



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

2 December 2020

Report Title:	Cabinet Response to Spotlight Review of County Lines Issues in St Helens
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All Wards
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Borough priorities Please mark X for any priority supported by this report NB Use Section 4 - Background Information to explain how each selected priority is supported	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities for our residents	X
	Support a strong, diverse and well-connected local economy	
	Create a green, thriving and vibrant place to be proud of	
	Be a modern, efficient and effective Council	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents to Cabinet a proposed Action Plan in response to the recommendations made by the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel Task Group following a Spotlight Review on the issue of County Lines.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Approve the Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 setting out the response to the recommendations from the Safer Communities Panel Spotlight Review of County Lines Issues in St Helens.

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 This report presents a proposed response to the recommendations made following the completion of a review of the issue of County Lines in St Helens and the presentation of eight recommendations to Cabinet.

4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1 At the previous meeting on 23 September 2020, Cabinet noted the Spotlight Review on the issue of County Lines presented by the Chair of the Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel and resolved that Cabinet receive a report considering the recommendations and the production of an Action Plan prior to submission to the Place Services Scrutiny Panel on 24 November 2020.
- 4.2 Cabinet recommended that the Place Services Committee receive the response to the Spotlight Review due to this Committee now encompassing the functions of the previous Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel, however both the Chairs of the Place Services and CYP Scrutiny Committees have agreed that the CYP Scrutiny Committee will initially consider the proposed response to the recommendations made.
- 4.3 Attached at Appendix 1 is an Action Plan proposing a response to the recommendations following the findings of the Spotlight Review.

- 4.4 Due to the nature of the issue of County Lines and the need for co-ordinated action to protect vulnerable young people, the Action Plan has been developed by Officers across Children's Social Care, Education and Early Help Services and in consultation with the Community Safety Team.
- 4.5 A key theme from the recommendations made by the Task Group was communication – specifically to ensure that agencies received regular training to raise awareness of the issue of County Lines and to ensure partners are aware of the risks and responses required. In response to these recommendations, progress has been made in preparing further training and in communicating with Elected Members who are also School Governors to ensure that schools are at the centre of the response to County Lines. The response to Recommendation Two outlines the current activity that is undertaken in partnership with schools in relation to this issue.
- 4.6 The Task Group also made recommendations to engage further with both the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership and the St Giles Trust to strengthen joint working and to understand their roles in tackling exploitation of vulnerable young people. The Action Plan highlights that due to current restrictions, it is not possible to schedule visits to external organisations. However, these actions will be delivered as soon as suitable arrangements can be confirmed.

5. Community Impact Assessment

- 5.1 A Community Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

6 Consideration of Alternatives

- 6.1 There are no alternative options related to this report.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The Spotlight Review into the issue of County Lines in St Helens provides an insight into the existing partnership activity in the borough to protect young people, tackle the exploitation of young people and raise awareness of this issue.
- 7.2 The recommendations of the Review have prioritised the areas of communication, training and engagement. The recommendations of regular and detailed monitoring to Scrutiny Panel and sharing the recommendations with the Children's Improvement Board will promote further awareness across governance structures in St Helens and ensure that this issue remains central to the activity of protecting young people and building safer communities for our children and families.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.2.1 Social Value

8.2.1.1 The impact of any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report on employing local people, spending in the local economy or local procurement would depend on how the recommendations are implemented, if accepted/supported by Cabinet.

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment

8.2.2.1 There are no sustainability and environmental impacts arising from this report.

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing

8.2.3.1 There are no direct impacts arising from this report. Protecting the health and wellbeing of young people is a key corporate priority.

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights

8.2.4.1 There are no direct impacts to Equality or Human Rights emerging from this report.

8.3 Customers and Resident

8.3.1 The recommendations made by the Task Group highlighted the importance of awareness raising in relation to the risks of exploitation of vulnerable young people. Ensuring agency awareness as well as informing our communities about this issue and responses, will assist in preventative activity and in creating safer communities.

8.4 Asset and Property

8.4.1 There are no asset or property issues arising from this report.

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource

8.5.1 There are no direct staffing implications emerging from this report. Tackling County Lines in partnership with other statutory partners is a shared responsibility of the Complex Safeguarding Service, Education Services and the Community Safety Teams within the Council. Delivery of the actions within the Plan have been allocated to responsible officers across each of the service areas.

8.6 Risks

8.6.1 There are no risks directly associated with this report. County Lines and criminal exploitation in our community are key risks and agencies continue to co-ordinate responses to protect our young people. The recommendations made by the Spotlight Review and the subsequent Action Plan support the delivery of the overall aim of tackling County Lines, focusing on preventative actions and raising awareness within our communities.

8.7 Finance

8.7.1 There are no direct financial implications emerging from this report.

8.8 Policy Framework Implications

8.8.1 There are no Policy implications emerging from this report.

9. Background papers

9.1 Report to St Helens Cabinet, 23 September 2020:
'Spotlight Review of County Lines Issues in St Helens Scrutiny Task Group Report'

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 - Action Plan – Spotlight Review of County Lines Issues in St Helens