

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday 13 June 2023**

Present:- Councillor Pitchley (in the Chair); Councillors Cooksey, Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Z. Collingham, Griffin, Haleem and Monk.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Hughes and McNeely.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-  
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**83. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2023**

**Resolved:** - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 25 April 2023 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

**84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**85. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items of business on the agenda that required the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

**86. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or press.

**87. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no items of communications.

**88. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE**

The next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel was to be held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and an update from this meeting would be provided at the next Improving Lives Select Commission meeting in July. The following items were on the agenda for discussion:

- An update from the Looked After Children's Council, which included an overview of its activities, including preparations for the summer festival.
- An update on the Corporate Parenting Panel Strategy.
- An update on the regulation of sixteen plus and dispersed accommodation.
- An update on the House Project.

- An update on grant funding.
- A Performance Monitoring report which would include trend data and graphical analysis.

**89. PRESENTATION - SAMANTHA SYKES FOUNDATION TRUST**

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission in July.

**90. PRESENTATION - SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN FROM RADICALISATION**

The presentation gave an insight into safeguarding children from radicalisation. This issue was included on the Improving Lives Select Commission Work Programme in 2022/2023. The purpose of the presentation was to facilitate the scrutiny of the work that councils do with their partners, to safeguard children from radicalisation in line with the statutory duties under Prevent.

The Chair invited Emma Ellis, Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services and Carol Adamson, Community Safety Service Manager to give the presentation.

The presentation gave an overview the following content:

- Legal frameworks.
  - Partnership work and governance.
  - Referral pathways.
  - Channel programme.
  - Awareness raising and training.
  - Prevent Duty performance review and quality assurance.
  - Harms of Hate work with school.
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- Prevent was different to other counter terrorism topics, as it focused on the non-criminal space aimed at safeguarding individuals before they entered any criminality.
  - The requirements of the Prevent Duty were a result of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 which required local authorities to lead on prevention work and co-operate in partnership working. The duty applied to public bodies including schools, education, and childcare providers. It also stated that public bodies must have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
  - An important part of the duty was providing adequate training to staff to enable them to spot any associated risks and provide the required support.

- For schools, the duty ensured a focus on safeguarding and protecting students from extremist ideas and building resilience by ensuring a strong school ethos, strong values and by providing a safe space for debate in schools so that young people could develop critical thinking skills.
- In relation to governance structures for counter terrorism duties, there was the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board, which had three subgroups underneath. These subgroups were the Prevent Partners Group, the Channel Panel and the Protect and Prepare Group. All groups had links to the South Yorkshire Contest Board, the Safeguarding Adults Board and Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- There was an annual counter terrorism local profile that set key areas of risk and a quarterly counter terrorism policing briefing which identified risks, threats and referrals.
- There was a local prevent risk assessment based on the counter terrorism local profile, which was completed every year with partners at the Prevent Partners Group. This risk assessment was based on what structures, safeguards and mitigations were in place and analysed any potential gaps. The results of the local prevent risk- assessment directly informed the Partnership Prevent Plan.
- Quarterly performance reports were also provided to The Safer Rotherham Partnership Board and annual updates were reported to the Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards.
- The Channel Duty formed a key part of Prevent and was a multi-agency approach in the non-criminal space, which aimed to identify and provide support to individuals who were at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The referral pathways adopted a check and share model, which trained the relevant employees to understand signs of vulnerabilities and susceptibility to radicalisation. The model encouraged employees to share any concerns by making a safeguarding referral or contacting the police in situations of immediate danger. For Rotherham Council employees the referral was completed through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Referrals could also be made directly to the counter terrorism police and it was noted that the Prevent Team were keen for employees and Elected Members to seek any required advice via the dedicated contact line. National structures ensured that people could report any concerns regarding emerging terrorist activity anonymously.
- When a referral was received by MASH or adult safeguarding,

counter terrorism police would complete gateway checks and consider whether there was a viable concern or threat. If they felt the individual concerned could be susceptible to extremism, they would refer the case into the gateway channel. Where there were any identified vulnerabilities the usual safeguarding procedures ran alongside the gateway channel.

- The Channel Panel was a national legal requirement for every local authority and the panel was required to provide early intervention to children, young people, and adults through a multi-agency approach. The Channel Panel was a voluntary process, therefore, all adults were required to consent to receiving the support of the panel and must fully understand the support that would be provided in order to give informed consent. For a child under the age of eighteen, the parents or legal guardian of the individual were required to provide consent for the individual. However, for young people who were sixteen or over although formal consent was required from parents or legal guardians, the panel also worked with the individual to gain their consent as well.
- Examples were provided of the types of support given to children and young people in Rotherham through Channel. These included the following:
  - Support from school and colleges via a trusted teacher, head of year or pastoral staff.
  - Early Help intervention with a young person, parents and carers and family around building confidence and self-esteem, managing anger and online safety.
  - Referrals to mental health services and autism assessments.
  - Housing advice for families, where housing circumstances were causing additional stress.
  - Prevent Intervention Provider, which was a specialist mentor.
- Local statistics and data could not be shared publicly due the data being related to counter terrorism policing, therefore individual and specific case studies were also restricted from public access.
- The Rotherham Borough was on trend with the national data with more referrals being received for males than females. Extreme right-wing issues and concerns were predominately related to the Rotherham Borough, with less referrals received for religious extremism.
- The most common referral sources were predominantly the police, neighbourhood teams, schools and educational settings, health care providers, local authorities, and prisons. Referrals from family, friends, or communities were less frequent, although these were

steadily rising.

- The police website was specifically aimed at family and friends and provided advice regarding potential concerns.
- Prevent was a legal duty on every partner organisation and therefore every partner organisation was required to provide an update to the policing group on a regular basis.
- The Home Office provided training packages that were available to the public and were promoted to the voluntary community sector and associated partners.
- Rotherham Council employees were required to complete a mandatory online e-learning module for Prevent and there were further optional models for any employee wanting to learn more about Prevent. There was also a 'Guide to Prevent' leaflet offered to all employees who were unable to access the online e-learning. The basic level requirements for training employees were to ensure they:
  - Understood the main risks and threats.
  - Could recognise the signs of vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism or harmful extremism.
  - Knew how to refer concerns.
  - Were aware of available support programmes and interventions.
- Online Radicalisation Training took place during Safeguarding Awareness Week in November 2022 and was attended by 35 professionals. The training covered the following:
  - The risks to young people.
  - Methods of radicalisation.
  - Examples of online forums where they may be at risk.
  - Signs of radicalisation.
  - Supporting young people and families.
  - Reporting mechanisms.
  - Links to further information and support.
- Home Office funding was provided to the local authority to tackle radicalisation following a successful bid. There were two hundred places available and Shout Out UK would deliver the training, which would cover the risks of radicalisation faced by young people and vulnerable adults through online forums, gaming and social media spaces. The training was provided in three modules and were targeted at:
  - Teachers and school staff.
  - Children, family workers and professionals.

- Parents and carers of neurodivergent children.
- There was a Digital Champions Network that was established during Safeguarding Awareness Week in 2021. The network had over one hundred members and included professionals and members of the public. The network was an information sharing network which regularly shared information on training, emerging issues and concerns.
- The Home Office required local authorities to submit a yearly self-assessment which was assessed against a set of ten benchmarking criteria. The rating was backed up by comprehensive evidence and included areas for development addressed by the Partner Prevent Plan. The self-assessment was completed for 2023 and was reviewed by the Home Office Regional Advisor, following the review Rotherham scored highly in all 10 benchmarked areas.
- A 'Harms of Hate' Programme had been implemented across schools within the Rotherham Borough. There was a dedicated Community Safety Officer within the Safer Stronger Communities Team who had led on this initiative since June 2022. The initiative included creating projects to engage children and young people, in learning about the harms of hate to individuals, communities and society and build resilience to hateful narratives. It also provided a mechanism for teachers to introduce the topics of hate and harmful extremism into the curriculum.
- Examples of work conducted with schools and young people were as followed:
  - The Year One Armbands Project.
  - The Swinton Academy Book Cover Project.
  - Hate crime educational sessions delivered by South Yorkshire Police.
  - The Remedy Hate Crime Project, which was group awareness raising sessions with young people, and one to one restorative interventions.
  - Online Safety Sessions delivered with young people, professionals, and parents.
  - Harms of Hate Event on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 which was attended by over two hundred year six pupils from targeted schools.

The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation and invited questions, this led to the following points being raised during discussions:

- It was confirmed that Rotherham was a non-priority area nationally therefore the local risk was low.

- The Channel Panel met monthly, and all cases were reviewed, work with individuals in the Channel Panel was on-going until the risk level reduced. Closed cases were reviewed after six and twelve months, to re-evaluate the risk level.
- There was a rise in cases after the Coronavirus lockdown as children returned to school and were receiving more face-to-face contact. Numbers had reduced back down to a normal level.
- The referral process included multi-agency partnership working to gather as much information as possible. There were occasions where it was concluded that an individual was susceptible to exploitation and was not a risk to counter terrorism. In this case the individual remained part of the channel process as a closed case. There was regular check and challenge to ensure Channel Panel decisions were reviewed.
- As a non-priority prevent area the focus was currently on tackling hate crime, building community cohesion and tackling online extremism. The local authority was working closely with the voluntary community sector who were engaging in this work. Funding was received from the Local Government Authority to open dialogues with local communities. This work was focused on working with communities to facilitate conversations around concerns. The outcome of these conversations highlighted that communities were more concerned about the cost-of-living crisis rather than potential extremism.
- There was wider work around online safety being completed to address the lack of referrals received from family, friends and the community. It was important to raise awareness through the digital champions and Early Help.
- Figures of referrals received from family, friends and the community differed to the official statistics. Referrals from family, friends and the community were often raised to other public bodies and referrals were processed through those public bodies. There was evidence that family, friends and communities did seek advice when required.
- As part of the work across Children's and Young Peoples Services, all cases were audited on a regular basis. There was an internal escalation process that provided challenge and checks. All agencies involved were responsible for safeguarding individuals.
- Radicalisation was part of the Child Exploitation Strategy and learning from Channel Panel cases was part of Home Office requirements, therefore it this was a standard agenda item at every channel panel meeting.

- The last 'Harm of Hate' event included presentations from external providers. A national campaigner who campaigned for the end of knife crime presented at this event, to highlight the importance of the impact of knife crime.
- There were concerns in local communities around the topic of migration, however there were extremist groups and activists that had exploited these concerns to cause tensions within communities. Where there had been protests of this nature, officers had worked in those areas to promote respect, tolerance and encourage local debates.
- The police were responsible for making the distinction between freedom of speech and hate crime.
- The safeguarding and prevent lead for The Rotherham Foundation Trust was a member of the Safer Rotherham Partnership and worked alongside representatives from the Integrated Care Board. Regular information was provided to General Practises through partnership working.
- The Channel Panel had representation from The Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Foundation Trust, the 0-19 School Nurse Service and the Integrated Care Board.
- Elected Members and Parish Councillors had access to the Home Office online training module and member sessions were provided on extremism risks and threats yearly. There was also information provided through the Elected Members newsletter.
- Guidance was provided to Parish Councils around safe room hire to ensure Parish Councils could protect against the possible misuse of their premises to promote extremist messages.
- As part of wider work and engagement, the Council worked in partnership with local faith groups regarding early interventions, building community cohesion, respect and an understanding of diversity and faith.
- Individuals referred into the Prevent Scheme that did not make it into a Channel Panel space were referred into MASH for screening and for consideration of any wider concerns. Rotherham Council worked with Channel to check, challenge and review any decisions. There were also regular audits to ensure all vulnerabilities of the individuals referred were addressed and that the appropriate support had been put into place.
- The Channel Panel had a core membership of all statutory agencies and had strong links to the Multi-Agency Public



Protection Agency (MAPPA) and the Young Offender Institute. Additional members were invited to join specific Channel Panel meetings where appropriate.

The Chair thanked officers for their informative presentation. In concluding, the Chair outlined that in her view assurances had been received that the systems and processes were in place to ensure appropriate safeguarding. If further enquires arose, there were opportunities to raise these through consideration of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report and on-going scrutiny of the Child Exploitation Strategy.

**Resolved:-** That

1. The presentation be noted.
2. Details of available training and information leaflets be circulated to Elected Members, with relevant online materials added to the Elected Member Portal.
3. Details of online training be circulated to Parish Councils as appropriate. Thought would be given to training opportunities accessible to parish councillors.
4. Contact details for the dedicated Community Safety Officer within the Safer Stronger Communities Team be distributed accordingly.

## **91. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its Work Programme. It was advised that the finalised Work Programme would be provided to the Commission in July. It was advised that items included on the agenda for July's meeting included:

- The Annual Performance Outturn Report from Children's and Young Peoples Services. This would provide an opportunity to understand the key areas of performance across Safeguarding, Education and Early Help. Members were advised that the Performance Outturn Report had already been circulated.
- The Samantha Sykes Foundation Trust would be an agenda item at the next meeting in July.

**Resolved: -** That the update be noted.

## **92. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SUB AND PROJECT GROUP UPDATES**

There were no updates provided.

93. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that there was no urgent business.

94. **DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 commencing at 10am in Rotherham Town Hall.

**Resolved:-** That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023 commencing at 10am in Rotherham Town Hall.