

**Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on
10 July 2018**

Present: Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Attendance

Mike Davies	Natasha Pullen
Syed Hussain	Paul Snape
Trevor Johnson	Mike Worthington
Jason Jones	

Also in attendance: Mark Sutton and Alan White

Apologies: Ann Beech and John Francis

PART ONE

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

12. Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 8 June 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 8 June 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

13. Provision of Places of Safety under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had previously raised concerns over individuals being detained under Section 136 (S136) of the Mental Health Act (MHA) being taken to Police Stations and retained in police cells rather than a health-based Place of Safety. The Police and Crime Act 2017 made the use of Police Stations as Places of Safety a “never event”. Prior to this there had been a reliance on police stations to “hold” citizens awaiting a MHA assessment.

Staffordshire currently had two health based Places of Safety (PoS), one in Newcastle and one in Stafford, with a number of routes for individuals detained under S136. The main course of action would be for a Police Constable or Street Triage staff to bring the individual into the PoS.

The County Council has representation at S136 operational meetings. Through the Operational meetings it has been reported that, since December 2017, there has been no detentions under S136 in Police Custody Suites. There had been a reduction in the use of S136 over the last year, although there had been a slight increase in S136 for

under 18s. Members also heard that on 14 May 2018 there had been a Police And Crime Act (PACA) review, at which point there had been no adults or children detained under S136 at a Police Station since the commencement of PACA. The Select Committee received details of the number of assessments undertaken each month since the introduction of PACA.

The Select Committee were reassured with the work undertaken to ensure those detained under S136 were taken to health based PoS and were never routinely retained in Police Custody. They agreed that the Chairman should write to the PCC on their behalf to allay his concerns.

RESOLVED – That the Select Committee Chairman write to the Staffordshire PCC advising him of their reassurance in the work undertaken to ensure those detained under S136 of the MHA are taken to health based PoS and never routinely retained in police custody.

14. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Staffordshire, to include progress against the CSAF Action Plan

[Robert Simpson, Customer Services Group Manager (Stafford Borough Council) and DCI Nicola Furlong (Staffordshire Police) also in attendance for this item]

The Select Committee has regularly received updates on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) since 2014. CSE continues to be a priority for Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and its partners under their Child Sexual Abuse strategic priority. Members were updated on the work of the Child Sexual Abuse Forum (CSAF), its CSE Action Plan and the CSE Outcomes Framework and Risk Factor Matrix.

Policies and protocols for Staffordshire licensing authorities in terms of issuing taxi licenses had been agreed. This had included level 1 safeguarding training and enhanced DBS checks for all taxi drivers seeking a license within Staffordshire. A recent Staffordshire inter authority audit showed that all authorities were adhering to these policies and protocols. Some Councils were also requiring drivers to sign up to the CRB updating service, enabling information to be current rather than updated every three years. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Responsible Bodies Group (SSRGB) were considering recommending that all Staffordshire licensing authorities make this a requirement.

Concerns were shared over Wolverhampton City Council taxi license charges. On average a license charge was between £190 to £220, however Wolverhampton were now charging £69. This had resulted in a significant increase in license applications to Wolverhampton, from 859 licenses last year to 9000 this year already. Concerns were raised as to whether the safeguarding standards and accountability were as stringent as those agreed within Staffordshire. There was an understanding that licenses were being awarded to drivers who may have a virtual base in Wolverhampton but who worked elsewhere. Representatives from Wolverhampton City Council were to be invited to the October meeting of the SSRBG to explain their licensing process and management. The Select Committee requested that they be informed of the outcome of this meeting. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People suggested that there may be an opportunity for the Local Government Association (LGA) to bring together some national

best practice guidelines which help address the concerns of inconsistency in licensing authority requirements. The Select Committee intends to write to the LGA outlining their concerns over the inconsistency of licensing protocols across the Country and suggest good practice guidelines would be beneficial.

Taxi drivers used for school journeys for vulnerable young people underwent enhanced DBS checks and were included on an accredited framework of drivers. Members queried whether drivers and/or passenger assistants were required to have first aid training. This was not currently a requirement, although first aid kits were carried on all licensed vehicles. Members requested that the advice and guidance with respect to the use of first aid by taxi drivers/passenger assistants be clarified and this detail be shared with Members.

Members also discussed the potential difficulties and anxieties for parents of vulnerable young people who use the school taxi service. In particular their possible reluctance to challenge a driver if they had concerns because of the possible consequences for their child. It was suggested that, where a parent felt uncomfortable, they should contact the school and they would be able to check/challenge the driver on arrival. Members also heard that the licensing authority undertook routine checks at the school gate to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the transport and/or driver. Parents/guardians were also advised to check that taxi drivers had ID badges displayed and the taxi should have a plate. Members were also concerned that taxi drivers could be exploited and receiving below the national minimum wage. The County Commissioner for Community Safety, Children and Families agreed to explore this.

On querying whether District and Borough Councillors undertook the level 1 safeguarding training Members were informed that part of the licensing policy was for all councillors on a licensing committee to have undergone this training. However concerns were shared that not all local councils felt there was a need to train all their councillors (ie those not on a licensing committee), with an example shared of Cannock Chase District Council choosing not to request their Members undertake this training. It was suggested that a possible way forward was through the Safeguarding Board, with the offer of a presentation to the Council or using the designated Safeguarding Officer to promote the importance and relevance of this training. District and Borough Councils also had representation on Safeguarding subgroups and these representatives could also be used to promote the importance of training and in particular its relevance to their community safety responsibilities.

Members heard about the work of the CSE Coordinator. This post was funded through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and worked across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. Examples of how this post was working well were shared with the Select Committee, including the "Loud Mouth" event and the follow-on work undertaken by Stafford College.

The Select Committee noted that due to the complexity involved in implementation of the CSE Outcomes Framework, a decision had been taken to implement this through a phased plan. There had been difficulties with the difference in computer systems and differences in data analysis. The information collated would now be simpler and provide an overarching picture of risk. A working group had been established to develop a more

manageable and meaningful framework. It was suggested that this could be shared with the Committee.

A gap had been identified in the local coordination of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in schools. The OPCC hoped for a more consistent approach to the delivery of areas of PSHE, including CSE. They had provided some funding and were piloting an approach to PSHE in two Districts with a view to the learning from this being rolled out across the County. Members were aware that PSHE had a broader remit than safeguarding and that schools already had developed programmes for their PSHE. It was important to work with schools to help develop the safeguarding areas of the PSHE curriculum. A possible way forward was to engage with the designated safeguarding teacher within each school to help promote this programme of work.

Members also discussed the work of the CSE Panels which had been in place for three years. They were consistently reviewed year on year to ensure they were working effectively. As awareness increased more incidents were being brought to the Panels which were a good forum for information sharing. The recent focused Ofsted inspection had recognised the good work of the Panels. The next stage was to look at broader vulnerabilities, not just CSE.

Changes to the way in which Staffordshire Police manage their CSE team was shared with the Select Committee. From 3 September 2018 there will be a dedicated Child Protection Team, with 42 detective constables, 5 sergeants, 2 detective inspectors as well as an on-line team of 1 sergeant and 7 detective constables. This enabled a joined up approach and would make it easier for close working relationships with partners. There would also be an on-call function, with a child protection officer on call at all times.

Members noted that a six-monthly data report was produced on CSE at high, medium and low levels. Members discussed whether this report should be shared with the Select Committee to help inform their overview of CSE. In general Members felt that they were happy with the current report format which gave an explanation of the work being undertaken and therefore there was less opportunity for raw data to be misinterpreted.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the Select Committee be updated on the outcome of the October SSRGB meeting to which Wolverhampton City Council representatives have been invited to explain their licensing process, accountability and management;
- b) following the update from the SSRGB, the Select Committee write to the LGA outlining their concerns over inconsistency of licensing authority practices and protocols and suggesting there is a need for best practice guidance, specifically with regard to safeguarding;
- c) the good work of the licensing authorities in Staffordshire be applauded; and,
- d) the advice and guidance with respect to the use of first aid by taxi drivers/passenger assistants be clarified and these details shared with the Select Committee.

15. Work Programme

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Select Committee of discussions at the 29 May Triangulation meeting and subsequent discussions with the Chairman and Vice Chairman to develop the work programme and to manage items. A further request was made for details of post 18 transition services and it was agreed that a briefing note would be produced and shared with members on this issue in the first instance.

RESOLVED – That the amended work programme be shared with Members after the meeting and that a briefing note on post 18 transition services be requested.

16. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED - That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below

The Committee then proceeded to consider reports on the following issues:

PART TWO

17. Child Sexual Exploitation Learning from Reviews - Briefing Note

(exemption paragraph 7)

RESOLVED – That this item be deferred to the September Select Committee meeting.

Chairman