

Updated Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention Strategy

Cabinet

Date: 8th February 2017

Author:	Cabinet Member for Children's Services Director of Children's Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from Cabinet to endorse the Council's refreshed Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation.
- 1.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is among the most serious and challenging issues that any Council will face. Since launching the Council's first CSE Prevention strategy in 2015, there has been a great deal of activity undertaken and significant improvements have been made in understanding and recognising CSE within Swindon Children's Services and the wider Council. However, we recognise we must not be complacent and the strategy has now been refreshed to reflect new national and local learning. This report informs members of the Council's priorities and key activities for preventing child sexual exploitation over the next three years.
- 1.3 Tackling CSE is vital to support the Council's Corporate Priority of reducing vulnerability. It also contributes to the One Swindon Priority: Living Independently, protect from harm, leading healthy lives and making a positive contribution. There are also links to the Crime and Disorder Act whereby Section 17 of the Act 1998 makes it a statutory responsibility for all local authorities to consider community safety as part of its core business.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is invited to recommend to Council that it:

- 2.1 Agrees the updated Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention Strategy as set out in Appendix 1; and
- 2.2 Notes that an associated delivery plan will be developed by the Council's CSE Working Group, progress on which will be reported periodically to the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the plan updated at regular intervals.

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3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a crime that is not limited to any particular geography, ethnic or social background, and there is no single model of perpetration. CSE is therefore recognised as a national problem.
- 3.2 Child Sexual Exploitation has destructive and far reaching consequences for victims, their families, and society. It involves young people being offered incentives (for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) to participate in sexual acts. Perpetrators have power by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Identifying children and young people at risk and protecting them from sexual exploitation in Swindon is a collective, multi-agency responsibility. Working with safeguarding partners, the Council's aims include:
- a. Prevention, awareness raising and public confidence
 - b. Early identification and protection
 - c. Bringing perpetrators to justice
 - d. Intervention and support to children and their families
 - e. Intelligence gathering and performance monitoring
- 3.3 The Council's CSE Prevention Strategy has been developed to support and enhance the work of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board around preventing Child Sexual Exploitation. Swindon Borough Council cannot tackle the issue in isolation, the support of the police service and the full commitment of all statutory agencies, the voluntary sector, schools and the wider community are critical.
- 3.4 Since launching the Council's initial strategy in 2015, there has been a great deal of activity undertaken and significant improvements have been made in understanding and recognising CSE within Swindon Children's Services and the wider Council. Through close working with partners, the Council has undertaken work to ensure that all professionals are fully aware of the risks of CSE and know what to do if they have concerns. Successful delivery of the Council CSE Action Plan has achieved a number of positive outcomes, but it is clear there is still more to do. Some key achievements include:
- a. The creation of the multi-agency OPAL Team who work directly with children who are at high risk of CSE or who have been sexually exploited;
 - b. Improved awareness of CSE amongst practitioners;
 - c. Mandatory CSE e-learning for all Council public facing staff;

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- d. CSE training provided for Swindon's wider service industry including bus companies, leisure centres, hotels, CCTV operators and housing maintenance;
 - e. Training to enhance practitioners skills and practice in working with children (including children with a learning disability) and parents; and
 - f. The collation of robust local intelligence on the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation in Swindon through the partnership profiles.
- 3.5 The 2015 CSE Strategy has been refreshed building on the learning from the past 2 years and the intelligence gathered from local and national risk profiles and audits. The updated strategy for 2017-2020 includes local objectives, a national overview of CSE, and current and emerging local issues. CSE is complex. As mentioned above, good collaborative working both within the Council and across the partnership is required to reduce the risk of CSE. Swindon Council has set three priorities and identified a number of key activities for implementing the updated strategy. The priorities are:
- I. Prevent CSE by creating an environment that does not tolerate CSE;
 - II. Provide protection by identifying and supporting victims;
 - III. Stop perpetrators by identifying them early, disrupting.
- 3.6 The Council's updated CSE prevention strategy is a 'live' document and will be subject to scrutiny and potential amendment. It is important to ensure the document aligns to emerging national and local issues, particularly in relation to the wider exploitation strategy (covering CSE, Missing Children, Criminal Exploitation, Trafficking, and Online Exploitation) in development by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- 3.7 The Council will continue with its senior officer CSE Working Group albeit with refreshed membership, who will be accountable for over-seeing the development and implementation of a robust action plan to support the delivery of the Council's updated strategy.
- 3.8 The strategy and action plan will be monitored by the Council's CSE Working Group and progress will periodically be reported to Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The action plan will be refreshed on an annual basis.
- 4. Alternative Options**
- 4.1 There is no statutory requirement to have a Council Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention Strategy although it is considered good practice to have one.
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5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Council has already provided a CSE Operational Manager and additional social work resources to meet service demand. The funding for this is contained within the draft budget proposal elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 No implications have been identified other than as covered in Section One of the main body of the report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found. The strategy will positively impact on vulnerable children living in Swindon's community. A copy of the DIA can be obtained from the report author

Risk Management

- 5.5 CSE is included on the Risk Register for Services

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Interim Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 No unpublished papers

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Updated Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation 2017-2020

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and it is recommended that full Council be asked to adopt the updated strategy. It is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for February 2017.