

## **Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on 22 January 2019**

Present: John Francis (Chairman)

### **Attendance**

Ann Beech  
Mike Davies  
Trevor Johnson  
Jason Jones

Natasha Pullen  
Paul Snape  
Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)

**Also in attendance:** Gill Burnett and Mark Sutton

**Apologies:** Syed Hussain and Mike Worthington

### **PART ONE**

#### **44. Declarations of Interest**

There were none at this meeting.

#### **45. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 December 2018**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 11 December 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **46. Minutes of the Joint Safe & Strong Communities and Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committees meeting held on 18 December 2018**

The minutes of the joint Safe and Strong Communities and Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committees meeting held on 18 December 2018 were agreed.

#### **47. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Staffordshire**

*[DCI David Giles (Staffordshire Police) and Megan Richards (Stoke City Council) also in attendance for this item]*

The Select Committee regularly received updates on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) since 2014. This report updated Members on:

- the Child Sexual Abuse Forum (CSAF);
- outcomes from the Staffordshire County Council Children's Services focused visit from Ofsted in June 2018 and the subsequent action plan;
- CSE Action Plan, including the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) audit and HSB Steering group, the work of the Joint Strategic Coordinator and changes implemented following the publication of revised Working Together guidance in July 2018;
- the CSE Outcomes framework;

- communications;
- workforce and development;
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE);
- youth produced sexual imagery (sexting);
- learning and improvement;
- work progressed by Staffordshire Police, including Operation Safenet, the Child Protection and Exploitation Team and abduction notices;
- work progressed by Families First and Commissioned Services; and,
- CSE and licensing.

Ways of working have developed across Police and social work teams to more effectively address some complex cases involving child sexual exploitation and grooming. Details of a recent successful prosecution resulting in an eight year sentence were shared with Members. This had involved an adult grooming and abusing boys and had required cross border, cross social work team and cross agency working. The boys had been from a number of locations across Staffordshire and had no connection to each other. These types of enquiries create an onerous workload for social work teams as they can involve large numbers of child witnesses who require interviewing where social workers support those interviews. The service area are considering any long term capacity impacts of this growing area of work.

Members heard that whilst acknowledging the work of the CSE Panels, the Ofsted focused visit had suggested consideration needed to be broadened to cover all vulnerable teenagers. The challenge was how to include the wide range of service areas and partners, considering a broadened group of vulnerable young people, in a manageable way, particularly when the existing workload of the CSE Panels resulted in Panel meetings lasting a full day. However the joined up inter-agency working of the CSE Panels had been successful and the learning and development from this way of working would help in developing the wider panel groups.

A review of transition arrangements had been undertaken for children affected by CSE. A benchmarking tool, designed by the National Working Group (NWG) that looked at multi-agency approach to safeguarding 16-18 year olds and transition, had been sent to frontline professionals. Findings would be collated by the Joint Strategic Coordinator with a multi-agency working group planned to create a position statement around the current transition arrangements and proposed next steps. The benchmarking tool and audit of transition would help ensure a consistent approach across the County. The audit was across partner agencies which added to the complexity, with data currently with the Business Analyst. The intention was to develop joint protocols across adult providers and commissioners as well as children's services.

The Care Act set out the criteria for those who should receive services post 18. Many vulnerable young people who had received services up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday did not fit the Care Act criteria and therefore, whilst being no less vulnerable, they would not qualify to receive services after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There was a need to consider preparation for adulthood at an earlier stage and also a discussion around wider transition issues. There were also difficulties in interventions post 18 as, at this age, the individual had to give consent for receiving support and/or interventions.

The Select Committee agreed that further work on transition would be beneficial. Members were informed that Newcastle had experience of working with complex children interventions and that hearing their experiences may be useful.

The Select Committee were informed that CSE Outcome Framework was currently too big to be manageable. There was a need to rationalise the data required to ensure added value and give consideration to the frequency of reporting.

Concerns were shared over possible inconsistency in the delivery of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education in schools. Efforts had been made to establish current practice and to identify any gaps in provision. The way in which PSHE was delivered was at the individual school's discretion and there were currently a variety of approaches. In particular some partners had recognised a gap in PSHE and Sex and Relationships education, around vulnerabilities such as child sexual abuse, youth violence, prevent, fire safety, road safety, substance misuse, healthy relationships and sexual health. Work was ongoing to support a more consistent approach, with the Schools Liaison Group considering this issue. The market place for suggested PSHE approaches was flooded with schools receiving conflicting messages. A consistent and well planned approach that identified clear delivery would be welcomed. Interactive sessions where young people consider how they would act in certain situations was also suggested as a positive way forward.

Members were informed that, in an area where there had been incidents of CSE, targeted work was undertaken with schools as well as with young people close to those involved. The timeliness of this targeted approach gave a relevance to the work, with the work delivered by Catch22 and the CSE Co-ordinator. The use of other forms of social media was suggested to help key messages reach young people. This was possible but would need care in how the message was delivered and the response it could generate. An excellent example of this work was the "Like a cup of Tea" video clip that looked at issues around consent. Members were also informed that the strategy of the CSE Communications Group was to be proactive rather than reactive.

**RESOLVED – That:**

- a) The progress detailed in the report be welcomed;
- b) consideration of preparation for adulthood and "transition" from children's to adult services be included on the work programme; and
- c) the video clip "Like a cup of tea" be shared with Members.

**48. Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017 - 2018**

The Select Committee received the Annual Report 2017-2018 of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board. This set out the work undertaken and the progress made by the partnership between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. Since the last annual report the SSCB had engaged in a range of activities that targeted groups of children and young people who had been identified as being vulnerable due to sexual abuse and exploitation, or to neglect as a result of parental alcohol misuse, substance misuse, parental mental health and/or domestic abuse.

Members noted that, following the Wood Report and national consultation, the Government published a revised Working Together 2018. In July 2018 the SSCB had

been successful in their bid to the DfE to become an early adopter to re-focus the work of the Board across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and to bring together six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), numerous acute trusts and community and mental health providers.

The Select Committee noted the SSCB budget was derived from contributions from a number of partners, including the Staffordshire County Council's Children's Services, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Probation, the Prison Service, CCGs, Youth Offender Service (YOS) and District Councils. There was no funding formula as such, with levels of funding from each organisation being historic and considered appropriate at the time the Board was set up. As part of the new arrangements from April 2019 it was anticipated that a funding formula would be produced. Statutory partners under the new arrangements would be the County Council, Police and the NHS. Members noted that although the six CCGs still existed, they were now working as one combined group for commissioning arrangements.

Whilst understanding that the new arrangements were being developed, Members asked for details of what the anticipated changes would be and how this Select Committee could continue in its scrutiny of the Board's work. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People offered to forward a paper to Members that had recently been shared with the SSCB. He also agreed to discuss the future scrutiny arrangements with the Chairman and Vice Chairman at the next Triangulation meeting.

Members welcomed the booklet produced by the Joint Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). Feedback from this had been very positive, with favourable comments on the new layout, format and style.

Members noted the work with taxi drivers by the District Safeguarding Subgroups. The Chairman raised concerns the Select Committee continued to have around the licensing policy of Wolverhampton City Council. Previously the Select Committee had heard from Mr Robert Simpson, Customer Services Group Manager, Stafford Borough Council, and the work of the Responsible Bodies Group who had invited representatives from Wolverhampton Council to attend their meeting to discuss their licensing approach. Mr Simpson had sent an update for Members explaining that, following concerns raised by a number of councils throughout the West Midlands Region, the Chief Environmental Health Officers Board for the region had agreed to invite Wolverhampton Council to address them. This would enable the discussions to take place whilst reducing the number of meetings Wolverhampton Council representatives had to attend. Members noted that the CSE report had informed them of a national government report on taxi licensing and private hire vehicles (PHV) published in September 2018. This document made a number of recommendations for reforming taxi and PHV licensing, including an end to cross boarder hiring.

The continued lack of regulation within Elective Home Education (EHE) was raised and the issues this could create around safeguarding. Where safeguarding issues came to light they would be investigated as any other.

The high level of fixed term exclusions was raised by Members, with 5,890 exclusions reported. There was no doubt that exclusions were rising both in Staffordshire and

nationally. The inspection by the CQC and Ofsted also highlighted this. Work was ongoing with schools and the District Inclusion Partnerships to help address this.

There had been a 19.83% increase in the number of children placed on a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time. The most common reasons for this were due to parental mental ill health or domestic abuse. Where the second or subsequent Plan was within 12 months to 2 years there may be concerns that the issues putting the child at risk originally had not been successfully resolved. The current Child Protection Data would give a more accurate reflection of the picture at present and this could be forwarded to Members after the meeting. Members were also reassured that in most cases a child who had been subject to a child protection plan would normally have a period of time on the Child in Need register or Early Help Planning rather than all services being stopped. In general Staffordshire had been lower than their statistical neighbours in this area and was now more or less in line with the national average.

14,306 incidents on the Domestic Abuse Incident Log (DIALs) had been recorded last year. Members were informed that the level of training from a Police perspective was very thorough, with children central to that training. Considerable work was currently being undertaken around this issue with data needing to be considered from a range of partners to enable a rounded picture to be established. Work had also been undertaken to hear the voice of the survivor which helped inform services going forward.

Members were aware that post March 2019 Mr John Wood, Independent Chair of the Board, would be standing down. They congratulated him on the work he had done during his time chairing the Board and thanked him for his commitment and expertise.

**RESOLVED-** That:

- a) the Independent Chairman and Members of the SSCB be congratulated on their Annual Report;
- b) the paper giving proposed new arrangements from April 2019 for the SSCB be forwarded to Select Committee Members;
- c) future scrutiny arrangements for the SSCB be discussed at the next Triangulation meeting; and,
- d) current child protection figures with respect to the number of children placed on a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time for forwarded to Select Committee Members.

**49. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board Annual Report 2017/18**

During the course of the reported year (2017-2018) in Staffordshire there had been 4908 occasions when concerns had been reported that adults with care and support needs may be at risk of, or were experiencing, abuse or neglect. The total figure had decreased by 621 occasions from the previous year. The reported average per month was 409, however there had been a reduction of nearly 50% each month from December 2017 onwards, due mainly to the change in recording practice. Of those individuals subject of a Section 42 enquiry, those aged 85-94 (26%) represented the largest cohort, closely followed by 75-84 years (25%) and 65-74 years (12%).

Neglect continued to be the most prevalent factor leading to concerns being made, followed by physical abuse. Financial abuse referrals were increasing and concerns were shared with Members that this was an under reported abuse category. Financial abuse was a new strategic priority for the Board during 2018-2021. Members queried whether banks were involved in raising issues of potential financial abuse as they may be well placed to identify concerns. DCI David Giles informed members that banks had a duty to report any fraudulent or unusual activities and that the Police received referrals from them.

The issue of recognising abuse and understanding how to report concerns was raised. Work was ongoing with engagement and prevention, with a number of communication avenues supporting this. Difficulties were also discussed around the tension between an individual's right to choose how they lived and removing that choice as a safeguarding measure. A specific case study was discussed around an individual who had choked to death and Members were informed that choking awareness training events had been held in response to this case.

The Select Committee queried whether the Board provided training for voluntary groups on abuse recognition. Whilst the Board wasn't funded to provide such training they had developed a free level 1 safeguarding package which was available on their web site. It was also suggested that, where voluntary groups were part of the Support Staffordshire umbrella, Mr Gary Jones (also a member of the SSASPB) may be able to help with appropriate training.

Members queried why transition from children to adult services was not to be a priority for the Board going forward. This had been a strategic priority for three years, with a review commissioned and LAs responding to this. Project and delivery plans were now in place and the infrastructure around transition had been recognised. It was felt that, over the three year period when transition had been one of the Board's priorities, enough work had been undertaken and assurances receive to now close the work and move to a new priority area.

**RESOLVED** – That the Annual Report 2017-2018 be received and the Board be congratulated on their report.

## **50. Work Programme**

The Select Committee received a copy of their current work programme. Members agreed the following additions:

- Ofsted Children's Services focused visit;
- SEND inspection;
- transition/preparation for adulthood and safeguarding issues throughout this process;
- care packages, the speed at which these are put in place and communication barriers between the north and south of the county; and,
- future scrutiny of the children's safeguarding board under their new arrangements.

**RESOLVED-** That the work programme be amended to include the additional items.

**51. 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:

**52. Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2018 (exemption paragraphs 4 & 5)**

**RESOLVED** - That the exempt minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 11 December 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Chairman**