IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Wednesday, 5th November, 2014

Present:- Councillor J. Hamilton (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Astbury, Buckley, Burton, Reynolds, Roddison and Turner. Co-opted member Mr. M. Smith (Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Consortium) was also in attendance.

Councillor Doyle was in attendance for the items regarding Domestic Abuse as they related to his portfolio area.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clark, N. Hamilton and McNeely, and from co-opted member Mrs. A. Clough (Rotherham Older Peoples' Forum).

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

28. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

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

29. COMMUNICATIONS.

Nothing was raised under this item.

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2014.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 17th September, 2014, were discussed.

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

31. REPRESENTATIVE AND SUBSTITUTE FROM THE IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION TO THE HEALTH, WELFARE AND SAFETY PANEL.

Resolved: - (1) That Councillor A. Buckley be confirmed as the Improving Lives Select Commission's representative to the Health, Welfare and Safety Panel.

(2) That Councillor J. Hamilton be confirmed as his substitute.

32. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION'S SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE - PROPOSED REVIEW OF LOCAL RESPONSES TO "HONOUR" BASED VIOLENCE AND FORCED MARRIAGE.

Councillor J. Hamilton, Chairperson of the Improving Lives Select Commission, welcomed Cheryl Henry-Leach, Domestic Abuse Officer, Jan Bean, Safeguarding Adults and Domestic Abuse Manager (Health and Wellbeing, Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate) and Zalakia Ahmed, Apna Haq. They had attended to give a presentation on the issues around so-called 'honour-based violence' and forced marriage. This was to enable the Improving Lives Select Commission to consider how it should undertake a scrutiny review into the issues.

A previous scrutiny review into Domestic Abuse had been undertaken by the Improving Lives Select Commission and presented to the Cabinet on 6th November, 2013. Minute No. C111 refers.

Work to tackle so-called 'honour-based' violence and forced marriage was led by the Safer Rotherham Partnership through the Domestic Abuse Priority Group. This was in-line with the national Violence Against Women Campaign that the Central Government led.

A presentation was delivered by the Domestic Abuse Officer. Issues covered included: -

- A definition of Domestic Abuse;
- There was no legal move to change the term "honour". The concept varied between different individuals and groups;
- Illustrated the differences between forced marriages and arranged marriages;
- Arranged marriages could become forced marriages if one partner subsequently withdrew their consent;
- There had been a slight increase from 2008/2009 – when 1,200 incidents were reported to 1,500 in 2012/2013;
- Majority of victims were female. 31% were in the 18-21 age bracket;
- Domestic Abuse training was refreshed in 2013;
- In March, 2014, the Young Person's Advocacy programme was adopted.

Three case studies were shared that illustrated the different types of forced marriage that could take place and the responses of agencies following referrals. Discussion was undertaken on forced marriage and the impact it had on children and young people.

Questions were asked if partners such as the Police, routinely attended key strategy meetings and Members of the Improving Lives Select Commission expressed concerns if this was not the case. Officers in attendance confirmed that the expectation was that all Partners must

attend when called to Strategy meetings. When this was found not to be the case it was challenged at a strategic level.

Discussion also covered: -

- What support was available for children and young people who wanted to report their concerns about being subject to a forced marriage? It could be very difficult for children to accuse their parents, as they loved them. What could the Local Authority and partners do to ensure help was available? - It was highlighted that the delivery of training on behalf of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board was always full to capacity. Positive work had also been undertaken with Mosques. However, Apna Haq raised issues about potential gaps in awareness raising in schools suggesting that it was not provided on a consistent basis.

- What exercises were undertaken to ensure that gaps were identified? – The legal change around domestic abuse had helped with the recording and analysis of forced marriage and so called "honour-based' violence. The family's history needed to be considered when assessing future risks. It was difficult to ascertain an accurate picture of the extent of forced marriage within Rotherham because of under-reporting.

- Rotherham's Elected Members had attended a police training session on CSE. Councillor Reynolds explained how he had asked whether the Chief Superintendent for South Yorkshire was confident that he had the resources to effectively police the issue. He did not confirm this was the case and it was an area of concern to Councillor Reynolds. - Statutory Guidance was clear that if the child was under the age of 18 the response would be led by Children's Services. If a specialist response was required Apna Haq would be approached.

- Councillor Turner was aware of cultural differences and expectations. If a young person reported any issues related to domestic abuse it would be taken seriously. Different cultural and traditional norm were respected but we have to place victims' safety first. There was the statutory obligation to prevent a domestic homicide. Apna Haq worked with and supported migrant communities and British Asian communities.

- The importance of independent, confidential and safe areas where reporting could take place was discussed.

- The provision of information to Elected Members was considered. It was noted that the Cabinet received a quarterly update from the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board.

It was agreed by all in attendance that a scrutiny review focused on forced marriage and so-called "honour-based" violence and in particularly how agencies responded to these issues given the legal changes recently introduced. This would be scheduled to take place in the spring of 2015. The members of the Improving Lives Select Commission supported the commencement of the review as quickly as possible.

Councillor Hamilton thanked the Officers in attendance for their presentation and contribution to the discussion.

Resolved: - (1) That the responses to so-called "honour-based" violence and forced marriage be noted.

(2) That a scrutiny review on so-called "honour-based" violence and forced marriage take place from spring, 2015.

33. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION'S SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE - UPDATE TO RESPONSE PRESENTED IN NOVEMBER, 2013.

Councillor Hamilton welcomed Chrissy Wright, Strategic Commissioning Manager and the interim chair of the Domestic Abuse Priority Group. Chrissy had attended the meeting in relation to the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Abuse that had been undertaken by the Improving Lives Select Commission and accepted by Cabinet on 5th February, 2014. Minute no. C176 refers.

Action plan comprised of 20 items. It was a substantial piece of work for the operational teams to take forward. The Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Abuse was considered, along with an update that was current as of 5th November, 2014.

Questions asked included: -

- The impact of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – this was still in its early days. Benchmarking with other Local Authority's had taken place and the use of a MASH had enabled prevention and disruption activity to prevent Domestic Abuse;
- How were partners and the Vulnerable Person's Unit working together and had there been training for staff? – Again, it was early days for the co-location of the VPU, the PPU and the Contact and Referral Team (CART). Anecdotally, teams did appear to be communicating better and sharing intelligence;
- What finance and investment was required? – There had been recruitment to two further posts through contingency funding;
- Had any recommendations stalled? - Any not complete were in progress. All recommendations were on a timeline to be completed by March 2015;
- Funding bids had been turned down? - A detailed response as to why the bid had not been successful had been received and the

Local Authority was looking for similar monies that could be bid for to pursue its work with perpetrators;

- Were there strong relationships with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office? - Yes. Future meetings were planned to look at accessing PCC funding;
- Recommendation 14 covered the use of a standard approach and standard risk assessment by all agencies. Were all agencies working towards an agreed and common understanding? – This had been reviewed with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Pre-birth assessments were not being undertaken as would be expected and clearer guidance had been rolled-out. It would become a Tri.ex document as it currently only existed as a paper document. The Domestic Abuse risk matrix aligned the needs of any child/ren to the adult victim;
- Were services attending the MARAC? - Key partners were attending and were aware that attendance was currently under review;

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, who had the issue of Domestic Abuse in his portfolio confirmed how he monitored the issues. Minutes of the meetings came to his Cabinet Member meetings. An initiative coming forward was that Rotherham was working towards the White Ribbon campaign whereby men advocated to other men that abuse against women should not be accepted under any circumstances. All major sports clubs, the Police and the Council in Rotherham had been asked to sign up to it.

Discussion continued: -

- Was there less reporting taking place? – This was being discussed with the Police at a South Yorkshire level. Research was being undertaken through Sheffield Hallam University to look victims' journeys and how supported they had felt. It could be very difficult to secure a conviction of Domestic Abuse;
- How did Rotherham's service compare to others? – The issue of Domestic Abuse was well-owned across the Council, across the Executive and by the Multi-Agency Support Hub.

Councillor Hamilton thanked the Officers for the update presentation and requested an update in six-months' time. Progress so far appeared to be positive and it must be maintained and built upon.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That a further update report on the Improving Lives Select Commission's Scrutiny Review of Domestic Abuse be presented in six-months' time.

34. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014.

The Safeguarding Adults Manager presented the sixth Safeguarding Adults Annual Report (2013/2014). The Department of Health's 'No Secrets' (2000) document stated that multi-agency management committees should undertake an audit to monitor and evaluation the way in which their policies, procedures and practices for the protection of vulnerable adults.

Rotherham Safeguarding Adults had investigated 314 referrals and 85 people were found to have suffered some form of abuse. 46 as a result of neglect or act of omission, 14 as a result of physical abuse, 13 as a result of institutional abuse, 5 as a result of psychological abuse, 4 as a result of financial abuse and 3 as a result of sexual abuse. Actions had been taken against providers around poor standards of care that resulted in harm.

The report included: -

- The Mission statement;
- Objectives;
- Charter;
- 100% of all alleged abuse reported were responded to within 24 hours;
- The Annual report had been contributed to by the Local Authority, the joint Learning Difficulties and Disability Service, NHS Trust, RDASH, Fire, Police and Voluntary sectors.

Priorities for the coming year included the Care Act (2014), which would be effective from 1st April, 2015.

The data within the report for the period 2013-2014 was discussed: -

- Source of alerts – other Council departments were referring concerns;
- There had been a large reduction in anonymous complaints – It was very difficult to work with an anonymous complaint. When they were informed of the processes and how their concerns will be handled they were usually more confident to put their name forward;
- Training – no members of the Police had taken up training in 2013/2014 – the Police ran their own training scheme;
- Future reports would include information about working with people who did not have the capacity to decide where they should live.

Resolved: - That the Safeguarding Adult Annual Report 2013/2014 be approved with the amendments as suggested to the heading sections.

35. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

The dates of the Select Commission meetings to be held in December may be subject to change.

Resolved: - That the meeting date of the next Improving Lives Select Commission be circulated in due course.