

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet 14 December 2015

ITEM 5 (a)
**Tackling Child Sexual
Exploitation in North
Tyneside - Overview,
Scrutiny and Policy
Development Committee
Sub Group Report**

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr I Grayson

Report from: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee's study, on behalf of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, into the local authority's arrangement to protect young people in the borough from child sexual exploitation.

The recommendations are set out in paragraph 1.5.5 below.

In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within two months. In providing this response Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

1.2 Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet consider and formulate a response to the recommendations presented to them as a result of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's study into child sexual exploitation.

1.3 Forward plan:

The report was included in the Forward Plan published on 9 November 2015 for the period 9 November 2015 – 29 February 2016 under the heading 'matters arising from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub committees'.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework:

The report contributes towards the following priorities of the 2014-18 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People - are cared for and kept safe if they become vulnerable

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 In response to the number of national high profile cases and reviews in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE) in recent years, the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee had agreed at its November 2014 meeting to examine the Authority's role and practice on issues relating to CSE in North Tyneside as its next in-depth study. Due to another in-depth study being undertaken by the sub-committee an initial scoping document for the establishment of a CSE sub group was not agreed until its meeting on 15 June 2015.
- 1.5.2 CSE was considered an appropriate topic as it was important to ensure the processes and initiatives undertaken by the authority and its partner organisations to tackle the issues around CSE were appropriate and effective and to raise awareness of the issues more broadly within the authority and the community as a whole.
- 1.5.3 The objective of the CSE Sub Group was to satisfy Members that there was a pro-active approach to tackling CSE in North Tyneside and increase awareness of Members, officers and the public in general of the issues and the warning signs in relation to CSE.
- 1.5.4 Members held a series of evidence gathering meetings with representatives from the local authority, the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board and organisations working with young people in the borough.
- 1.5.5 As a result of the study the CSE Sub Group have identified eleven recommendations, ten of which are for submission to Cabinet which are:
1. Cabinet requests that the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding ensures that local authority officers are enabled to attend the meetings of the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board's Sub Groups to ensure a consistent membership and clear reporting lines.
 2. Cabinet requests that the Chief Executive require all service areas to appoint a Safeguarding Champion who will participate in the completion of the Section 11 Audit from the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that all services have recognised that they must have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 3. Cabinet requests that the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board invites the Chair of the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee or a designated member of the Sub-committee to attend its meetings as an observer.
 4. Cabinet requests that the Head of Law and Governance undertakes the necessary steps to propose to Full Council an amendment to the Constitution to ensure that child sexual exploitation training is provided to all Members at the same frequency as to officers and that attendance is mandatory and includes information on:
 - what the situation in the borough is
 - what the warning signs are
 - what to do if you suspect something
 - what to do if someone comes to you with a disclosure or a suspicion.
 5. Cabinet requests that the Standards Committee reviews the current Members' and Co-opted Members' Code of Conduct and considers including a provision that Members must report any suspicion of sexual exploitation or intelligence received on any safeguarding issues to the authority's Front Door Service and that failure to do so would be considered a breach of the Code of Conduct.

6. Cabinet requests the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding to provide a quarterly update in the Members' Newsletter, including any information from the police service, on the situation in North Tyneside regarding child sexual exploitation.
 7. Cabinet requests that the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Head of Corporate Strategy develop a communication strategy for the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board's CSE Training Strategy to ensure all Members, officers and other interested groups both inside and outside the authority are aware of the training opportunities available and what is expected of them with regard to attendance and keeping up to date.
 8. Cabinet considers amending the process of applying for a private hire or a hackney carriage license and a personal licence issued under the Licensing Act 2003 to require the applicant to have undergone child sexual exploitation training prior to issue.
 9. Cabinet requests that the Head of Corporate Strategy develop a communications strategy on CSE through the authority's own publications (Our North Tyneside and Teamwork) to dispel some of the myths surrounding CSE and to make clear to residents and employees that people who are suffering CSE or who may suspect CSE is taking place can access appropriate support and information. The strategy should include the production of posters to inform people of the warning signs and what to do if they are concerned. These posters should be available for display in all Council buildings and offered to bed and breakfasts, hotels, takeaways and taxi offices.
 10. Cabinet requests the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure, the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding and the Head of Commissioning and Investment work with Changing Lives to consider whether there is a suitable venue in Whitley Bay to be made available for use by Changing Lives and their associated partners/programmes as a drop-in centre for young people who may be experiencing exploitation and/or abuse.
- 1.5.6 The full report which outlines the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the review is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.5.7 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee received the report on 7 December 2015 and suggested that the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (NTSCB) Training Strategy and Implementation Plan should include School Governing Bodies and that the Group C heading should read 'children at greater risk' instead of 'children at risk'. Officers at the meeting undertook to ensure that this was passed onto the NTSCB (minute OV37/12/15).
- 1.5.8 Cabinet has a statutory duty to respond to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's recommendations within 2 months of receiving them. In providing its response Cabinet is asked to provide reasons for any recommendations which are not approved. Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee is of the view that the recommendations set out in the report will assist the local authority, its partners and the public to improve their awareness of CSE and enable them to identify and support victims in the most effective and comprehensive way.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet accepts the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

Option 2

Cabinet does not accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above and provides a response to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee at the meeting.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet has a statutory duty to respond to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's recommendations within 2 months of receiving them. Option 1 is recommended as this option allows Cabinet time to consider and formulate a response to the recommendations.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee Report: Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in North Tyneside.

1.9 Contact officers:

Elizabeth Kerr, Democratic Services Officer Tel: (0191) 643 5322

Russell Pilling, Senior Manager Safeguarding and Placement Services Tel: (0191) 643 7314.

Alison Campbell, Senior Business Partner Tel: (0191) 643 7038.

1.10 Background information:

- [North Tyneside Council Constitution](#)
- [Minutes of Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee meetings held on 17 November 2014, 16 March, 20 July and 16 November 2015.](#)
- [Minutes of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee meeting held on 7 December 2015.](#)
- [Background information used in the formulation of the Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in North Tyneside report can be found on page 36 of the report.](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The financial implications associated with each recommendation will be included in Cabinet's response to the Sub Group's report.

2.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

The Sub Group which undertook this work on behalf of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee met with officers from across the authority and Heads of Service, the Independent Chair of the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board and representatives from Barnardo's, Changing Lives and Bright Futures. Full details are listed in the Sub Group's report attached at appendix 1.

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct issues relating to human rights arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The importance of raising awareness and educating adults and young people that sexual exploitation can happen to any child regardless of gender, religion, race, sexuality, disability, social and or economic background is detailed in the Sub Group's report attached at appendix 1.

2.6 Risk management

There are no direct issues relating to risk arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no direct issues relating to crime and disorder arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no direct issues relating to environment and sustainability arising from this report.

PART 3

The following officers and Members have been sent a copy of the report for their information:

- Chief Executive
- Mayor/Cabinet Member
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy
- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development