

Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on 4 March 2019

Present: John Francis (Chairman)

Attendance

Ann Beech
Mike Davies
Syed Hussain

Jason Jones
Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)
Mike Worthington

Also in attendance: Gill Heath and Mark Sutton

Apologies: Trevor Johnson, Natasha Pullen and Paul Snape

PART ONE

53. Declarations of Interest

There were none at this meeting.

54. Minutes of the Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee meeting held on 22 January 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 22 January 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

55. Domestic Homicide Reviews and Emerging Themes

The Select Committee were informed that a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) was a multi-agency review of the circumstances around the death of an individual aged 16 years or older where this had (or appeared to have) resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom the individual was related, or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate relationship, or by a member of the same household as themselves. In April 2011 it became a statutory requirement for local areas to conduct a DHR following a domestic homicide, with the local Community Safety Partnership responsible for conducting the DHR and the implementation of any recommendations resulting from it.

In 2018 an analysis of DHRs in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent was commissioned by the multi-agency Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board. The Review considered outcomes from all completed DHRs across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to identify any trends or themes. Of the fourteen statutory DHRs considered, six were Staffordshire based. In addition to DHRs, Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent) had also conducted four Domestic Abuse Multi-Agency Learning Reviews (MALRs). MALRs followed the same process as DHRs, although (unlike DHRs) their final reports were not sent to the Home Office for quality

assurance and were not published. The Review therefore considered 18 reviews (DHRs and MALRs) in total.

Members received a copy of the Review summary of key findings. Of the total DHRs and MALRs in Staffordshire 3 (30%) involved male victims and 7 (70%) involved female victims. Of the 18 Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire DHRs and MALRs 6 (33%) involved male victims and 12 (67%) involved female victims. This was broadly in line with National Home Office figures published in 2016 of 50 (32%) male victims and 107 (68%) female victims.

Of the 14 Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent DHRs, seven were killed by a partner or ex-partner, six were killed by a family member and one was killed by a member of the same household, in this instance landlord/lodger. The youngest Staffordshire DHR victim was 19 years and the oldest was 73, with victims in their 40s being the most prevalent age group. In Stoke-on-Trent the prevalence was for ages 30-50. The most common method of killing the victim in Staffordshire was by stabbing, whilst the most common method in Stoke-on-Trent was via blunt force, with or without a weapon.

For all DHRs in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent the ethnicity of the perpetrators was White British. The ethnicity of the victims was White British for 12 cases, with two cases recorded as having Asian victims. Members asked for clarification of the ethnicity of the two victims recorded as Asian, asking if these were British Asian. These cases had been Stoke-on-Trent based and Officers agreed to clarify this after the meeting.

Members were informed that an action plan was produced as part of each DHR which looked at how any recommendations made would be implemented. The Community Safety Partnership in the area where the victim lived was responsible for monitoring the implementation of any recommendations made in a timely manner. Where the Partnership had concerns over recommendation implementation they could refer their concerns to the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Domestic Abuse Strategy had considered learning from reviews and looked to address these. In particular consideration had been given to the prevalence of mental health issues and substance misuse. The Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board had endorsed the commissioning of services that promoted prevention, including work around healthy relationships at an early age.

As part of any DHR or MALR, those agencies involved would be expected to undertake a review of their role and actions in relation to the subjects of the review. Members had some concerns over the thoroughness of a review where this was completed by the agency themselves. Members were informed that each agency's review was undertaken by an individual who had not been involved in the case and who had no line management responsibility for those staff involved. Each agency's review of their role was then considered by an independent panel who would consider it objectively. The Chair of a review was independent and often subject specialists relevant to the case would be included on the Review Panel.

Members also heard that the DHR and MALR cases were spread across the County, with no hot spot areas of particular concern. There was only one area that had not yet had cause to conduct either a DHR or a MALR, that being Lichfield.

Members heard details of victim support services and services to help address offenders' behaviour. Both services were delivered under the brand name of New Era.

Whilst the Review had necessarily been considering published DHRs and completed MALRs, and therefore the information was historic, Members heard that the issues presenting in DHRs currently underway were not dissimilar to those highlighted in the Review.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the learning from DHRs and the way in which this learning is used be supported; and
- b) clarification over the ethnicity of the two domestic homicide Asian victims be forwarded to Members.

56. Prevent

In Staffordshire the implementation of Prevent was overseen by a multi-agency Prevent Board, chaired by the County Council's Commissioner for Safety and Families. The Prevent Board reported to the Staffordshire Contest Board, which oversaw all of the counter-terrorism strands of activity and was chaired by Staffordshire Police.

The Select Committee were informed that the Prevent Board was the mechanism by which the quality of progress in relation to Prevent delivery was monitored, impact assessed, and challenges identified and addressed. A refreshed Prevent Delivery Plan had been presented to the Prevent Board in October 2018. The Plan had been reviewed and updated to reflect the national Contest Strategy (2018), the recommendations within the Staffordshire Counter Terrorism Local Profile (2018) and relevant local activity. Members also heard details of how the delivery Plan was actioned through partnership working. They also noted that Staffordshire's partnership arrangements had been recognised as good practice and were referenced as a case study within the Home Office "Prevent Duty Toolkit for Local Authorities".

Members received details of school responses to the specific Prevent related questions which had been included in the mandatory audit of schools undertaken by the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board. Around 85% had actioned all of the requirements with regard to their Prevent Duty. 2% had been unable to confirm that they had all the expected elements in place and Officers were working with these schools to address this. Equally follow-up action would be taken with those schools who had not responded to the survey to ensure they were aware of and addressing their Prevent responsibilities.

Members raised the issue of online safety and shared their concerns over how radicalisation could be prevented on-line. They were informed that this was part of a broader safeguarding agenda looking at Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), gangs and radicalisation. Work was being undertaken with schools and other agencies looking at how to keep children and young people safe on line. Schools were also encouraged to address these issues, with Ofsted expecting schools to be able to account for how safe their children were on line. Work was also ongoing around community engagement, with schools having a key role to play in this. Members noted concern was around the growth

in home grown extremists, including those on the far right, and the vital importance that no one community should feel unfairly scrutinised but that all communities should feel supported.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the ongoing work around the implementation of Prevent be noted; and
- b) an update report be brought in 12 months time outlining the progress and developments made around Prevent in Staffordshire.

57. Youth Offending Service (YOS) Review

In 2017 the Cabinet requested a review of the Staffordshire Youth Offending Service (SYOS) to reflect both the changing landscape of the Youth Justice System and the decreasing caseloads. A reduction in staff was identified, with formal consultation with Unions from 25 July 2018. Subsequently all job descriptions were reviewed and evaluated to ensure they met the needs of Staffordshire's children, families and communities. Members received details of the revised staff structure, which had removed a layer of management and reduced the overall management posts. The revised structure included Senior Practitioners (Youth Justice), Social Workers (Youth Justice) and Practitioners (Youth Justice) who would continue to perform the same roles and responsibilities, following small changes to the job descriptions and person specifications. The number of social worker posts would be retained (reflecting the complexity of the children accessing this service). Practitioner and senior practitioner posts had been reduced.

The changes also enabled the SYOS to achieve its agreed contribution to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) of £300,000 savings in 2018/18 and a further £100,000 in 2018/19. This was in addition to the £100,00 reduction in 2016/17.

The new structure was due to be implemented on 15 March 2019 and Members heard that when compared with other YOS, Staffordshire still had some flexibility within the system and that case loads should remain manageable. The changes would be reviewed in September 2019 to ensure that the new structure was effective.

Members asked for a brief description of the role of each individual job title within the YOS structure. A brief overview was given but Member's asked that a note be forwarded to them after the meeting for future reference.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the actions completed to achieve the MTFS savings be noted;
- b) the reasons for the YOS review be understood;
- c) a briefing note identifying the role of each job title post within the new YOS structure be forwarded to Members for their reference; and
- d) details of the outcome of the September 2019 review be brought to the select Committee's December 2019 meeting.

58. Children's Centre Visits

In September 2014 Members of the Select Committee had undertaken visits to 41 of the 52 Children's Centres in Staffordshire to review their effectiveness and had produced a

report and recommendations for the Cabinet Member's consideration. Following on from this work Select Committee Members visited Staffordshire's Children's Centres during September and October 2018 to consider the changes and developments made since their 2014 review.

In general Members were pleased to see that there was now a clear Strategy for Early Years and that Children's Centres were being well used. Two key findings resulted from these visits. The first was around the provision of Wi-Fi in the Centres, which had been reported to, and immediately responded to by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families. The second key finding was regarding a request for an update on the operation of the 0-19 Health Visiting contract. A presentation had been arranged at this meeting to address this request.

RESOLVED: That the final report and recommendations of the Committees' Early Years – Follow-Up Visits to Children's Centres be endorsed.

59. 0-19 Health Visiting Contract

To address one of the key findings from the Children's Centres visits, Members received a presentation from Kate Cox, Lead Manager, Children's Services, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, on the 0-19 Health Visiting contract.

The presentation outlined the new approach to commissioning these services, providing high quality care for children and young people from 0-19 years, rather than the historically separated health visitor and school nurse service approach. Eventually the work of the Children's Centres would also be brought together with health visiting and school nurse services for the benefit of local families. The new approach ensured the most appropriate skilled member of staff was supporting families appropriately. They also received details of the universal services, the graded response and specialist services for those at greatest risk.

Members were pleased to note that, among other key reviews/visits, the individual home antenatal visits would continue under the new system. Members received details of the referral systems and information Hubs that supported families with information, guidance and coordinated referrals. From the two advice Hubs approximately 300 calls were dealt with each day. The Select Committee welcomed details of the new service and congratulated officers on their outline of the programme. They asked that a copy of the slides be forwarded to them after the meeting for reference.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

60. Work Programme

The Select Committee received a copy of their current work programme. There were a number of outstanding items on their 2018-2019 work programme and Members considered how these would be addressed, with some likely to be referred to Health Scrutiny, some transferred to the new 2019/2020 work programme and some undertaken by a working group.

RESOLVED: That proposals for addressing the outstanding work programme items be noted.

Chairman