understanding how to keep their children safe on-line. Officers agreed to check whether this initiative was still available.

Resolved: That the LA's role as part of Prevent be noted.

32. Work Programme

Members noted the items scheduled for their next meeting on 24 November 2022. They asked if a summary of the Safeguarding Children's Board Annual report could be made available. It was also noted that Members had previously raised concerns around Family Improvement Board's being cancelled, particularly in East Staffs, due to vacancies. They asked that a report be brought to the November meeting addressing these concerns.

The work with Young Carers was now complete and a report on this work would be included on the November agenda.

Resolved: That the proposed additions to the agenda for 24 November be agreed.

Chairman