

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

16 JUNE 2015

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HARVEY TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HEALTH AND PLACE
UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 20**

Safety of young and vulnerable people in taxis

Can the Portfolio Holder please give an update on any work being undertaken with regards to safeguarding issues and young & vulnerable people, specifically in relation to Safeguarding policies as they affect the private hire trade and Hackney Carriages.

Answer

The Assistant Director Environment and Environmental Health and Licensing Manager have been looking at this area in detail especially in light of the second Rotherham Report authored by Louise Casey which was presented to the House of Commons in February 2015.

To this end a number of pieces of work are currently ongoing in conjunction with Devon and Cornwall Police's Public Protection Unit.

- *Development of awareness sessions for drivers, hackney carriage proprietors and private hire operators based upon the national campaign 'Say Something if you see something.'*
- *Inclusion of safeguarding questions in the council's knowledge test to ensure a complete understanding of vulnerability, acceptable conduct and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).*
- *Further staff awareness training to ensure that early signs and areas of concerns are highlighted at the first opportunity for multi agency investigation.*

Members may be aware that my portfolio also includes responsibility for the Community Safety Partnership. I can also advise members that this is a high priority not only for the Exeter Community Safety Partnership but also for the county wide Safer Devon Partnership. To this end a number of other measures are also being put in place:

- *the establishment of a multi-agency CSE sub group meeting every six weeks to address CSE in Devon;*
- *more investment in and exploration of data collection, mapping and the assessment of CSE risk, including the set up of a data working group;*
- *support for victims in conjunction with partner agencies;*
- *focusing on early intervention to prevent children and young people at risk of CSE becoming victims, including the employment of a specialist in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to analyse social networking activity;*
- *encouraging local business to sign up to a commitment agreement to train and raise awareness of CSE among their staff, and the potential for developing this further;*
- *encouraging businesses and the wider public to report lower level concerns to Crimestoppers, which over time would form intelligence which can be used by the Police to detect CSE;*
- *working with the NSPCC helpline to ensure that they are equipped to make referrals where necessary to the Police and to Social Care.*

I can also add that in Exeter awareness sessions are also being arranged by the City Council in conjunction with the Police for the hotel, pub and club sectors.