

## Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday 16 November 2022

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice Chair), Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

**Officers:** Martin Gray, David Willingham, Tanya Evans, Jon Doyle (Ch'S), Marc Stephenson (CS&RS) Judy Trainer (CS)

**Apologies:** Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Lauriane Povey

### 1 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

### 2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2022

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4 Scrutiny Review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships

The Select Committee received a presentation regarding multi agency working from the Contextual Safeguarding Team Manager which set out:

- The Continuum of Need
- MACE (muti agency child exploitation) triage:
  - Offender
  - Location
  - Victim
- Joint arrangements and locality arrangements
- Risk assessment and risk management pathways

The key issues highlighted from the presentation and discussed were as follows:

- The MACE hub provided a daily source of information, scrutiny and problem analysis, improving spaces and places to reduce the risk of harm
- Co-ordinated through the Joint Action Group (JAG), disruption activities might include licensing visits, premises closures, securing empty properties, street patrols, Thirteen visits etc
- Partnership working helped to build a complete picture of the child's environment and provide evidence for arrests
- Whilst moving a child out of the area might be necessary for safeguarding purposes and as a "circuit breaker", it was essential to break the pattern of abuse to prevent a longer-term risk

- Stockton-on-Tees were making strong progress compared to many other areas but it was recognised that more work was needed

The Select Committee received a presentation regarding wider partnership working from the Assistant Director – Community Safety and Regulatory Services which set out:

- Statutory requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, including the duty to undertake strategic needs assessment, consult with local residents and develop a strategic plan setting out priorities for all responsible partners
- The Community Safety Strategy, included six key priorities:
  - Managing the impact of organised crime
  - Reducing serious violence
  - Supporting the vulnerable
  - Reducing crime linked to substance misuse
  - Reducing the offending rates of prolific offenders
  - Reducing ASB and improving feelings of safety
- The Serious Violence Duty
- Operational Delivery

The key issues highlighted from the presentation and discussed were as follows:

- The Community Safety Partnership was well attended, effective and innovative
- The Community Safety Strategy took into account other strategies including those impacting on children and young people
- The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Court Act 2022, defined serious violence; this included domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence. The Act introduced a duty to consult with educational settings, prisons and youth custody authorities for the first time. Responsible Authorities had to work together and adopt a public health approach to ‘stop problems upstream’. The new emphasis on young people highlighted the need to address issues at primary and secondary stages and with wider partnership working
- Although overall crime rates had fallen in Stockton-on-Tees, there had been an increase in violent crime and it was recognised that a partnership approach was essential to tackle this
- The nature of offending was changing including new challenges such as County Lines. Although there had been success stories and progress made, it was recognised that this was the beginning of a partnership journey and greater understanding of complex issues and tactics adopted was needed
- The need for improved communications with ward Councillors was reinforced

The Select Committee received a presentation providing a social work perspective from the Service Lead for Children’s and Families Social Care which set out:

- The challenges of addressing extra familial harm including:

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- Modern Slavery and trafficking
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Definitions
- How children are “groomed”
- How feelings are invoked and unmet needs exploited
- As relationships become established, expectations, or requirements for the child emerge that influence and enforce behaviours
- Evidencing harm

The key issues highlighted from the presentation and discussed were as follows:

- The current child protection system, legislation and practice did not adequately address the extra-familial harm and risk facing many young people
- There was no statutory definition for Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). The Children’s Society believed a statutory definition of CCE was needed because children who were coerced into criminal activity were often treated as criminals by statutory agencies rather than as victims
- It was important to understand the influence of not only the material benefits of grooming but what the items represented to the child and how they could satisfy unmet needs by making a child feel accepted, important and rewarded
- Children might not recognise that they were being exploited or might be too afraid to admit that the exploitation was taking place
- It was imperative that judgements which positioned children as being responsible for putting themselves at risk and making poor decisions were challenged. This included challenging stereotypes and public perceptions
- Community intervention had a role to play in supporting children; even just asking a simple question such as “Are you ok?”

AGREED that the information be noted.

## **5 Chair’s Update and Work Programme**

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.