

## **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 12 September 2017 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room G3/4, Addenbrook House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT 7**

**Present:** Councillors S Barnes, E A Clare, J A Francis, E J Greenaway, K Guy (Chair), J Pinter, and co-optees and Mrs C Healy, Mrs S Fikeis, Mrs C Morgan and Mrs S Osman.

**Also Present:** Lead Cabinet Member for Children & Adults Early Help & Support – Paul Watling; Independent Chair of the T&W Safeguarding Children Board – Andrew Mason, Superintendent Tom Harding, West Mercia Police, Clive Jones: Director of Children’s and Adult Services- TWC, Jo Britton – Assistant Director Children’s Safeguarding - TWC, Sarah Constable – Partnerships Manager -TWC, J Tangye, Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer - TWC.

#### **CYPSC-05 Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs J Jones, H Rhodes and co-optees Mrs L Fowler, Mrs M Ward.

#### **CYPSC-06 Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **CYPSC-07 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee’s Review of Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Annual Progress Report by TWSCB**

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Early Help and Support, Adult and Children; and the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board to the meeting. The Cabinet Member outlined that the report demonstrated the significant progress against the recommendations from the Telford & Wrekin Council’s Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee’s *Review of Multi-Agency Working against Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)* which was published in May 2016. Members’ attention was drawn to the highlights in the report which included detail on contacts and outcomes received by the Local Authority and referrals to the specialist CATE team.

It was noted that a CSE Raising Awareness Day had been held on 17th March 2017 which had been successful in challenging misconceptions and addressing some of the perceived gaps; it focused on building cohesive communities, accurate statistical data, education and licensing. 105 people attended the event including: the statutory agencies, voluntary services, Street Pastors, Shropshire Islamic Foundation, taxi companies, housing providers and leisure services. The event was evaluated positively and some of the comments were provided in the report.

It was noted that the Telford & Wrekin licensing policy had been updated in line with Recommendation 32a; a requirement for operators to have a designated CSE contact for drivers to report concerns confidentially was incorporated in the revised Licensing Policy for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles. Additionally it was a condition of the

operator's licence that they display on the premises, information relating to CSE provided by Telford & Wrekin Council. The review of policies was completed and the conditions of licence were implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. The Board followed up by seeking assurance from West Mercia Police that disruption activity was making a difference. A report would be presented to the Board in December 2017. The Committee was concerned that there was still an issue with the licensing of taxis when taxi drivers could come to an area from anywhere. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that it was a huge concern, that neighbouring authorities had been written to where there had been concerns. CSE training had taken place in neighbouring Shropshire and Wolverhampton. During the scrutiny review it had been uncovered that there were difficulties and frustrations when reporting to the police, where pooled cars and named drivers could not be identified at a particular time. Superintendent Tom Harding confirmed that where reports had been received, these would go through the intelligence system that supported covert operations. Feedback could not possibly be provided to PSO without the possibility of compromising such operations. The police were doing more work to clamp down on suspicious car. There was still an issue around hire cars and the police were monitoring this area.

It was highlighted that the Telford & Wrekin Council's Public Health Team were working with the Severn Teaching Alliance to build into the Future in Mind programme (a teacher train the trainer course) support for schools around implementing the national changes under The Children and Social Work Act 2017 which required all educational establishments to teach Relationship and Sex Education and Personal, Social, and Health Education from September 2019. This included purchasing the Shropshire Respect Yourself Relationship and Sex Education programme which received the PSHE Association quality assurance kite mark in 2014.

The Committee noted the improvements made to the management and oversight of the CATE team; practitioner caseloads had been reviewed during individual supervision sessions, and with the provision of management oversight and direction, caseloads had been significantly reduced.

Superintendent West Mercia Police, Tom Harding, spoke of CSE as a main priority for the police force; a new Telford Police CSE team was in place and was reportedly going from strength to strength. By-monthly meetings around risk ensured that information and intelligence was shared between the Police CSE Team and the CATE team, although urgent information was continuously shared. He stated that more needed to be done in terms of problem – solving in policing in the day and night time economy. Hotel staff were being CSE awareness trained; the types of circumstances to look out for and how to be proactive, engage, challenge suspicious behaviour and flag to the police. This would be expanded to guest houses/ B&Bs and to Doormen where training and safeguarding prompts could help to identify vulnerability.

The TWSCB had worked with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to bid for some money from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to fund a post for 12 months that would look at raising awareness of CSE in the community, including parents. This was granted by the PCC in May 2017 and the post had been appointed to. The post would be monitored closely by the CSP and quarterly updates would be provided to the PCC.

The Committee was reminded that in terms of data, CSE was not a criminal offence and CSO offences were difficult to separate out. Each individual case had to be reviewed and

CSE cases extrapolated. The Police were using a broad spectrum of legislation to convict perpetrators such as the Modern Slavery Act and Human Trafficking legislation. Vehicles were being stopped and seized, licenses revoked. Data showed that out of offences committed April 2014 – to Sept 2016, 50% of CSO offences were committed by people 18 years old or under. It was noted that there was a sharp rise in electronic crimes- unwanted contact or harassment. Resources were being put into covert operations even where there was only the slightest amount of intelligence. Victims did not often perceive themselves as victims and therefore covert operations were one of the best ways to identify potential suspects.

The Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board talked of the continued efforts by the Board to drive, monitor and challenge progress. He noted that a key recommendation from the review was about understanding the scale of CSE within the Borough. Over the last 12 months the Board had worked with partners to establish a multi-agency dataset which was being used to monitor the impact of the CSE Pathway (including contact and referral numbers). He noted that the report demonstrated the strengthened ability of multi – agencies to deal with this type of crime and highlighted some key services such as the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service for 0-25 year olds which involved many organisations that gave wider access and support to young people. The ‘Tell Someone’ campaign had a dedicated website across West Mercia with bespoke solutions locally for parents, carers and young people. In a three month period, there had been 20,000 direct links to the website around CSE awareness day. There would be continued efforts to raise CSE awareness. The Board and the CATE teams were raising all agencies abilities to deal with CSE such as through delivery of training courses. A subgroup of the Board would continue to monitor and scan the horizon and identify changes to the way the crime was perpetrated, particularly with the increasing use of electronic communications. One year on, the Board would again look at the outcomes.

The Committee raised a number of concerns and questions for the Officers as follows:

Would the Chair of the Board continue to take responsibility for looking at how partnerships shared data? Was there any way to differentiate between a one-on-one attack and organised groups of perpetrators?

Operation Chalice pieced together that the perpetrators were working as an organised crime group. Work with victims was the key and the precursor was grooming and trafficking. It was acknowledged that it was important to pick this up as early as possible. It was noted that other agencies were reporting CSE such as doctors and nurses and it was noted that this was due to awareness raising which continued as part of the strategy against CSE.

It was acknowledged that it was difficult to separate out CSE from CSO crimes but one of the recommendations was to try to come up with a flagging system in the data. The Committee wanted to know how this was progressing. Superintendent Tom Harding reported that an important marker was the number of girls that the CSE team was working with, otherwise the current situation was fairly static in terms of reporting but there were no guarantees that the picture was accurate. There were numerous offences where the police were working with girls, key data was being captured on male contacts and data was cross-referenced. There was a focus on trying to identify as much CSE as possible, victims were working with the CATE team and more of an understanding and picture was being built up because of intelligence gathered on the victims’ contacts. It was particularly valuable where

victims gave the Policy permission to access their mobile phones. There was a concern about how this would be highlighted in the media as there were lots of different perceptions as to how data, evidence and convictions could be evaluated but it would be difficult to ever be in a position to demonstrate how the T&W scrutiny review had made a difference. The Cabinet Member agreed that there was no easy answer to this question because of the complex nature of the crime, it was not a numbers game. Disruption and awareness raising were key. For the future, it would be horizon scanning and ensuring CSE remained firmly on the agenda.

The Committee noted that the Board was constantly looking at new avenues for raising awareness. The Board had recognised that private and social landlords could identify problem areas, so the reach was being extended to the housing sector. The message was that safeguarding was everyone's business.

The Committee noted that communication about CSE was problematic; messages about the complexity of the crimes were difficult to get across but it was important to try to bridge the understanding of the professionals and the general public. It was understood that all child sex offending was complex; that awareness and education was centred on the warning signs of CSE and offending against children. It was important to ensure where there was unusual behaviour, individuals who were responsible for children were being inquisitive about children, using their professional curiosity, recognising the signs and reporting anything suspicious.

The Committee understood that the general public were concerned about CSE in Telford and wanted to know what it looked like in Telford. After Operation Chalice, Superintendent Tom Harding said that the general public perception of CSE was around gangs but evidence of this was no longer being found. The vast majority was now found on-line but parents were not as aware of this as they should be. The agencies were making efforts to get this message to parents; such as through the TWC Crucial Crew where new technology and keeping yourself safe was on the agenda. This had been the focus for Years 6/7 children but it was not headline grabbing news. Parental awareness was lacking but from a Community Safety Partnership perspective the funding for the new post would help with engagement across the Borough. It was positive that the PCC had supported this. The post was specifically concentrating on hard to reach areas. The Committee requested that progress be considered in another 12 months by the scrutiny committee.

The Safeguarding Children Board was having some success engaging with schools, it was accepted that progress was slow. The Future in Mind programme would help to drive change and make a difference to how schools would work in the future. Other programmes such as the PANTS campaign was actively engaged with by children and it was often children educating their peers and parents that spread the message. The same was seen at Crucial Crew in Telford and Wrekin and other counties were looking to replicate this model.

The Cabinet Member noted that there was learning across children's services through family group conferencing and that this also allowed an opportunity to share best practice on how to get the most from resources. Work was being done with victims and the families of victims to identify where there were missed opportunities to inform disruption activity. Superintendent Tom Harding stated that the Police were reviewing cases in detail to inform investigations and analysing how offending was evolving.

A question was raised about Recommendation 7b – the sexual health service, it was noted that work was ongoing. Detailed information and reports were being considered at the Board's subgroup and if it was sufficiently important, the Board would be notified.

The Committee asked for progress on Recommendation 11 – the feedback from CATE practitioners. The safety plan was now electronic. A CATE worker would go to the child and parent to complete the plan until it was completed and actions were acknowledged/ agreed. Communications between CATE workers and senior officers had improved to ensure everything tied up. The Committee agreed that it would be valuable to talk to members of the CATE team informally to get an insight into how things had improved on the ground. Superintendent Tom Harding suggested that he would be happy for members of his CSE team to meet with the Committee to talk about how the partnership with the CATE team was working.

On the Parent Support Group, a survey had shown that parents were generally happy with the support that they were getting on an individual basis but that additional support was needed for the child i.e. with anger management. It was reported that parents were not showing an appetite for a support group format. PACE had taken an innovative approach to parental support, setting up relational safeguarding and together with individual packages, the support was joined up and the offering was good. TWC had invested in a senior social worker, to work with families. IMPACT was also used as a counselling service. Families were being looked after better across all agencies since 2008. It was noted that Safeguarding Boards for both children and adults were looking at the transition from childhood to adulthood.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Officers of Telford & Wrekin, the Police CSE team, CATE Team and agencies all working in this complex and delicate area.

The Officers left the meeting at 7.27pm

### **CYPSC-08 Chair's Update**

The Chair asked Members to consider the Committee's proposed response to support the School Organisation Plan as per the Minutes of the meeting 3 July 2017. Members recalled that they had received a report on the School Organisation Plan and presentation from Officers. Questions and answers were taken during the meeting and formally recorded in the Minutes. Members had been asked to reflect on the plan and the information provided by Officers and to raise any further concerns/ or questions following the meeting. Two questions had been received and a response provided which was acceptable to the Members involved. A note of this was appended to the Minutes.

The Committee agreed that outstanding issues remained that they wished to explore and requested a briefing with the newly appointed Assistant Director responsible for School Organisation and Corporate Parenting. The Committee would be interested to receive confirmation of how the Plan was meeting the local needs of local children, there were concern that the aims of the Plan were not being delivered.

Members confirmed that they were happy with the Work programme items and plans for future meetings as per the Minutes of the meeting 3 July. It was agreed to focus on the following issues and to retain some flexibility for anything that came up during the year. Youth unemployment and NEETS would be considered via email and concerns would be raised if Members identified issues from the information/ data that would be collated and circulated. It was agreed that an update on the Ofsted Improvement Plan, following Ofsted's Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers 2016, would come to the next meeting – 6 February 2018 in order to receive it as an annual update. Education attainment would be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....