

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
23rd September, 2015**

Present:- Councillor Hamilton (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor M.Clark), Councillors Astbury, Beaumont, Cutts, Hoddinott, Jones, Rose, Taylor and M. Vines.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ahmed, Currie, Jepson and Pitchley and from co-opted members Ms. J. Jones (GROW) and Mr. M. Smith.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were made.

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no members of the public or the press in attendance.

16. COMMUNICATIONS

Nothing was raised under this item.

17. SECOND IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Resolved: - That Councillor S. Ahmed be the second Improving Lives Select Commission representative to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22ND JULY, 2015

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 22nd July, 2015, were considered.

On page 8, the minutes recorded that a scorecard was being developed in respect of creating a CSE profile and would allow progress tracking. The scorecard had not been forwarded to the Improving Lives Select Commission and it was hoped that it would soon be available for consideration.

On page 10 of the minutes covering the conclusions and next steps for the Improving Lives Select Commission, the areas that the Commission had highlighted were noted. Councillor Hoddinott emphasised the need for recommendations to be made following consideration of the Delivery Plan.

Resolved: - That the minutes from the previous meeting held on 22nd July, 2015, be approved as a correct record.

19. TACKLING CSE - DELIVERY PLAN

Councillor Hamilton, Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission, welcomed the Officers in attendance to present the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board's Child Sexual Exploitation Delivery Plan (2015-2018).

In attendance were: -

- Gary Ridgeway, Assistant Director for CSE Investigations and Chair of the Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (GR);
- Phil Morris, Business Manager of the RLSCB;
- Sue Cassin, Chief Nurse, Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Linda Harper, Interim Director for Commissioning and Performance, Children and Young People's Services Directorate;
- Jo Smith, Post-Abuse Co-ordinator, Children and Young People's Services Directorate.

Consideration of this item formed part of the Improving Lives Select Commission's focus on the work to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), including the strategic plans and documents agencies had created. The previous meeting held on 22nd July, 2015, had considered the overarching work to tackle CSE (Minute Number 12: - 'Child Sexual Exploitation – The Way Forward for Rotherham'). The CSE Delivery Plan was referred to at that meeting and had now been submitted for consideration.

Councillor Hamilton invited members of the Improving Lives Select Commission to ask questions on each section of the Delivery Plan document.

1. Prevent – prevent children and young people from becoming sexually exploited through effective leadership, governance and a wider culture embedded within organisations that recognise the root causes of CSE, the signs and risk indicators and do all they can to tackle them (pages 20- 23): -

Councillor Jones referred to the intention to produce a problem profile and annually update it. Surely this needed to be more regular at the present time. – Gary Ridgeway agreed that the document would need to be more regularly refreshed in the short term and confirmed that it was being refreshed in 'real time' whilst all of the strategy work was underway.

Councillor Beaumont referred to 1.2 and how it related to engaging a PR/marketing company to ensure that messaging was well constructed and targeted. – GR confirmed that it was an action to consider the feasibility/appropriateness of using a PR/marketing company, and this included exploring how this would be funded and the sustainability of the option.

Councillor M. Vines asked whether schools were taking part in CSE training. – GR explained that the levels of influence varied. Some schools were completely engaged, whilst others were determining their position. All headteachers would be brought together in the Autumn to discuss the curriculum work needed and the resources that were available. Gary confirmed that a school connected to live operations had responded well to working with the Council.

Councillor Hoddinott spoke about relationship education. Was the priority to engage with all primary schools as well as secondary schools? - GR confirmed that it was an aspiration and would be coupled with early help planning.

Councillor Beaumont – referred to the pilot awareness campaign and how it intended to engage one school from each phase. – GR confirmed that this had not happened yet and would form part of the discussion with schools this Autumn.

Councillor Hoddinott asked what has been learnt from previous campaigns and from speaking to victims and survivors? What had worked and what had not worked? - GR explained how it was important for the material to strike a chord with individuals and help them to come forward. Schools involved with the operations had been supportive and open and honest. Agencies were still learning what the nature of victims and exploitation in Rotherham looked like. There was no 'off-the-shelf' response available for marketing/promotional resources.

Councillor Hoddinott asked how victims and survivors were feeding in to developing promotional resources and training materials? – GR explained that he had witnessed victims and survivors sharing their experiences and it had caused them to re-live the experiences. Gary was clear that he did not want any victims to re-visit their exploitation for these ends. It was important that the voices of many survivors were heard to represent the range of victims, and also to ensure that it was a complete and cross-cutting part of the process.

Councillor Hoddinott reported feedback that the 'Spot the Signs' poster pictures did not reflect what happened to victims and, as such, did not resonate with what happened. Officers working on the campaigns really needed to hear the feedback so that campaigns helped to remove barriers to reporting not least for victims and survivors. Jo Smith – outlined an assertive outreach service programme of work to include CSE prevention. There would be two levels to the work, one at junior school level and the second aimed at comprehensive schools. The Services were talking to individuals and a range of groups. Influence was coming from more than one voice.

Sue Cassin explained the drama/theatre groups that were to be offered to Key Stages 3 and 4. Councillor Hamilton emphasised how important it was for the theatre groups to differentiate between age-groups and provide age-appropriate material.

Councillor Clark challenged the commonly-held view that CSE only happened in certain areas of the Borough. Evidence showed that this was wrong. How were Schools selected to participate? – GR explained that there must be a clear evidence for engagement. It would be wrong to pick schools only on their willingness to engage.

Councillor M. Vines asked whether the Local Authority could make a school engage? – GR would never want to be in that position. However, from the statutory position of an Academy, and that of a Safeguarding Board, there were no powers to enforce this. There were no schools in Rotherham not wanting to do their best for their children.

Councillor Hoddinott asked if the RLSCB had evaluated the pilot? - GR explained that this was a current issue and work was not at that stage yet.

There was confusion on the number of pilots that were taking place and which stage they were at.

Councillor Hoddinott referred to Section 1.7 that stated that the Improving Lives Select Commission would undertake an annual review of community engagement activity. – GR explained that it had been put forward by the ILSC as part of the work to produce the delivery plan.

Councillor Hamilton acknowledged how the Jay report paid reference to BME communities being victims of CSE. She did not feel that the Prevent area gave much time to the issues. – GR did not agree with this. The Delivery Plan was a live document and a detailed action plan. All victims, regardless of label, would show some form of vulnerability so it was better to refer to vulnerabilities in the plan.

2. Protect – protecting children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation as well as those who are already victims and survivors (pages 24-27): -

Councillor Hoddinott asked about Regulation 44 reports. How many had there been in the last year and where were they reported to? - GR did not know this personally but agreed to forward the information to the ILSC.

Councillor Beaumont noted that 2.5 was rated Amber. – GR confirmed that as of September 2015 the strategic objective had been judged to be amber because there was a risk of failing to achieve it and remedial work was required. It had not been rated as Red, which was for significantly off-track objectives.

Councillor Beaumont asked about funding. – GR confirmed that funding cuts were not being felt by the team, although this was causing pressures elsewhere.

Councillor Hoddinott asked what would be the procedure if a family was not happy? Was there an independent complaints procedure? How would issues be flagged? - GR – Confirmed that a complaints procedure existed, which included a multi-agency significant third sector organisation. There were Command and Operational groups providing a strong voice and advocate for victims and families.

Councillor Clark asked how looked after children complained if they were not happy with the support they were receiving? - GR explained that there was a review of support for Looked After Children, including the role that the Review Team played. Looked after children would be supported through multi-agency challenge to any issues in post-abuse support.

Councillor Beaumont asked whether there was evidence that schools were not reporting children and young people who missed education because of the pressure to avoid Ofsted scrutiny on falling attendance rates? – GR explained in order to have a practical multi-agency response it would be difficult to distinguish between missing and absent. Missing overnight was a clear trigger for CSE, although children missing for just an hour at a time could also be at risk. If a child was missing for an hour there was every chance that this would not be picked up. There was a dedicated Missing Persons Officer co-located with the CSE team. The IYSS Service undertook a return interview within 72 hours of a young person returning. It was important that agencies increased their ability to respond to missing.

3. Pursue – pursue, relentlessly, perpetrators of child sexual exploitation, leading to prosecutions of those responsible (pages 28-29): -

Gary spoke about the prosecution of offenders for other offences they had committed. Although it was positive because it disrupted activities, it did not deliver justice to victims of CSE. This ethos was a tangible presence within command groups, they wanted to pursue and prosecute CSE crimes.

Councillor Beaumont referred to the pending reduction in PCSOs and their re-location – would this have an impact on intelligence, community safety and so on? - GR acknowledged that PCSOs had a presence and role within communities. His view was that PCSOs were one element of the community able to spot and articulate risks and signs. There were lots of other professionals on the ground who should be keeping their eyes open to signs. It was also crucial for all members of the public to be able to report their concerns.

Councillor Hamilton asked about progress made on the witness support strategy. - GR explained how the RLSCB was keen for third sector agencies to be integral in providing links and support. This would support the police and social care. All meetings had an agenda item on how to identify the best support for victims. Cultural beliefs that responsibility sat squarely with statutory agencies needed to be challenged. Statutory partners could not afford to support that myth.

Jo Smith agreed that third sector organisations had a critical role to play in ensuring that the victim was the focus, regardless of whether or not a prosecution was pending. She was working on a new service specification for a tender process in November, 2015, to be up and running by 1st April, 2016. There were already services in place, but needs were changing.

Councillor Hoddinott referred to sections in Prevent and in Pursue on how people reported concerns. Was ringing 101 the right route to do this? Was there a better way of reporting? Adult Safeguarding had text and email reporting mechanisms. This did not seem to be in place for Children's Services. Were partners making it easier to report concerns? - GR agreed that this was a good suggestion. There was enhanced information sharing between the police, children's social care and licensing. Members of the public were asked to raise concerns through 101. Email and internet templates were being looked at by the CSE Sub-Group. Neighbours used this approach. There were issues relating to the treatment of different types of concerns: - urgent concerns that needed to be picked up immediately, and pieces of intelligence information that needed to be shared. It was possible that with electronic reporting an urgent piece of information may not be picked up quickly. Agencies would need to give the right guidance about what was urgent and what needed to be shared.

Councillor Hoddinott asked whether Health Services were involved in data sharing? - GR explained that there were always more challenges for Health due to their confidential relationship with patients and their legal requirements around confidentiality.

4. Proving Support – providing support for survivors of CSE, ensuring that their needs are met (pages 29 – 31): -

Councillor Rose referred to the Transition/Adult Survivor Board at 4.3 and asked how it was progressing. She had heard from survivors that they were not getting support from 18 and feeling they had reached a 'cut off' point. - Linda Harper outlined work, along with partners' statutory responsibility to LAC until they were 25.

Councillor Hoddinott asked how voice and influence work was contributing to the design of support packages. – Jo Smith explained that the voluntary and community sector had been commissioned and this would feed into the needs analysis. Jo reported monthly on the work that had been undertaken and offered to report this to the next meeting.

Councillor Hamilton noted that section 4.1 concerned mental health services and an annual needs analysis to be undertaken to identify any gaps. It was known that mental health services were under strain, how sure were partners that they could provide the help and treatment that was really need? – GR stated the importance of recognising the full picture of mental health requirements so that services could be designed accordingly.

Councillor Hamilton asked what the reviews into service improvement partnerships referred to? - Linda Harper explained that it was a review of the current services that were being funded. The field work completed at the end of August and the report would be released at the end of September. The field work had involved Rotherham's Young Inspectors and voice and influence work. The aim of the review was to improve quality by sharing good practice and the focus had been to support providers to work together without competing.

5. Ensure the participation of all children and young people and families – ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard and listened to at all times (pages 31- 32): -

Councillor Hoddinott stated that this also needed to include the involvement of adult survivors and also to ensure there was no cut off at the age of 18. It was important to reassure survivors that they are involved, whichever stage they were at. – GR explained about the RLSCB's Community Reference Group.

Councillor Beaumont asked for more quantitative information. – GR said that this would be provided through the Scorecard and the Thematic Reviews.

Councillor M. Vines saw that the Rotherham Standing Together Campaign was judged to be Amber. How far behind were they to completing? - GR outlined the ongoing discussions with a wide range of stakeholders on issues like: should the posters about CSE be visible to every person coming into Rotherham?; was this appropriate to victims and other groups like businesses and tourists?; should the posters be displayed in every public building?. It was important to listen to all stakeholders' opinions.

Councillor Hamilton asked whether the staff changes referred to at 5.3 were now sorted, and were the staff in place? – GR said this was a priority to take forward, along with decisions needing to be made around commissioning. This was expected to be delivered in November, 2015, and there would be one person who would be held accountable from then.

Councillor Hoddinott asked whether there was any update on Elected Members being involved in audit activities? - GR described the role as part of the thematic CSE audit and understood that the ILSC were to have a Lead Member for CSE audit.

Councillor Taylor referred to 5.2 as he felt the language could be complacent as meetings with schools were not yet confirmed. - GR agreed that listening to victims and survivors was important in preventing future cases of CSE.

Gary thanked the Improving Lives Select Commission for the guidance, comments and questions that had been shared with him.

The Improving Lives Select Commission's summary and next steps:-

Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, outlined the areas of discussion that she felt were a priority and prime for future investigation. She invited contributions from the Elected Members present.

The following future lines of enquiry were agreed: -

- A report would be provided to the next meeting on the work with the third sector in supporting victims;
- Schools – what activities were taking place? Which pilots were running? Was there more than one? Who was doing what? Was there a gap in primary school provision?;
- Raising awareness;
- Offender profile;
- Support for BME groups;
- Voice and Influence – The importance of the Improving Lives Select Commission in speaking with victims and survivors and progress monitoring of this work overall;
- Performance;
- Gaps in delivery plan around health partners – challenges with health around data sharing;

- Allocation of a Lead Member to work with the RLSCB on Audit;
- Transition issues and the 'drop off' that had been described by victims and survivors at the age of 18 between Children and Adult Services.

Councillors Clark and Rose had met and worked with victims and survivors and explained how keen the individuals were for their voices to be heard so that their individual stories were out there. There were issues to be considered relating to where the meetings would take place, respecting the victim and survivors' need for confidentiality and their need for safe spaces and potential on-going criminal proceedings. Councillor M. Vines endorsed the Women Against Grooming conference where two victims and three parents attended to give their accounts of living with CSE. It had been interesting to hear from family member perspectives.

Resolved: - (1) That the development of a multi-agency CSE Delivery Plan to deliver the strategic objectives of the new CSE Strategy be noted.

(2) That the next steps discussed for future scrutiny review into Child Sexual Exploitation be noted, and the Improving Lives Select Commission's work programme be developed accordingly.

20. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE - UPDATE

Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, introduced this item by outlining the history of the Scrutiny Review into Domestic Abuse. The scrutiny review had most recently been considered by the Improving Lives Select Commission on 5th November, 2014 (Improving Lives Select Commission's Scrutiny Review of Domestic Abuse - Update to Response Presented in November, 2013, Minute Number 33).

It was important to consider the length of time since the fieldwork was undertaken, and since that time there had been austerity measures and changes within Rotherham's social care and the overall Domestic Abuse sector.

Domestic Abuse had been a key priority within the Improving Lives Select Commission's work programmes in the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 municipal years.

The Scrutiny Review into Domestic Abuse had been very thorough and considered a lot of evidence. Following completion of the review it had been subject to a six month monitoring report and then an annual review. By the eighteen month mark, most reviews were signed-off.

Submitted to the Improving Lives Select Commission was the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Review, the Cabinet decisions on each recommendation, and the updates on progress at November, 2014, and August, 2015.

Councillor Clark explained that she was on the review group; the work on the review had been long and complex, but very good. Also on the group were Councillors Russell, Ahmed, Burton and Lelliott, supported by Caroline Webb. Councillor Clark felt that it would be more effective to send the update to original Members for their feedback, given their greater knowledge of the process the review had taken.

Councillor Clark asked for an update on recommendation one. She felt that this was a key recommendation as it related to the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) being funded through mainstream budgets, rather than twelve monthly fixed-term contracts.

Jan Bean, Domestic Abuse Manager, confirmed that this recommendation had been achieved in November, 2014, through the retention of current service capacity. Two permanent IDVAs had been secured. She thanked the Improving Lives Select Commission on behalf of her team; it was much appreciated that the review had identified this as an issue. Additional temporary funding had been received from the Police and Crime Commissioner for a further two IDVAs for one year.

Councillor Clark referred to recommendation 5 that related to the creation of a golden number and/or a one stop shop for domestic abuse support, as in neighbouring authorities. She was aware of issues preventing this, including different risk assessments being used by different agencies. The review group felt strongly about the importance of this recommendation.

Councillor Clark also referred to the importance of dentists being engaged and understanding how and when they should refer patients as the review group heard that patients presenting with tooth loss and jaw problems could be due to domestic violence. It was found that dentists were not regularly referring in the same way that GPs did.

Councillor Clark was happy that the two IDVAs were not worried about losing their jobs every twelve months. This was a coup for the process of scrutiny reviews. She had attended training and open day sessions with the Domestic Abuse service and would recommend the experience.

Jan thanked the review group and said how appreciated it was. She also confirmed that GPs continued to be involved and refer, and Dentists had processes in place to refer their concerns about potential domestic violence.

Councillor Hoddinott was also pleased about the additional security for the IDVAs. She was concerned that the commentary to recommendation five stated that it had been completed whereas there was no golden number or one stop shop for domestic abuse support. This was misleading.

Jan explained that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) would act as the golden number.

Richard Liversage, Detective Inspector in the Reputation Unit, explained about the restructure that had taken place in the Public Protection Unit. It included a Safeguarding Adult Team that responded to allegations of rape, care homes issues, neglect, so called 'Honour-Based' violence and so on. In high risk cases Domestic Violence Officers worked with IDVAs. The Officers in the Unit were all detectives and experienced investigators. In addition to responding to reports of domestic violence incidents, the Unit sought to reduce the risk as a whole by working with perpetrators.

Jan explained how co-location within the MASH meant improved information sharing at meetings and the ability to respond and refer quickly. Being co-located with the Police meant that they could be cited immediately.

Councillor Hamilton asked whether individuals and families at risk of/experiencing CSE could be identified easily by the Domestic Abuse team.

Jan explained that the focus of the Domestic Abuse team was Adult Safeguarding, however, risks were always assessed and the voice of the victim was always represented.

Councillor Hamilton asked for more information in relation to recommendation 17 where it stated that a pilot in perpetrator management had reduced domestic abuse reports to the police by 75%. Richard and Jan both confirmed that they had struggled to quantify the figure or identify where it had come from. It is possible that it related to a transcription error.

Richard explained funding bids that had been made and were unsuccessful. These decisions were appealed and rejected. Management of cases were now assigned wholly to one officer, rather than splintered to a number as in the past. Integrated Offender Management included working with offenders to address their behaviour and reduce the risks to victims and children.

As one document providing the MASH storyboard had not been included in the information that was sent to members, it was agreed that consideration of the sign-off of this report should be deferred to a future meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission. This would also allow the members of the original review group to see the updates and make any comments or ask any questions. Deborah Fellowes confirmed this

information had been received from the Domestic Abuse Team but due to administration issues this information had not been sent out with the update.

Councillor Beaumont referred to so called 'honour-based' violence and asked whether this should remain a focus of the Select Commission. Deborah Fellowes confirmed that it remained on the list of priorities and she would programme consideration of a report on the issue.

Councillor Hamilton thanked the officers for attending the meeting and for contributing to the discussion and answering questions. She felt that a deferral for further information and wider comment would be beneficial for all stakeholders.

Resolved: - (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That consideration of signing off the scrutiny review be deferred to allow the original review group members to comment and the MASH story board attachment to be forwarded.

21. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Wednesday 4th November, 2015, to start at 1.30 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.