

## **Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 July 2021**

### **Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service**



**Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said,**

“Protecting children from exploitation is, and always will be, a priority for this authority.

As the forms of exploitation evolve, so our response and preventative work change too and the newly commissioned service will provide a layered approach to support children and their families, which will aim to intervene and improve situations at an early stage.”

#### **Report Summary:**

Protecting children from Child Exploitation has been, and remains, a priority for Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire Children's Safeguarding Board. Child Exploitation can have a devastating impact on children and their families with Child Exploitation been inclusive of Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Gangs, County Lines, Knife Crime, Youth Violence, Modern Slavery, Child Trafficking & Radicalisation.

This Cabinet Report seeks to outline the commissioning intentions of Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner in relation to the development of a Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service. The proposed commissioning intentions seek to contribute to a whole-system approach to the delivery of the priorities set out in the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Child Exploitation Strategy.

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Endorses the commissioning intentions of Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner Office in relation to the development of a Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service.
- b. Approves the procurement of a Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service by Staffordshire County Council, on behalf of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.
- c. Delegates decisions in relation to the Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service to the Cabinet Member for Children and

Young People in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities.

- d. Acknowledges that the delegation to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People includes acting on behalf of the County Council to finalise the Joint Commissioning Deed of Agreement and the entering of required contractual arrangements with the successful bidder.

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

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#### **Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:**

I recommend that Cabinet:

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- c. Delegates decisions in relation to the Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People’s Service to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities.
- d. Acknowledges that the delegation to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People includes acting on behalf of the County Council to finalise the Joint Commissioning Deed of Agreement and the entering of required contractual arrangements with the successful bidder.

#### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities**

##### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

##### **Context:**

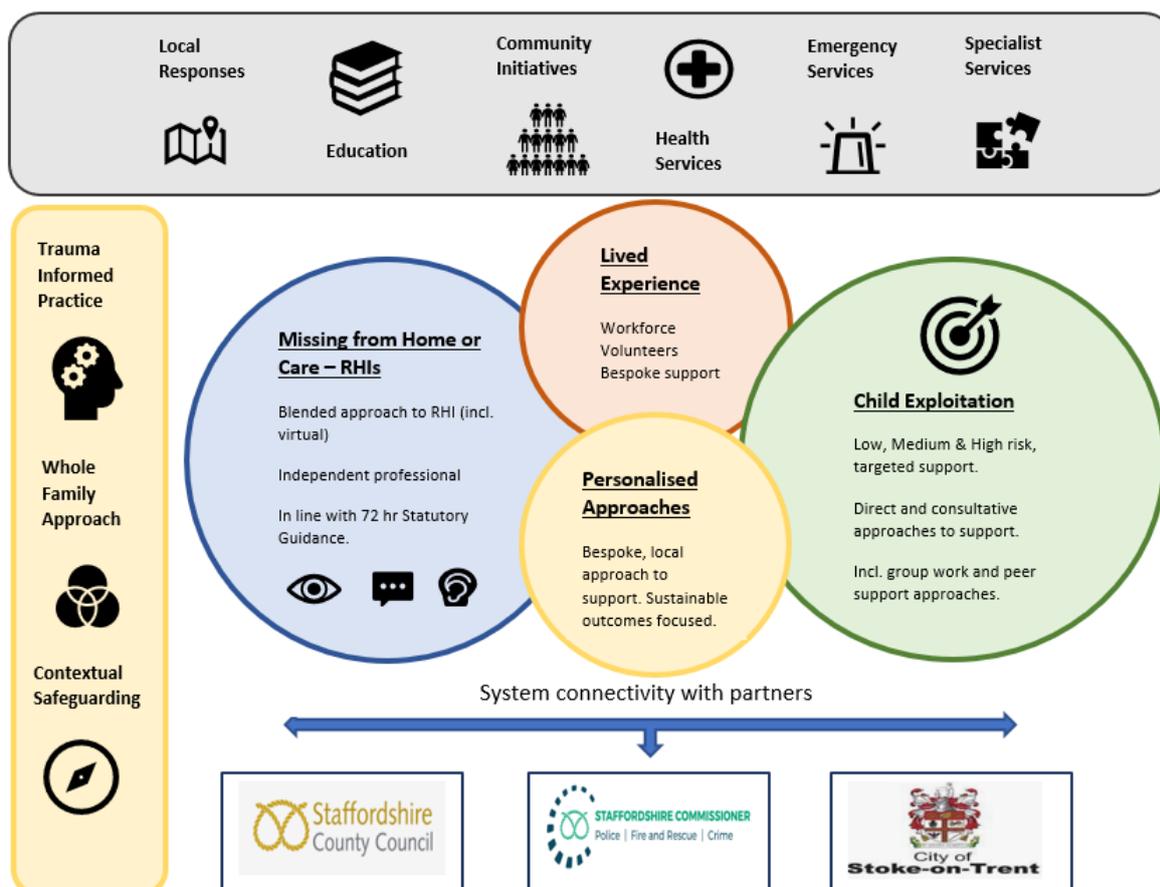
1. Protecting children from Child Exploitation has been, and remains, a priority for Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire Children’s Safeguarding Board. Child Exploitation can have a devastating impact on children and their families with Child Exploitation being inclusive of Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Gangs, County Lines, Knife Crime, Youth Violence, Modern Slavery, Child Trafficking & Radicalisation.
2. The Staffordshire Children’s Safeguarding Board and the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Board have coproduced a Joint Child Exploitation Strategy which seeks to outline the local approach to preventing, identifying, and tackling Child Exploitation. This Strategy was developed using an extensive local needs analysis, building upon national policy and guidance about effective practice. The Strategy

also recognises and addresses the risks and vulnerabilities faced by children and young people who go missing.

3. During Spring/Summer 2021, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner commissioned Catch22 to deliver a Pan-Staffordshire Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service. Catch22, who commenced service delivery in September 2017, were awarded the contract, following a substantial period of analysis, research, design and procurement.
4. On 1st April 2021, Catch22 are entering the final year of delivery under the current procurement arrangements led by Stoke-on-Trent City Council. To ensure continued compliance with appropriate Procurement Regulations, the Partnership have undertaken a further substantial period of analysis, research and design to co-produce future commissioning intentions relating to Child Exploitation and Missing Children and Young People. The Partnership are also proposing to work together with the incumbent Provider to develop a transition plan to reflect the proposed commissioning intentions outlined within this Cabinet Report.
5. Staffordshire County Council has agreed to be the lead for the future commissioning arrangements relating to Child Exploitation & Missing Children & Young People. In consideration to this, the County Council is leading a Joint Commissioning Group which includes Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioners Office.

#### **Future Commissioning Intentions:**

6. Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioners Office are proposing to commission a Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation & Missing Children and Young People Service. The proposed Service will see the Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Children & Young People Service Model reconfigured to be inclusive of all forms of "Exploitation", as outlined in the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Child Exploitation Strategy.
7. It is proposed that the Service will consist of four core elements. Each component will interlink with the other to ensure that the need and voice of a child is centric to any support that is provided within the Service and across wider partnerships. The Service will adopt a whole family approach to empower families in achieving their goals with the aim of sustaining long term change and stability. Outlined below is a diagram that outlines the four main Service components, Service principles and connectivity with partners.



- a. **Missing from Home or Care Offer:** The Service will facilitate all independent Return Home Interviews (RHI) for missing children and young people aged up to 18 years residing in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This includes children or young people cared for in Staffordshire who are the Corporate Parenting responsibility of another Local Authority (in some circumstances the other Local Authority will undertake the RHI where it is appropriate). The interview is an opportunity to gather information from the individual and to identify root cause factors which have contributed to the incident. It also aims to protect and prevent further missing episodes. This Service will be delivered in line with statutory Department for Education (DfE) Guidance.
- b. **The Child Exploitation Offer:** The Service will seek to work together with children, young people and their Families who are identified at risk of Child Exploitation. The Service will provide a flexible approach that aims to reduce the risk of Child Exploitation through a range of approaches which are facilitated across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- c. **Lived Experience Offer:** The Service will build upon evidence-based good practice, to grow Lived Experience Mentors who will be utilised to develop contact and relationship with children, young people and their families to encourage engagement in the Service. The Lived Experience Offer would be underpinned by a robust infrastructure of support to reflect the sensitive nature of the proposed offer. This would seek to ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection of children, young people, their families and the Lived Experience Mentors.

- d. Personalised Approaches: The Service will adopt a Place Based Approach Model to utilise the provisions within local communities and will strive to connect children, young people and their families to diversionary activities and resources that will ensure long term, sustainable change, and resilience.
8. Commissioning Intentions for the Child Exploitation & Missing Children and Young People Service were coproduced with a range of stakeholders including children and their families. The Commissioning Intentions are underpinned by a Joint Strategic Needs Analysis.

### **Proposed Commissioning Approach:**

9. It is proposed that the County Council will act as the Lead Commissioner, on behalf of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioners Office. This Joint Commissioning Model will be underpinned through a Deed of Agreement, developed by Staffordshire's Legal Services.
10. It is proposed that the County Council will facilitate a Procurement Process to seek a single lead provider for a contractual period of three years with the option to extend for a further two twelve-month periods.

### **Legal Implications**

11. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on Local Authorities and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals.
12. Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires Local Authorities and other named statutory partners to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes planning to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do. Through their inspections of local authority children's services, Ofsted will include an assessment of measures with regard to missing children as part of their key judgement on the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.
13. To commission the Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation & Missing Children and Young People Service, the Partners will be required to enter a formal Deed of Agreement. This Deed of Agreement is currently under development by Staffordshire Legal Services in consultation with the Legal & Governance Representatives of each Partner.
14. The agreement will have a three-year initial period. Any extension beyond the initial period of three years will be agreed, subject to each Partner's respective internal governance decisions to avoid automatic expiry.
15. In the unlikely event that a Partner seeks to leave the Joint Commissioning Arrangement, the Partner will be liable for any incurred expenditure, and in accordance with the Deed of Agreement will be required to negotiate the exit from

the Service with the County Council (as the Lead Commissioner) and the commissioned provider.

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

16. The County Council have led the development of a Joint Finance & Resources Formula, which has been underpinned by a Joint Strategic Needs Analysis. This Formula also ensures that each Partner contributes the appropriate level of financial contribution to the Service which reflects the Partner's agreed commitment.
17. The Joint Finance & Resources Formula ensures that appropriate funding within the commissioning arrangement is ringfenced to deliver the Service within the eight districts of Staffordshire, benefitting local residents. Prospective bidders will be required to clearly account for how the ringfenced budget will be utilised within both the County and City.
18. The County Council is leading dialogue with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioners Office to confirm the fixed value of the Contract and the contributions of each Partner.
19. It is anticipated that the annual value of the Contract will be £1,050,345 with the total anticipated value being £5,252,625. It is anticipated that the annual value of £570,795 will be ringfenced for the delivery of the Service in Staffordshire with £479,550 ringfenced for the City of Stoke-on-Trent.
20. This is subject to the endorsement and agreement of each Partner through the appropriate Governance.
21. The County Council's contribution is anticipated to be £238,475 with the remaining contribution made by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioners Office.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Oversight**

22. The proposed Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation & Missing Children and Young People Service was considered by Members of the Safeguarding Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting (formerly Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee) held on 22nd April 2021.
23. The Committee recognised the importance of building upon the existing model to extend the scope of the Service moving forward.
24. The Committee endorsed the emerging Commissioning Intentions of the Partnership, inviting further Oversight and Scrutiny, following the mobilisation of the Service.
25. The Committee wished for the Joint Commissioning Group to reconfigure the Performance and Data Reporting relating to Missing Children and Young People. This request of the Committee will be taken forward through the proposed commissioning arrangement.

## Conclusion

26. The Joint Commissioning Group will continue to develop the Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation & Missing Children and Young People Service Model and Service Specification, underpinned by the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis.
27. The Partners of the Joint Commissioning Group will conclude dialogue to confirm the fixed value of the Contract and the contributions of each Partner.
28. Decisions relating to the Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities.
29. The Pan-Staffordshire Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service will be in place by the Autumn 2022, subject to the delegated decisions of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities.

## Contact Details

**Assistant Director:** Natasha Moody, Assistant Director, Families & Communities Commissioning

### Joint Report Authors:

**Report Author:** Joseph Sullivan  
**Job Title:** Senior Commissioning Manager  
**Telephone No.:** 07866 913434  
**E-Mail Address:** [joseph.sullivan@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:joseph.sullivan@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Report Author:** Sarah Newton  
**Job Title:** Commissioning Officer  
**Telephone No.:** 01785 895160  
**E-Mail Address:** [sarah.newton@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.newton@staffordshire.gov.uk)