

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) TO CABINET ON 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2019

#### ESTABLISHING A SUB-REGIONAL RESPONSE TO TACKLING CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION IN BARNSELY, DONCASTER AND ROTHERHAM

##### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's approval for the Local Authority's participation within a multi-agency, sub-regional initiative aimed at addressing child criminal exploitation in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet endorses the Local Authority's participation within a multi-agency, sub-regional approach to tackling CCE during 2019/20, based upon the principles of prevention and targeted early intervention.**
- 2.2 **Subject to Cabinet's endorsement concerning the Local Authority's participation, that an evaluation of the outcomes of the initiative be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet.**

##### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Child criminal exploitation (CCE), which is sometimes referred to as '*County Lines*' is an emerging theme in all areas of the UK and South Yorkshire is no different. South Yorkshire has a high number of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and in the past five years Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham have each experienced in variable proportions '*county lines*' issues in relation to young people being targeted for CCE.
- 3.2 In March 2017, an All Party Parliamentary Group on Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, recorded the following observations: *Children and young people who go missing from home or care are at serious risk of being targeted for involvement in gangs, trafficking, criminalisation, sexual exploitation and violence. Recognising the risk at the time the child is reported as missing and offering a child appropriate support on return may prevent the situation escalating and further exploitation of vulnerable children and young people*".
- 3.3 An inherent aspect of CCE is the potential for victims to be both perpetrators and victims of serious crime. In its "County Lines – A national summary and emerging best practice (2018)", the Government identified the following in relation to young people at risk of or experiencing CCE: *Increasingly crime is being committed in private spaces as well as the public sphere and this type of crime often involves the exploitation of children and adults by physical intimidation, sexual and / or*

*financial extortion This marks the emergence of a new type of criminality that links street gangs, drug dealers, organised crime groups; together they are operating as unregulated, extremely violent and exploitative businesses”.*

- 3.4 In the past Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was often perceived as the victim’s fault, or due to their risky behaviour. There is a belief that in some areas of the UK a similar culture exists around criminal exploitation by gangs. It is important that professionals start seeing young people who are involved in gangs as potential victims of exploitation or trafficking and that all young people under 18 are considered children, are treated as such and are safeguarding by society. Recent developments around ‘contextual safeguarding’ are supportive of this approach and as part of the Council’s response to the recommendation made by Ofsted, following its inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services in the Borough, we are continually improving our understanding of the wider risks to which young people are exposed in the community, including the timeliness and quality of return home interviews when children go missing from home or care.
- 3.5 Doncaster Children’s Services Trust has led on a bid to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire, to establish a sub –regional CCE response covering the areas of Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham. The bid was successful in attracting £703,432 over two years (2018-2020) to be split across the three areas of South Yorkshire. The project will target young people ‘on the cusp of or experiencing CCE’ – not those who may already be involved in the Youth Justice system. In order to address this, a coordinated response is required between agencies to both disrupt and effectively support young people who are experiencing CCE or whom may be on the periphery of criminal exploitation.

#### **4.0 PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION**

- 4.1 Work is being coordinated across the three areas to develop local multi agency strategies to tackle CCE and this bid presents an opportunity to resource and pilot activities to pump prime strategies over the current financial year.
- 4.2 Whilst the bid has been developed as part of a sub-regional collaboration, it is recognised that the operating framework across each area will be unique due to local governance, demographics and resources. For this reason, the proposal is intentionally flexible so that programmes of activity can be tailored to fit local need. Essentially, strategic sub regional activity will include:
- Regional police led mapping of young people connected to OCGs across locality borders leading to identifiable areas to target resources.
  - Targeted police disruption activity focused on adult offenders exploiting young people.
  - Creation of a peripatetic team and associated resource to disrupt and prevent young people becoming involved in CCE deployed directly in high risk areas based upon Police and local intelligence layers. The team will include a Project Coordinator, positive activity leaders, assistant psychologist positions and a police resource, all of whom will be deployed according to intelligence and will apply youth work approaches to engaging young people who are deemed at risk.
  - Training for staff and ‘train the trainer’ opportunities that will bring together a range of professionals who are trained in a number of disciplines to work

collaboratively and consistently in order to create changes in the complex patterns of behaviour associated with children and young people who experience CCE. This will support legacy developments for locality based staff once the project has ended.

- Establishment of a South Yorkshire wide CCE strategy and intervention offer where identified young people are supported with appropriate intervention from locality based services including appropriate therapeutic support as required based on a consistent evidence informed approach.
- Development of education programmes delivered in schools in relation to preventing young people becoming at risk of CCE and a sub-regional campaign targeted at parents / carers to make them aware of indicators of CCE.
- Commissioning of local voluntary, community and faith groups for ongoing aftercare and step down support for young people diverted from CCE once the statutory interventions are completed.

4.3 Success will be measured sub regionally and will include indicators such as:

- Reduction in young people mapped to OCGs.
- Reduction in First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System / Reduction in binary offending rates.
- Reduction in active adult OCGs.
- Reduction in young people aged 16-17 year old entering the care system as a result of neglect originating through their involvement in CCE.
- Increase in the perception of safety from young people as a result of their interventions.
- Wider benefits to reduce the community / young people perception around knife crime, youth violence and exploitation.

A full evaluation will take place at the end of the programme for which the Office of the PCC are currently identifying a partner to undertake the work.**5.0**

### **CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

5.1 Evidence suggests that in developing a strategy for addressing CCE, no single agency can tackle the problem of CCE; it has to be a multi-agency, multi-faceted, coordinated response, drawing on the unique contributions of the key agencies and their staff. Whilst enforcement and police disruption of gang activity are important it is recognised that education and the prevention of young people from becoming victims or perpetrators of criminal exploitation and serious violence needs to be enabled. These strategies share the insight that it is not helpful for agencies and professionals who work with young people to get drawn into simplistically seeing them as either victims or perpetrators. However, the enormity of the task of bringing about a shift in mind-set of those in all agencies working with this group of young people is not to be underestimated. The Home Office is presently consulting on proposals for the best multi-agency approach in preventing and tackling serious violence, with an emphasis upon early intervention and prevention among young people.

5.2 In order to be effective, the strategy will require multi agency buy in from partners such as social care, housing providers, police and schools. The project will work alongside and within existing local structures and pathways but may result in an increased demand / referral on to early help services and/or other agencies.

- 5.3 The proposal brings together sub regional partners and already we are beginning to identify further areas of activity within which it would be more feasible and effective to collaborate. One area currently under consideration is the viability of working with our colleagues to target joint prevention work through schools and multi academy trusts. This is an area of commercial development that is currently being explored as part of the CCE bid as this will lay the foundations for more sub regional collaboration and a less competitive approach, employing more specialisms across the region.
- 5.4 Overall outcomes will be monitored on a quarterly basis in line with published data from the Ministry of Justice and will provide case studies and explore thematic issues which have been identified through the creation and delivery of the project.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS**

- 6.1 In particular, please see Paragraph 17.1.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer).
- 7.2 Doncaster Children Services Trust (DCST) have been awarded grant funding of £703,432 over two years from the Police and Crime Commissioners Office (PCCO) aimed at addressing child criminal exploitation in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. The funding is for two years and covers the period 2018 – 2020 (will cease on 31 March 2020) and will be used to provide an early intervention and prevention offer for young people who are experiencing or on the cusp of CCE involvement.
- 7.3 DCST is the host Authority for the multi-agency arrangement on behalf of the 3 local authorities and will manage the peripatetic team that has been established and would be deployed in high risk areas across the 3 local authorities' areas to disrupt and prevent young people becoming involved in CCE. The 2 year funding of £703k funding covers expected staffing costs (team manager, CCE support workers, psychologists, etc.), transport, commissioned activities / support, etc.
- 7.4 Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham are each providing in-kind match funding through their own resources and existing services to support successful implementation of the CCE initiative. There is no prescription on the financial value of in-kind contributions or match funding. In the case of Barnsley, it includes existing work with schools and access to the Council's YOT and MST specialist provision.
- 7.5 There is no specific requirement on the 3 local authorities to maintain or mainstream the team or funding beyond March 2020. However, there is the expectation that the arrangement would create opportunities and embed collaborative working amongst professionals across the 3 local authorities.

## **8.0 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct implications for employees of the Authority. The Team which will be established in support of the initiative will be deployed in support of each district, according to intelligence and assessments of risk.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Should Cabinet approve the Borough's involvement in this initiative, it is recommended that arrangements for overseeing the governance of the project and arrangements for challenge and accountability over progress and outcomes, should form part of the terms of reference of the Child Criminal Exploitation Sub-Group of the Barnsley Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) and reported to the LSCP and Safer Barnsley Partnership.

## **10.0 CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no implications for the current range of channels for accessing Council services or for digital transactions, arising through this report.

## **11.0 COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Subject to Cabinet's approval and the engagement of local partners, including South Yorkshire Police, schools/academies and housing providers, the aims and objectives of the project will be widely disseminated through existing communication networks.

## **12.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 12.1 The Council's Senior Management Team has been consulted and is supportive of the Authority's involvement in the proposal.

## **13.0 THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

- 13.1 Barnsley's participation in the initiative accords with the strategic objective of the Borough Children and Young People's Plan and Council Corporate Plan, of keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- 13.2 There is, currently, no local performance indicator and target concerning the percentage of young people who are experiencing or who are at risk of experiencing CCE in the Borough. However, the project will involve the development of a set of indicators at sub-regional level against which progress will be reported to the Barnsley LSCP together with the Safer Barnsley Partnership. A full evaluation of the project and its outcomes will be undertaken next year and be incorporated within the LSCP's inaugural annual report which will be presented to Cabinet next year.

#### **14.0 PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

14.1 It is anticipated that the multi-agency approach to tackling CCE in the Sub-Region will ensure that any specific needs of young people at risk and who have a protected characteristic, will be supported. This is likely to form part of the full evaluation of the project, following its conclusion.

#### **15.0 TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY**

15.1 The approach will target the extent to which the impact of poverty upon parental relationships and child neglect, particularly upon adolescents, increases the risk of experiencing CCE, together with how this can be mitigated through multi-agency led prevention and early intervention.

#### **16.0 TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES**

16.1 The Sub-Regional initiative will adopt a public health approach in order to understand the causes and consequences of CCE and will be informed by evidence and a rigorous evaluation of interventions.

#### **17.0 REDUCTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER**

17.1 A primary purpose of the Borough's involvement in formulating a Sub-Regional 'offer' to tackling CCE is to reduce the risk of such crime upon the achievement of young people's potential and its adverse impact upon families and communities.

#### **18.0 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

18.1 Any risks which could compromise the effective implementation of the project locally, such as for example, the engagement of schools and multi academy trusts, will form part of the Early Start, Prevention and Sufficiency Service's register of operational risks. Such risks will be managed and mitigated accordingly.

#### **19.0 HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESILIENCE ISSUES**

19.1 There are no implications for the health and safety of the public or the Council's workforce and for the resilience of the Borough to a major incident, through consideration of this report.

#### **20.0 COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

20.1 The proposal is compatible with the Articles and Protocols of the Convention.

#### **21.0 CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY**

21.1 There are no implications for the local environment or the conservation of biodiversity arising through this report.

**22.0 GLOSSARY**

22.1 None, applicable.

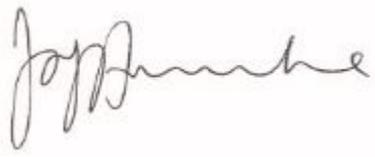
**23.0 LIST OF APPENDICES**

23.1 There are no appendices to this report.

**24.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

24.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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Financial Implications/Consultation  ...29.05.2019..... (To be signed by senior Financial Services officer)
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