

**Minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee Meeting held on
13 June 2017**

Present: John Francis (Chairman)

Attendance

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

Also in attendance: Mark Sutton

PART ONE

1. Declarations of Interest

There were none at this meeting.

2. Minutes of the Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee held on 6 March 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee held on 6 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3. Introduction to the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

The Select Committee received a presentation by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities which outlined the areas for scrutiny across the Select Committee's remit. Members were reminded that select committees were themed around County Council outcomes and therefore didn't sit exactly within the work of one directorate. However a large proportion of the work of this Select Committee was within the Families and Communities Directorate and covered children's social care, children and families commissioning, community safety and regulatory services. The Select Committee's remit also covered safer roads partnership and adult safeguarding.

Members heard details of the work within children's social care, including:

- a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year emergency and out of hours service;
- the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which brought together a range of partners from social care, health and the Police. The Staffordshire MASH was very highly regarded and it was suggested that Members may find a visit beneficial to understanding the type of work undertaken there;
- services across the continuum and the four tier levels of support around: early help (2776 families); children in need (4897 cases); child protection (545 children); Looked After Children (994 children); and children with disability (492 children);

- the areas within the Looked After Children's Services, which included fostering, adoption, residential care, respite and kinship care and the role of both the Virtual School and the Corporate Parent;
- Looked After Children and the various targeted Preventative Services which included intensive prevention, family group conferencing, intensive prevention support services and the Breathing Space project; and
- Youth Offending Services (YOS) and the YOS Board. Staffordshire's YOS had recently been given 22 out of 24 stars for this service, which is believed to be the highest rating achieved so far nationally.

Members heard that within Children's Commissioning, work included child health and wellbeing 0-19 and the work of Children's Centres, Health Visitors and the School Nurse. Commissioning was also around:

- Early help intervention;
- Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) (Staffordshire's version of the national Troubled Families programme);
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Service. Missing episodes could include children missing from home, school or care, with any episode explored to identify whether it was symptomatic of the individual being drawn into behaviours with serious safeguarding consequences;
- the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework;
- Sustain+, which offered mental health support for children and their families within the looked after system;
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) pathways;
- Locality based commissioning which was pertinent to a specific area's need, such as BRFC;
- People Helping People through the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) contract; and
- Supporting the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, where the aim was to increase the level of reporting whilst decreasing the level of repeat reported as a result of effective intervention.

Members noted that Children, Young People and Families Services were being significantly reshaped to ensure a sustainable set of future services. The proposed re-design was being considered by Cabinet at their meeting of 21 June, with the proposals coming to the July Select Committee meeting. Members had some concerns over decisions being made by Cabinet prior to the Select Committee scrutinising proposals. Whilst acknowledging that this was not ideal, it had been agreed with the Select Committee Chairman as due to the local elections, no timely Committee meetings had taken place. Members were also informed that this issue had previously been brought to the Select Committee as the reshaping processes developed and that there would still be an opportunity to comment and make recommendations on the developing services.

The Community Safety Agreement partnership priorities were informed by strategic assessment of risk and threat, based on intelligence, and these were shared with Members. Members also received details of Regulatory Services within the remit of the Committee, including the work of Trading Standards and the Public Analyst and Scientific Services.

There were a number of annual scrutiny items that were considered by the Select Committee and Members received details of these, including the Staffordshire Safeguarding Board Annual Reports for both children and adults.

The Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) was another area of work for this Select Committee and Members received details of the strategic vision, objectives and partnership plans. Staffordshire continued to have some of the safest roads in the Country and were currently rated the second safest in the Country.

Mr Stuart James, Lead Officer for Safeguarding Adults, outlined the work of the Adult Safeguarding Team. In particular Members heard details of the West Midlands Peer Review which had taken place during January and February 2017. Members requested that a report on this review be included on their work programme.

Members noted that “localism” was an area of work for the Select Committee and asked for clarification as to what this work covered. Community capacity and the People Helping People approach was the way in which localism was now referred to and much of this work was considered by the Corporate Review Committee as it was a more strategic and cross cutting area of work.

Members raised concerns over the difficulties that could be faced in encouraging reporting of domestic violence or CSE amongst some communities where culture inhibited them from accessing this support. Hard to reach communities were acknowledged as a challenge, however Members were assured that those services were available to all and that awareness raising and education was key in challenging behaviours. It was important that communities were given confidence that this sort of behaviour was unacceptable and that reported incidents would be dealt with effectively. Evidence showed there was underreporting from some communities and work was needed to remove the internal inhibitors from some hard to reach communities. The issue of modern day slavery was also one where communities needed the reassurance that reported incidents would be appropriately addressed.

The Member for Burton Trent shared his concerns at the difficulties in reporting faced within some of the communities he represents. It was suggested that he may benefit from a visit to the Burton Social Work Team to see the breadth of work they do and specifically how they approach issues around hard to reach communities. The Vice Chairman requested that he be included in the visit.

The Select Committee thanked the Officers for a comprehensive presentation.

RESOLVED – That: a) the presentation be noted;
b) a link to the Staffordshire Children’s Safeguarding website be forwarded to Select Committee Members;
c) a visit to the MASH be organised for Select Committee Members;
d) a report on the Adult Safeguarding West Midlands Peer Review be included on the work programme;
e) that a visit be arranged to the Burton Social Work Team for the Member for Burton Trent and the Vice-Chairman.

4. Developing the Work Programme

The Scrutiny and Support Manager presented a report on work programme planning which set out the remit of the Select Committee, considered methods of scrutiny and looked at work previously considered by this committee.

Members requested the following be included on their work programme:

- the West Midlands Peer Review of Adult Safeguarding;
- how to engage with hard to reach communities;
- modern day slavery and domestic violence; and
- CSE.

Having given consideration to the information received at this meeting Members were asked to contact either the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Scrutiny and Support Manager with any requests for items to be included on the work programme.

RESOLVED – That the items listed above be included on the work programme.

Chairman