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Report Track:	**Community Scrutiny C'ttee: 19/03/19**

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 MARCH 2019

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND 'COUNTY LINES' SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

1   Purpose of Report

1.1   To receive the final report of the Committee's Child Sexual Exploitation and 'County Lines' Review undertaken during the 2018/19 municipal year.

2   Recommendations

That:

2.1   The final report in respect of the Committee's Child Sexual Exploitation and 'County Lines' review be accepted.

2.2   A letter be sent to the Home Office, on behalf of the Committee, recommending that the law be changed to stop mobile phones being purchased and used anonymously, thereby making it easier for relevant authorities to tackle County Lines issues.

2.3   A letter be sent to the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime (PFCC) detailing the recommendations of the Committee on this review, once finalised.

3   Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1   As part setting its work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year, the Committee agreed to undertake a review of Child Sexual Exploitation and 'County Lines' activity in the District, based on feedback received from a number of sources about these issues.

4   Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1   The remit of the Community Scrutiny Committee is linked to the Council's Community Wellbeing priority.

5	**Report Detail**

5.1 It was agreed in July 2018 by the Committee that its main review topic for 2018/19 would be Child Sexual Exploitation and 'County Lines'.

5.2 As part of setting the review topic, the Committee agreed that Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire County Council be invited to give a presentation to the Committee, specifically covering the below questions:

a) What is the scale of child exploitation in Cannock Chase with particular reference to 'County Lines' drug related activity?

b) What is the relative position of Cannock Chase in relation to the above when compared to other District / Borough / Local Policing Team areas in Staffordshire?

c) Are there any issues that the District Council need to consider to support existing and future action child exploitation in the District.

The Committee also agreed that a Task and Finish Group comprised of four members of the Committee be formed to undertake additional work on the review, if required.

5.3 The Committee received presentations from both Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire County Council at its meeting in November 2018.

5.4 Chief Insp. Sarah Wainwright from Staffordshire Police provided the Committee with a presentation outlining the below:

- County Lines Definition (produced by the National Crime Agency);
- Case study
- Operation ENGAGED;
- Operation Ribble and Operation Rufino;
- County Lines – Warning Signs / Indicators;
- Partnership Support – Opportunities;
- Referral Methods.

5.5 Members raised queries re the number of vulnerable people being exploited in the District and were informed that there were people on the periphery that the Police had been concerned about, but only a small number of referrals had been made this year.

5.6 A further query was made as to whether much co-operation was received from mobile phone companies to help tackle issues related to County Lines. Chief Inspector Wainwright replied that companies were co-operative, but getting hold of the necessary data and sourcing the right individuals from that data was extremely time consuming.

5.7   The Committee then queried if front-line Council staff were provided with information related to County Lines issues. The Committee were informed that The Partnerships, Community Safety & CCTV Manager has daily conversations with Staffordshire Police and within relevant teams about any issues raised.

5.8   It was recognised that the Police received a lot of support from the Council in helping to deal with crime/community safety issues.

5.9   The Committee queried if there was any way of counteracting the use of mobile phones anonymously. Chief Inspector Wainwright explained that it was difficult for the police to tackle this particular issue as the usage of pay-as-you-go mobiles was difficult to track and trace, as such phones could easily be purchased using false information.

5.10   A Member of the Committee suggested to members that a letter be sent to the Home Office, on behalf of the Committee, recommending that the law be changed to stop mobile phones being purchased and used anonymously, thereby making it easier for relevant authorities to tackle County Lines issues. This was agree by all Scrutiny Committee Members.

5.11   Ms. Black from Staffordshire County Council provided a presentation on CSE which covered the following:

- Aim of the session;
- Risk Factor Matrix;
- Current picture – barriers;
- Local picture of CSE;
- Age and Gender;
- Examples of Locality Info/Hotspot;
- Identified Themes across the area;
- The importance of Disruption;
- Multiagency Disruption Techniques;
- Background;
- Factors to Consider in Assessment;
- Outcomes;
- Key contacts.

5.12   The Committee queried if those persons being exploited and were classed as being in isolated communities had an ethnic or religious prominence (or lack of such).   Members were informed that work on cultural awareness and understanding was currently being strengthened locally and nationally in order to try and improve engagement with different groups.

5.13   Members were informed that at the time of the meeting, no particular issues existed within the District.   Where cases had been identified, disruption techniques were used to deal with any associated issues in partnership with the Community Safety Hub (CSH) locally.

6   Implications

6.1   **Financial**

None

6.2   **Legal**

None

6.3   **Human Resources**

None

6.4   **Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

None

6.5   **Human Rights Act**

None

6.6   **Data Protection**

None

6.7   **Risk Management**

None

6.8   **Equality & Diversity**

None

6.9   **Best Value**

None

7   Appendices to the Report

None

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

None