

**Report of the Director of Place and
the Director of Human Resources,
Performance & Communications,
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)
on 14th March 2017**

Licensing & Safeguarding in Barnsley - Update Report For Information Only

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee (SSC) meeting in March 2016, Members considered and provided challenge to work undertaken regarding Licensing and Safeguarding in Barnsley. This report is provided for information, in response to Members' request for an update on this area of work during the following year.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following the publication of the Jay report regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham, Councils were asked to consider whether they had adequate measures in place to ensure the same failings would not occur. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) has undertaken this work, including the completion of an internal audit review, focusing on both taxi and premise licensing. This work was undertaken to consider and ensure adequate measures are in place to safeguard our communities, particularly vulnerable children and adults.
- 2.2 Both the Jay and subsequent Casey reports acknowledge that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and different services and agencies have the opportunity to impact upon the protection of vulnerable people in our communities.
- 2.3 The Casey report also specifically acknowledges that:

'Licensing, regulation and enforcement functions exist to protect the general public from harm across areas ranging from food safety to houses in multiple occupation, to licensed premises for entertainment. Safety is one of the principles of licensing which informs legislation. The safety of the public should be the uppermost concern of any licensing and enforcement regime: when determining policy, setting standards and deciding how they will be enforced'.

3.0 Barnsley Context

- 3.1 Prior to the publication of the Jay and Casey reports, work was undertaken by BMBC with regards to licensing and safeguarding. For example, BMBC's Licensing Service has a number of policies and procedures in place to ensure those licensed to drive vehicles are 'fit and proper' and in doing so ensure the safety of passengers and members of the public alike.

- 3.2 BMBC's Head of Regulatory Services continues to be a member of the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) CSE Strategic and Operational Sub-group which enables the sharing of intelligence and consideration of licensing activities with regards to the safeguarding of vulnerable people in our communities.
- 3.3 The publication of the reports provided a further opportunity for the Licensing Service to examine its internal practices and identify where further improvements could be made. Examples of specific work streams underway include:
- Review of licensing policies and procedures
 - Review of appropriate systems to share intelligence with other local agencies (complete)
 - Review of ensuring the appropriate collation of information and action taken in relation to complaints, investigations and inspections (complete)
 - Elected Member training delivered to both new and existing Members (complete)
- 3.4 In addition to the above considerations, a specific Internal Audit Review was undertaken regarding Taxi and Premises Licensing which resulted in a number of recommendations and actions being put in place by the Licensing Service and other agencies, all of which have been successfully completed.
- 3.5 The service was reassured that there was clear evidence of good practice being undertaken including appropriate policies and procedures in place as well as links with other agencies. In response to the findings and to ensure further improvement, the Licensing Service has also undertaken the following key actions:
- Ensured regular submission of Casey Report update papers to the General Licensing Regulatory Board (GLRB)
 - A GSX (Global Service Exchange) account has been established for the secure exchange of sensitive data between agencies
 - Private Children's Homes Provider meetings are regularly attended by the Licensing Service, Safeguarding Children's Services, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and other partner organisations
 - Formalisation of a BMBC and SYP information sharing protocol ensuring the timely exchange of sensitive data including action meetings to discuss safeguarding issues
 - Continual liaison with SYP regarding the planning of proactive enforcement operations
 - GLRB and Statutory Licensing Regulatory Board (SLRB) Terms of Reference reviewed to ensure Elected Members' role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding is explicit
 - Taxi and premise licence checklist procedure in place for the approval/authorisation of taxi and premises licences
 - Development of procedures in relation to the undertaking of taxi and premise licence inspections

- 3.6 In addition to the above actions taken, in relation to hackney carriage and private hire driver licences, the Licensing Service is currently undertaking a full review of the Council's Guideline Policy regarding Criminal Convictions and application process, to build upon and strengthen how the Council deals with drivers/applicants who have been convicted or investigated for sexual offences. The revision of such policies and procedures will, in turn, strengthen the stance taken in dealing with cases relating to safeguarding.

4.0 Training

- 4.1 In addition to the actions listed above, specific work has been undertaken to ensure that appropriate training is in place. This has included the delivery of training to Elected Members in relation to the duties and functions contained within the GLRB and SLRB, including safeguarding. Training will continue to be delivered to Elected Members with the offer of additional refresher training in March 2017.
- 4.2 As part of a national working group delivering safeguarding training across the country, Sheffield Futures have delivered safeguarding training to both new and existing licensed drivers, Licensing Officers and Elected Members. Timescales set to ensure the achievement of key actions in accordance with recommendations arising from the previously mentioned internal audit review have been met and the work completed.
- 4.3 Further training extended across a number of other licensing activities including late night refreshment establishments is underway in conjunction with Sheffield Futures.

5.0 Future Plans

- 5.1 The Licensing Service plans to undertake continual review of taxi licence policies and procedures in consultation with the licensed trade. They will also continue to build upon working relationships with neighbouring local authorities; sharing best practice along with regular attendance at appropriate safeguarding meetings.

6.0 Glossary

BMBC - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
BSCB - Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board
CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation
GLRB - General Licensing Regulatory Board
SLRB - Statutory Licensing Regulatory Board
SSC - Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee
SYP - South Yorkshire Police

10.0 Report Author and Officer Contact

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