

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: 6 (b)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

7th JANUARY 2014

COMMUNITY SAFETY and LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board of the progress made to date by the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board approves the actions of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel since the last update.

PROGRESS OF THE PANEL

- 3 The Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny panel met on the 18th December. The following outlines the progress and intention of that meeting.

18th December Meeting Exploitation of Children

- 4 The Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panels work programme identified the subject of "Exploitation of Children" and the Panel determined at their meeting of 20th November that it would be the next subject the panel would address.
- 5 The panel identified this subject as it was apparent through the BBC News that unfortunately it is a growing problem. The BBC had reported that helplines have seen a noticeable increase in calls from young people with thousands being reported to Police.
- 6 Against this background the panel wanted to know how significant this problem is in Middlesbrough and what can be done to arrest the problem and identify gaps where the Council and/or its partners could contribute to resolving this issue.
- 7 The panel is aware that Barnardo's in Middlesbrough has a SECOS project to enable young people to exit and recover from sexual exploitation. There are concerns that

such exploitation may be becoming more organised and sophisticated which is difficult to police.

- 8 Members have discussed the principles of this Scrutiny and considered it prudent to have more information of the depth and extent of the problem of exploiting children before establishing their Terms of Reference. The panel wanted to gain clarity on the issues of Physical, Emotional and Sexual exploitation. Consequently, to provide the panel with a clear understanding of the problem and the positive actions presently undertaken while recognising the difficulties the panel invited three areas of specialism to the meeting. These were representatives from Barnardo's, Local Safeguarding Children Board. (LSCB's) and Middlesbrough Council's Children Social Care will be in attendance.
- 9 Upon receiving this information, members have requested that the Chair of Licencing and appropriate officer attend the next meeting (January 2014) to gain information regarding the approach taken by the committee when addressing applications from establishments such as Hotels, Bars etc and their awareness and/or their procedures for ensuring these premises are not used to facilitate the exploitation of Children.
- 10 The panel also made reference to the process for receiving applications for Taxi driving due to recent publicity and information presented at the meeting of 18th December and how the Licensing Committee addresses these issues.
- 11 Members have asked that representatives from the Youth Service also attend the next meeting to outline their involvement in tackling exploitation of Children.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12 No background paper was used in the preparation of this report: -

COUNCILLOR FRANCES McINTYRE

**CHAIR OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEISURE
SCRUTINY PANEL**

20th December 2013

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