

Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on 15 January 2018

Present: John Francis (Chairman)

Attendance

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

Also in attendance: Gill Heath

Apologies: Natasha Pullen, Mark Sutton and Alan White

PART ONE

1. Declarations of Interest

There were none at this meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 November 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 9 November 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3. Domestic Abuse

Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) jointly commission Domestic Abuse (DA) services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The OPCC acted as lead commissioner, with services including provision for victims, perpetrators, children and young people.

The Select Committee were informed that whilst DA services went out to tender in January 2017, no contract had been awarded as the bids received had not fully met the service specification. A retendering process was underway, with services expected to be in place by October 2018. Members heard the Funding Agreements had been extended with three commissioned Staffordshire DA Support Service providers (Arch, Pathway and Staffordshire Women's Aid) to continue with existing provision until the new services were in place in 2018. They also received details of the governance and funding arrangements.

Members queried the cost of the continuation of existing provision and were informed that there had been no gap in provision, with services provided on the same basis and at the same level of funding as before. Officers were now able to report that the Domestic Perpetrator Programme had also been extended until the newly tendered service began.

At the time the report was written in November 2017 the annual value of the new commissioned DA services for victims and perpetrators (from October 2018) was still to be confirmed but would be at least £1,836,000 per annum, of which the County Council's financial contribution would be £600,000 per annum with £421,000 from Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The services went out to tender in December 2017 and the re-tendering period would be at least twelve weeks and there would be a three month mobilisation period. The Select Committee queried why the initial tendering process had been unsuccessful and what had been changed in readiness for the second tendering process. The initial bids hadn't met the service specification and officers had felt they were not strong enough for them to commit public money. Discussions had taken place after this with organisations to assess how they had found the tendering process and their comments had been taken on board and factored into the new process. More detailed information had been made available to organisations interested in bidding in the second process, with two market engagement events prior to the re-tendering to help inform potential bidders. The engagement leading up to the second tender had been encouraging and officers were hopeful that this time the process would be successful.

Members noted that the total Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) demand for April 2016-March 2017 was 2247 and there had been 447 MARAC cases within the first quarter of 2017-2018. Data indicated an upward trend in respect of repeat cases and Members asked for more detailed figures on this issue to enable them to see the extent of the upward trend. They also raised the issue of stalking, some concerns that the Police may not always take this issue seriously and the destructive impact this can have on victims. They asked for more details and figures on the extent of the issue in Staffordshire. Officers agreed to contact Staffordshire Police and to provide data on both the upward trend in repeat cases of DA and incidents of stalking. This data will be forwarded to Members after the meeting.

On enquiry Members heard that the DA Perpetrator Programme in Staffordshire was provided by Core Assets Children's Services Ltd. The programme worked to the Respect guidelines and was the first programme of its type in Staffordshire. The Programme had been run for male perpetrators aged 16 years and over, however the new tendered programme would be for both male and female perpetrators. Most referrals were made via partner agencies, however self-referrals could also be made. No charge was made for participating in the programme and participation is voluntary. Members heard that the current Core Assets perpetrator programme was open to, amongst others, men with a child or children on a Child Protection Plan.

Members were aware that two years ago the OPCC, led by the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), had agreed to undertake a piece of work on DA. They asked whether this work had been completed and requested a copy of the findings. DA had been a key priority for the OPCC, with the PCC investing in services. Much work had been undertaken to improve the governance and communication around this issue, including the establishment of the Domestic Violence Commissioning and Development Board which had been running for 9 months. The Board aimed to ensure consistency of service across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. It also looked at a more holistic

approach to the issue, including education through the healthy relationship programme delivered through PHSE (Personal, Health, Social & Economic) in schools.

Members noted the 'Project Doing More' had moved to an implementation phase on 1 February 2016 which effectively improved the MASH model and significantly reduced the challenge of case backlogs compared to what partners had previously experienced.

The Select Committee heard details of the October 2017 Pilot launched in Tamworth which adopted the principles set out in the MARAC review for a different way of working. This in essence meant that domestic abuse cases would be discussed daily in the Multi-Agency Team (MAT) meetings and that MARAC cases would be initially actioned on a daily basis but reviewed against additional information from the MASH on a weekly basis to ensure that a multi-agency plan was effective and delivering appropriate safety for victims and their family. The method and outcomes would be evaluated with a view to formulating a business case for further adoption and roll out. In the meantime MARAC in its traditional form would continue elsewhere. The Select Committee also noted the project board had reviewed the position in November 2017 to ensure that service delivery met the assumptions of the project and that close liaison was being maintained with the OPCC in relation to the commissioning of services in 2018. A full business case was expected to be provided by April 2018 and Members asked to see this business case once this was available.

Members considered the technology challenges faced by the Police and were aware of OPCC funding to address this. They asked how this had been used. This was a question for the OPCC's office and Officer's agreed to contact the OPCC to request this information.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the report be noted;
- b) that further information be forwarded to Members after the meeting on:
 - the figures regarding the upward trend in repeat cases of DA;
 - the figures of stalking incidents in Staffordshire;
 - the full business case following the Tamworth Pilot Project once this became available;
 - details of Police technology challenges and how these are addressed; and,
 - the Deputy OPCC report on DA following the piece of work undertaken two years ago.

4. SSCB Annual Report 2016-17

[John Wood, Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Chairman, in attendance for this item]

The Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is the key statutory mechanism that brings together representatives of each of the main agencies and professionals responsible for promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people. The SSCB must report annually on progress made to provide a transparent, public account of its work. The Select Committee now considered the SSCB Annual Report for 2016-17.

Members received details of the key priorities and actions that would drive the Board activity over the next twelve months around early help, neglect and child sexual abuse.

On querying whether the Board was satisfied that Staffordshire's safeguarding thresholds for services and intervention were fit for purpose the SSCB Chairman felt that they were. He referred Members to the recent Ofsted of Children's Services, which had rated the services as good. The Ofsted inspection process was very robust and part of this process was to test the "front door" to test service access, thresholds and consistency. The one front door concept was important in helping to ensure consistency.

Members asked whether the rise in the number of Staffordshire children in the Looked After Care system echoed the national picture. There was an increase in the number of children in the care system nationally with variances between authorities. Within the Midlands most authorities had seen a rise in numbers, other than those whose numbers were already high, with some external factors impacting on the increase. Whilst in recent years the rise in numbers had predominantly been amongst young teenagers, more recently the rise had been with children in the 0-4 years age bracket, with many more complex cases being seen.

The report noted that the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Coordinator, who played an important role in driving the CSE agenda across Staffordshire, had been reviewed and extended to January 2018 with funding provided by the Staffordshire PCC. Members were now informed that a further 18 months funding had been made available by the OPCC for the CSE Co-ordinator.

Members noted the work to ensure that all children and young people had equal access to information about how to keep themselves safe regardless of where they lived in the county and what education provision they accessed. Parents and carers should also receive consistent messages about how to help keep their children safe and education staff should know about local multi-agency arrangements or learning that helped them to fulfil their critical safeguarding role. Members noted that whilst some good work had been undertaken, further action was required to help to build on this to ensure a consistent approach across the county.

Schools had an important part to play in the safeguarding of young people, including their PHSE programme and the role of their designated safeguarding officer.

Members raised concerns over un-registered schools and were informed that there was no intelligence to suggest there were any un-registered schools in Staffordshire. However there may be some Staffordshire young people who attended un-registered schools in other counties.

Members raised concerns regarding the number of private children's homes in Staffordshire Moorlands and were assured that these must be registered with Ofsted as fit for purpose. Members also asked if there was a robust system in place for dealing with children missing out on education and were assured that this was the case although Members were concerned at the level of resources committed to this area of work.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the report to understand the role and function of Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board be received; and
- b) the Board's progress and thorough annual report be commended.

5. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board - Annual Report 2016/17

[John Wood, Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Adult Partnership Safeguarding Partnership Board Chairman, in attendance for this item.]

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board had a duty to publish an annual report which set out the work undertaken and progress made by the Board. The Select Committee now considered the Annual Report of 2016/17.

The report highlighted a 25% increase in reports of safeguarding concerns in Staffordshire, from 4393 to 5529. Members were informed that this was in part due to raised awareness of what constituted abuse and neglect and how to report incidents, whilst there remained a belief that safeguarding was still underreported. The majority of individuals for whom concerns were raised were aged 65 years and over (66%) with physical support needs. 28% of concerns reported were in connection with those aged 85 years and above.

Evidence showed that when abuse or neglect occurred it most frequently took place in the person's own home or residential care home, with the perpetrator being an individual who was known to them. Approximately one in four reported safeguarding concerns related to people in positions of trust. 26% of concerns were about neglect, 26% were in relation to physical abuse, 20% financial abuse, 14% psychological or emotional abuse, 8% domestic abuse and 3% sexual abuse.

Members queried the recruitment practices of some larger care companies, citing examples of inadequate and rushed training. Members felt strongly that those receiving care deserved to be treated with dignity and respect and they queried whether the Board had similar concerns over the training of care providers. Whilst the training provided was at the discretion of the independent companies who employed the individual care workers, if there were any safeguarding concerns these would be challenged. Where companies were found to have practices that were problematic this information was shared with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). If a pattern of concerns was identified a quality visit was undertaken and where necessary an improvement plan was produced. If any such improvement plan was not implemented successfully the County Council would cease to use the provider. Quality of providers was tracked and this information was shared amongst authorities and with NHS colleagues.

The Select Committee shared concerns that whilst there had been a national recognition of the ageing demographics within the UK population, very little had been done to address this. In particular Members felt there needed to be a long term plan to identify and address the needs of the ageing population. They were informed that there was a 3-5 year time line which helped identify gaps in service provision and address these. An

example of this was an identified shortage in dementia nursing and work was already underway to address this.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the work of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSASPB) noted; and
- b) the Board be commended on the thoroughness of their Annual Report.

6. Work Programme

The Scrutiny Manager highlighted the following areas of their work programme:

- the Edge of Care inquiry session had been set up for 30 January;
- the Elective Home Education review group had held its initial meeting to brief Members. Cllr Paul Snape had been appointed as Chairman. Mr Snape reported on progress so far. A planning meeting was scheduled for 31 January with the inquiry session scheduled for 21 March; and
- Members had now received the briefing note on hard to reach communities.

Members also asked for the following additional pieces of work to be included on the work programme going forward:

- further work on domestic abuse with consideration being given to a review in the new municipal year; and
- concerns over a perceived rise in crime and lack of both Police Officers or PCSOs. The Chairman asked Members to forward details of concerns within their areas to the Scrutiny Manager with a view to requesting the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to attend a special Select Committee meeting to address safeguarding concerns raised.

RESOLVED – That the amendments to the work programme be noted.

7. 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 Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

8. Home Care

The Select Committee considered the report on Home Care.
(exemption paragraph 3)

Chairman