

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**6th April, 2016**

Present:- Councillor Hamilton (in the Chair); Councillors Beaumont, Elliot, Hoddinott, Jones, Pitchley, Rose and Taylor and co-opted member Mrs. J. Jones.

Councillor Currie was in attendance for item 48.

Apologies for absence were received from: - The Mayor (Councillor M. Clark), Councillors Ahmed, Cutts, Jepson, Read, M. Vines and Smith and co-opted member Mr. M. Smith.

**46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made.

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

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

**48. COMMUNICATIONS**

Councillor Hoddinott provided feedback to the Improving Lives Select Commission on the visits of inspection that she and Councillor Ahmed had undertaken on behalf of the Commission (Minute No. 33 of the previous meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2016, provides a progress update).

Councillors Ahmed and Hoddinott had received training from Brian Durham in December, 2015. Councillor Hoddinott had visited Cherry Tree, Liberty House, Silverwood and St. Edmund's Children's Residential Homes as a lay person. Informal feedback had been provided following these visits. Councillor Hoddinott thought that it was important to keep abreast of the Regulation 44 reports in order to triangulate information observed in her informal visits.

Councillor Hoddinott reported to the Improving Lives Select Commission the issues she had noted during her programme of visits: -

- Record keeping and communication;
- Transport available to looked after children living in residential homes, a minibus, often broke down and disappointed the children who could not go on their trips and visits because of this;
- Looked After Children often reported feeling stigma attached to using taxis and the minibus. These were not always the most appropriate methods of transporting small groups/individuals;
- Looked After Children and young people were enterprising and often requested, and were granted, free tickets from attractions;

- Physical resources within homes were sometimes disappointing;
- Councillor Hoddinott had found standards at two residential homes to be not those she would expect for Rotherham's Looked After Children;
- Décor was tired and furniture was not homely;
- Councillor Hoddinott had reported these issues and was reassured that an urgent officer response would follow;
- Some educational arrangements were not appropriately challenging for the young people involved;
- Some residential homes did not have adequate 'likes' and 'dislikes' paperwork;
- Staff reported uncertainty in the Service;
- All wanted long-term high quality solutions for children living in the residential homes;
- It would be important for the Corporate Parenting Panel to continue to receive residential home visit updates, including after the elections.

Councillor Hamilton thanked Councillors Hoddinott and Ahmed for their work and update. She welcomed the visits and that two Councillors were involved. She would wish the visits to continue after the election in a similar way, as this method of visiting was sustainable and allowed two Elected Members to build on-going relationships with the residential homes and their children and staff.

Councillor Currie, member of the Corporate Parenting Panel, thanked Councillor Hoddinott for her update. He informed the Improving Lives Select Commission of the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the regular presentations that the committee received from young people. He described how a recent presentation had focused on the looked after children survey that had concluded 'listen to us'. Councillor Currie reminded all Members that corporate parenting was everyone's responsibility.

Resolved:- That the update received be noted.

**49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 3RD FEBRUARY, 2016**

The minutes of the previous Improving Lives Select Commission held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

**50. SCRUTINY OF THE 'PREVENT' ELEMENT OF THE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION DELIVERY PLAN 2015-2018**

Councillor Hamilton, Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission, welcomed Officers in attendance to provide an update of the 'Prevent' element of the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Delivery Plan (2015-

2018). The Improving Lives Select Commission's work programme had focussed on the steps taken to address CSE in the Borough. The Prevent actions would be taken to explore the wider issues of governance and performance management as a whole.

The Officers with responsibilities relating to the prevent theme in attendance were: -

Gary Ridgeway, Assistant Director, CSE Investigations;  
Jo Smith, CSE Support Services Co-ordinator;  
Kay Denton-Tarn, Healthy Schools Consultant;  
Anthony Evans, Education and Skills Manager;  
David McWilliams, Assistant Director, Early Help and Family Engagement;  
Jo Abbott, Assistant Director for Public Health;  
Phil Morris, Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager;  
Leona Schofield, Communications.

The Prevent theme included: -

Prevent children and young people from becoming sexually exploited through effective leadership, governance and a wider culture embedded within organisations and communities that recognises the root causes of CSE, the signs and risk indicators and do all they can to tackle them.

Councillor Hamilton invited questions from the Select Commission members on each strategic objective within the plan.

**1.1 Establish a clear view of the CSE profile in the Borough to ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board undertake informed commissioning of service provision.**

Councillor Pitchley asked how the action point to commission post support services was progressing in the early stages? Would the project be extended again?

Gary Ridgeway explained how his Service was working with 21 adult survivors in respect of a court case. Whilst it was anticipated that some would drop out of the very difficult process, none had. All 21 individuals had been able to give evidence with mostly positive outcomes for the individual. A learning event had been commissioned. Work within the Roma community was also underway. Dance was important to the community and would form the basis of a project working specifically with the community.

The project could not be commissioned beyond June, 2016.

Councillor Hoddinott asked about the development of the profile relating to current CSE? How did this compare to Jay's analysis of more historic

abuse? What did the hard to reach profile look like? Was outreach work taking place for Asian children?

Gary explained that the Service had identified 130 children and young people at risk who were showing some identification of CSE. It was important to emphasise that there were not 130 victims of CSE, nor give them a badge of victim. The 130 individuals had been shown to demonstrate triggers relating to CSE. Just under 30 were boys. A significant number came from the Roma community. Work was taking place to review all multi-agency records for the individuals identified was continuing to develop family profiles. This would be used to perform acid-based commissioning exercises to create services that responded to needs. This should be completed by the third week of April. The independent Analyst needed a 4-6 week turnaround time to report back on the completed profile.

Work on all types of CSE was taking place: -

- 'Journey' was responding to on-line grooming;
- The Roma community was forming a separate work stream;
- Sessions provided through the Lifewise Centre were being explored;
- Work was continuing with the Pakistani community to engage girls and women.

Councillor Hoddinott thanked Gary for his honest answer. It was important to recognise that victims of CSE could come from any community / background.

Jo Smith, Commissioner, explained the single-point of contact that was available through Apna Haq.

Councillor Hamilton asked about the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and when it would be available.

Jo Abbott explained that the data was being refreshed by the Children's Data Team and the first draft would be available in July or August.

**1.2 The public understand the signs and symptoms of CSE and raise concerns early, alerting statutory services where necessary. Awareness campaigns include a clear message that CSE is a crime and will not be tolerated.**

Councillor Pitchley asked about the closed action – were partners confident that the message was fully out in communities?

It was explained that this related to engaging an external agency. It had been agreed that this would be delivered in-house by partners working together. There had been high profile cases and issues since December, 2015, and Services had continued to promote awareness campaigns. An

umbrella communications plan was being developed that would link in with the wider Plan. The Rotherham Standing Together Plan was expected in September, 2016.

Furthermore, CSE was high on both the national and local agendas and there were many examples of collaborative working.

Gary Ridgeway explained that there was a strong commitment across Partners, including strong messages around length of sentences reflecting the severity of the crime. Interviews following the Clover trials showed partnership working and the emphasis on the role of GROW and the YWCA. An aspiration would be for the public to see and be confident in the whole system, rather than just the police or council being in the spotlight. The Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board would shortly be asked to appoint their CSE Sub-Group to take responsibility for the communications strand.

Councillor Jones asked whether any pre and post-analysis had been undertaken on the Plan? There were still members of the public who were not aware of CSE, and what the acronym stood for.

Jo Abbot responded that there was awareness of CSE in the general population, but individuals were not confident about who to report to. This was improving. For the work with the Roma community three key messages were being developed for all agencies to use.

Gary Ridgeway explained the monitoring of social media and opinions about CSE in Rotherham and that it was showing hopeful signs in terms of attitude changes and awareness improvements.

David McWilliams explained the importance of showing positive examples and being a child-centred Borough. Protecting vulnerable young people through a very positive message.

Councillor Hoddinott agreed how important the action was. She was anecdotally aware of an answer in a sex and relationship education lesson that missed an opportunity to explain to young people what an abuse relationship could involve.

Jo Smith knew that some of the population remained in denial about CSE, some parents did not identify issues and tended to not be aware of it. Grooming methods were constantly evolving and people's awareness always needed to be developed.

Jo Abbott referred to the good evaluation of the theatre education addressing complex relationship issues with a young audience.

Kay Denton-Tarn explained that early work with young children about friendships had evolved to ensure that it covered how 'nice could mean grooming'. 'Alright Charlie' had been commissioned and the evaluation of

'Chelsea's Choice' performed to over 3,000 young people of secondary school age and 73 vulnerable families showed a keen change in understanding. A full overview impact was expected after July, 2016.

Councillor Hamilton asked about what had moved on from the Action Plan – why was the update not reported?

Gary explained that the CSE Grooming Sub-Group would consider the most recent update before it would be presented to the Improving Lives Select Commission as was agreed protocol. The Improvement Plan represented the next stage.

Councillor Hamilton asked whether the awareness raising campaign had been completed with the Borough's Schools?

Kay explained that the first three paragraphs were in place and that future issues would be updated.

Councillor Hoddinott asked how many referrals had been generated from the audience members of 'Chelsea's Choice'?

Kay explained that Barnardo's Representatives were invited to each performance and they had reported that at least one person spoke to them after each performance. Referrals to school would be a confidential matter and not reported.

Councillor Hoddinott asked how the Service could be confident that referrals were appropriately moved on and sign-posted to partner agencies?

Kay felt that this was tackled through universal prevention and the education provided through the session would give individuals the skills of how to identify and avoid CSE and know where to go to get support.

Councillor Hoddinott wanted further reassurance that 'Chelsea's Choice' was appropriately addressing the pertinent issues.

Gary Ridgeway felt that the complexity of the issues meant that large numbers of referrals were unlikely to come forward from audience members. Proactive work taking place in parks was also not expected to generate massive referrals due to the issues involved. However, both were expected to raise awareness.

Jo Smith believed that awareness would be demonstrated by future reductions in reports. It would be down to the Services to adapt prevention work accordingly if this was not realised.

Councillor Hoddinott asked who and how this long-term analysis was conducted?

Gary stated trends would emerge over two to three years. The Jay Report provided a baseline. CSE trends within Roma and Pakistani communities would emerge over the next nine-months. The Annual Profile would be the responsibility of the CSE Sub-Group. National CSE recording methods had been agreed as fit for purpose.

David McWilliams agreed with the thrust of Councillor Hoddinott's question. 'How much do we do?', 'How well do we do it?' and 'Is anyone better off?'. Longitudinal factors needed to be developed to look at the third question.

Councillor Hoddinott asked that a recommendation from the Improving Lives Select Commission focus on what the outcomes would be in 2/3 years.

Councillor Hamilton asked what would happen if funding was not available to sustain work?

Kay had offered the performance of 'Chelsea's Choice' to all secondary age providers for free due to the funding available. She was now asking whether they would now pay for this whilst exploring sustainability with Safe@Last and RCAT student performances. If funding was available then she could assure that providers would receive the same level of funding, or, if funding was not available, offer a range of options if schools needed to self-fund.

**1.3 Intelligence, including 'soft' intelligence, about historic and current incidence and risk of CSE is timely, shared between agencies and treated with respect.**

Councillor Elliot asked about the lack of a reporting line – can children and members of the public still contact the services and what happens to this information?

Gary did not feel that a local reporting line was as important as the public were more aware of the national lines and they had well established systems. Referrals were promptly passed to Rotherham agencies from the national lines. Why re-invent a well-established process?

Councillor Elliot asked how the information sharing process was being analysed? 'Some good progress' was not a well quantified amount.

Gary explained the weekly performance monitoring at intelligence meetings. Issues were being dealt with at a lower level. Early Help colleagues were deploying to build the culture of early intelligence gathering and action. A company was developing an App to collate

information provided by members of the public although funding was required to take this through further development.

Councillor Hoddinott asked about the phone App and on-line reporting. The 101 number was a concerning method of reporting due to call waiting times and treatment of soft intelligence. Was SIM information fed in?

Gary explained that it was known that SIM information needed to be fed in, but it had not yet happened.

Councillor Jones asked for a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding for information sharing between Social Care and the Police. He was aware through another role that the Police have provided some information, but it was not complete.

Gary was aware of the 'proportionality test' and sometimes information did not meet the threshold and was not shared with other agencies. Weekly multi-agency intelligence meetings were seen as very productive.

Councillor Hamilton asked whether there was a flow chart to show how information was cascaded amongst partners?

Gary was aware that it was being considered by the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board's CSE Sub-Group at their next meeting.

**1.4 All children and young people in Rotherham understand what healthy, respectful relationship are and can recognise the damage and the dangers caused by sexual bullying and exploitation (including on-line) to both victim and perpetrator.**

Councillor Taylor asked about the prevention work relating to healthy relationships. This version of the Action Plan covered resources in schools, the January version of the plan spoke about meeting with all headteachers. What was the rationale behind the change?

Kay referred to competing priorities within schools and how CSE had been delegated to PSHE Leads, who Kay met with regularly. This was non-statutory work and it was important to support Schools on what they were able to do, rather than force them into specific workstreams.

Gary explained that the Plan was to drive activity and the Sub-Group felt that it was no longer relevant and had now morphed into something different as it had been debated.

Councillor Pitchley asked about 1.4.3 and the loss of the e-safety post. How would the discussion be progressed with the loss of the postholder? However, 1.4.5 refers to the e-safety officer having a role in ongoing work.

Kay explained that the activity referred to had been undertaken before the



postholder had left.

Anthony Evans explained how plans had been developed through the City Learning Centres to provide packages that schools could buy-in relating to e-safety topics. The DSG was no longer top-sliced by the Local Authority and this had changed the relationships in place. Schools could buy-in the Local Authority, go to the market or provide services in-house.

Councillor Pitchley spoke about her knowledge of how e-safety settings had been by-passed in a school. How was this being addressed?

Gary explained that eight themes had been identified for the CSE Sub-Group, one of which was e-safety due to its prevalence in grooming.

Councillor Hoddinott felt disappointed that the DSG funding for CSE had been removed. How was this risk being managed?

Anthony Evans explained that a traded offer to schools was being developed around school improvement matters; subsequent income would support other services. PSHE support would be separate to this, the Safeguarding Forum would launch a product in June that schools could purchase to support attainment outcomes and staff training.

Councillor Hoddinott felt uncomfortable with the concept of creating a marketplace for children's safety and awareness. Sex and relationship education and Safeguarding should be an integral part of education. However, she did appreciate the political landscape's drive towards academisation.

Councillor Rose asked about the 'all children and young people in Rotherham to understand...' statement. How were children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities being reached?

Kay described the work with special schools and how professionals identified whether the children accessing the mainstream provision was appropriate on a setting-by-setting basis. Kay committed to sharing lessons learned with all special schools.

Gary Ridgeway explained a recent conviction that was very close to a victim-less prosecution in the case of very serious sexual crimes against a young person with LDD.

Councillor Hamilton asked why the Early Help action had been rated as green?

David McWilliams spoke about the refresh that had taken place. Referrals had been streamlined. Now there was just one referral route and referrals had increased. Internal panels and integrated teams were in place, where

they had previously operated as separate services. A delay in physically producing the strategy was being addressed. The revised strategy would go out to consultation in May.

**1.5 Potential perpetrators (children and adults) are identified early in range of settings, including schools, youth clubs, young offender institutions and prisons.**

No questions raised relating to this strategic objective.

**1.6 Organisational leadership and governance creates a culture in Rotherham where the causes, signs and symptoms of CSE are understood and identified and responded to quickly, effectively and with a determination to do the right thing in response.**

Councillor Hoddinott asked about the culture and actions of individuals. Were whistleblowing policies in place?

Gary was aware of two whistleblowing policies that were available.

Jo Abbott explained the launch of a national whistleblowing resource system.

Councillor Hoddinott asked whether there was a route for victims' families to raise complaints?

Jo Smith explained the Children and Young People's Services' Directorate Complaints procedure – this was a well-documented procedure.

Councillor Pitchley asked whether mapping of hot spots relating to complaints and whistleblowing was continuing and how this was reported to relevant Ward Members?

Jo Smith explained that this should be covered by Complaints Officers in the future.

David McWilliams agreed that this would prove a fruitful way of analysing reports and hotspots and thought that it was worthwhile to pursue.

Councillor Hamilton asked about Section 11 Audits.

Gary confirmed that they were reported to the CSE Sub-Group.

**1.7 All Partners recognise the diversity of all communities in Rotherham and ensure services are responsive to need.**

Councillor Jones asked about Community Reference Groups. Who took part and how were they selected? How could the Roma community get involved?

Gary explained that three meetings had taken place and attendance had dropped throughout. A broader community engagement plan was required and would be discussed at the full Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board. Gary would chair the Roma forum. He had asked to speak to the Council of Mosques and was awaiting their response. Representatives of commissioned charities outnumbered members of the public attending the meetings that had taken place.

**In summary: -**

Councillor Hamilton noted that a number of actions had been marked as being completed. What would the Action Plan look like in the future?

Gary referred to the Children and Young People's Plan, which had been in place for a few months. The action plan was taken at a moment in time to support the workings of the partnership. If it was agreed by the CSE Sub-Group the actions would be moved to the wider CYPS Improvement Plan. Gary anticipated that the Improving Lives Select Commission would wish to look at the Improvement Plan if it incorporated CSE strategic objectives.

Councillor Hamilton asked how the Action Plan would feed into the Improvement Plan?

Gary did not have authority to sign off the Plan himself and it would not be signed-off unless chief officers were satisfied that no actions or workstreams would be lost.

**Next steps: -**

The Improving Lives Select Commission collated their thoughts from their consideration of the Prevent theme within the CSE Delivery Plan. The following points were agreed as priorities: -

- The gap in identifying Asian victims must be addressed;
- The Communications Team should look at the complexity of grooming, and involve victims and survivors in this work;
- Agencies need to identify the 'So What' question/parameters for monitoring;
- The use of phone Apps and online reporting should be supported to bolster the role of soft intelligence;
- Intelligence sharing – assurances were requested around information sharing across agencies – and proportionality thresholds for information sharing;
- Analysis of the resourcing in Schools and partners' contributions to

Safeguarding and e-safety. A report was requested on how schools were buying-back the traded service officer;

- The role of complaints and whistleblowing- how was information triangulated, and how would this be reported to Members;
- Reporting the ratings in future action plans. Issues relating to accuracy were relevant. Some strategic objectives had been rated as green where progress was unclear;
- New action plan – ensure that there is continuity with the old action plan.

Resolved:- (1) That the 'Prevent' element of the Child Sexual Exploitation Delivery Plan, 2015-2018, be noted.

(2) That the questions put forward to accountable officers by members of the Improving Lives Select Commission, and the Select Commission's comments relating to future versions of the prevent theme Action Plan be noted.

**51. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - WORK PROGRAMME (2016/2017)**

Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny and Member Training Officer, introduced the report outlining options for consideration for the Improving Lives Select Commission's work programme for the 2016/2017 Municipal Year. She asked that Members consider the issues and indicate a priority.

During the 2015/2016 Municipal Year, the Select Commission's focus had been on CSE: - the emerging strategy, the first version of the plan, work in schools and work with victims. Some Members had attended a meeting in Birmingham to look at the Council's approach to CSE and how they ran their Select Committee hearings. The focus would move to Safeguarding Boards - their audit and their work programmes would be progressed in the next Municipal Year, including scrutiny of Safeguarding plans.

A presentation on Early Help had been presented in November, 2015, and this would be looked at again in terms of savings identified and targeting interventions at an early stage to prevent cases escalating during 2016/2017.

Children missing from home and education would also be a focus.

Performance information would be taken on a quarterly basis. This would focus on the aspiration to create a child-centred Borough.

Domestic Abuse and the impact on children and young people would be considered.

Apprentices and apprenticeships for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Resolved: - That the identified priorities for the Improving Lives Select Commission's work programme for the 2016/2017 Municipal Year be noted.

**52. COUNCILLOR JANE HAMILTON, CHAIRPERSON OF THE IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**

Councillor L. Pitchley, Vice-Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission, wished to place on record the Members of the Improving Lives Select Commission's thanks to Councillor Jane Hamilton for all of her hard work and commitment to the Select Commission at both the formal meetings and preparatory work outside, at what had been a very pressured time for Rotherham over the past twelve months. Councillor Hamilton was due to retire at the local elections in May, 2016, following twelve years as a Borough Councillor.

**53. DIANE THOMAS, CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY**

Councillor Hamilton, thanked Diane Thomas, from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, for her commitment and support to the Improving Lives Select Commission's work over the past twelve months.

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

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, to start at 1.30 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.