

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

### Meeting held 28 September 2015

**PRESENT:** Councillors Chris Rosling-Josephs (Chair), John Booker, Katie Condliffe, Aodan Marken, Karen McGowan, Pat Midgley, Chris Peace, Lynn Rooney, Colin Ross, Ian Saunders and Peter Rippon (Substitute Member)

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Gillian Foster, (Diocese Representative - Education Non-Council Voting Member)

Jules Jones, (Parent Governor Representative - Education Non-Council Voting Member)

Alison Warner, (School Governor Representative - Education Non-Council Non-Voting Member)

Alice Riddell, (Healthwatch Sheffield, Observer)

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nasima Akther, Steve Jones (with Councillor Peter Rippon attending as his substitute), Mohammad Maroof, Jack Scott and Cliff Woodcraft and Joan Stratford (Education Non-Council Voting Member).

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 Councillor Ian Saunders declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 8 (Children and Families Act 2014) as he and his wife were Foster Carers, but chose to remain in the meeting due to the nature of the item under consideration.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015, were approved as a correct record and, arising from their consideration, it was noted that the Chair, Councillor Chris Rosling-Josephs, was to liaise with the Deputy Chair, Councillor Cliff Woodcraft, and the Policy and Improvement Officer, with a view to inviting Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, to provide a follow-up report to a future meeting of the Committee. The Chair added that, as the Work Programme was busy, this may need to be early in the next Municipal Year.

4.2 The Committee also noted the circulated Actions Update.

## **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

## **6. ROAD SAFETY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SHEFFIELD**

6.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Regeneration and Development Services which provided an overview of the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership and the Education, Training and Publicity Action Plan, an update on road safety for children and young people in Sheffield over the past 10 years and resulting actions, and an overview of the ongoing work around 20 mph zones and the School Keep Clear review.

6.2 In attendance for this item were Dick Proctor (Transport Vision and Strategy Manager), Joanne Wehrle (Safer Roads Education Manager), Karen Vickers (Senior Road Safety Officer) and David Lawson (Senior Road Safety Officer).

6.3 The Committee were taken through the report by the officers and following this, Members made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-

- It was recognised that some drivers did not regard speeding as a criminal offence and that this needed to be got across to them. The speed awareness courses were useful in changing people's attitudes towards speeding.
- Parents, as well as children, were included in the early years sessions on road safety, with the aim being to make the child a safer pedestrian and to alert parents to the dangers of parking outside schools when dropping children off.
- Members would be provided with a list of schools which were not engaging with road safety initiatives.
- Officers were working with students at the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre in relation to young driver and rider safety.
- Road safety activity was informed by the casualty data and priority was given to areas where the highest number of casualties lived.
- In relation to parents dropping children off at school, drop-off zones had worked very well at certain schools.
- Approximately 90% of primary schools attend Crucial Crew at the Lifewise Centre. Year 6 pupils attended to receive a range of personal safety scenarios including a road safety scenario.

- The reasons why children and young people in certain areas were more prone to accidents were complex, with issues such as housing, road layout and the culture of the community being significant. Areas of high deprivation showed higher casualty rates. In these areas, the peak in child pedestrian casualties was often shown to be earlier than in other areas, with children under 10 years of age being more prone to getting injured, as they were allowed to go out and travel independently from an earlier age.
- The collision data collected by the Police did not show whether the people involved had a criminal record so it was difficult to show a link between road traffic collisions and criminal behaviour. However, a study of fatal collisions in South Yorkshire had shown that those with a criminal record were more likely to be involved in fatal collisions. Officers were to meet with the Youth Offending Service in Sheffield to discuss how road safety interventions could be delivered to those people who were at higher risk of criminal behaviour.
- The Safer Roads Partnership already worked with over 300 approved driving instructors who delivered road safety messages. It was suggested that engagement of young drivers aged 17-24 years could also be undertaken via car sales firms.
- Officers were encouraged by the success of the Junior Road Safety Officer scheme, with 34 Sheffield schools participating, half of which were located in high priority areas. It was important to extend this initiative across the City.
- The use of mock trials had proved very effective in emphasising the seriousness of road safety to college students.
- The two children aged 16 and under who were killed in road collisions in Sheffield in 2013 and 2014 respectively, attended different schools.
- In relation to the School Keep Clear Review, schools were being given advice about park and stride initiatives, five minute walking zones and setting up agreements with nearby businesses to use their car parks. .
- Details of the schools in the City which had a 40 mph speed limit on the roads outside them would be provided to the Policy and Improvement Officer for circulation to Committee Members.
- The use of black box devices in cars was encouraged, particularly in the case of young drivers.
- Pedestrian casualties peaked between 10-14 years and again between 17-24 years with some of these being alcohol related in the evenings and at weekends.

- There was a spike in the statistics for the 60+ age group for pedestrian casualties. The effects of an ageing population were beginning to be seen in the statistics and interventions were being developed as a result.
- The information which was collected by Police following collisions did not attribute blame, so it was difficult to say how many young drivers were responsible for them. However, many collisions involving young drivers were single vehicle incidents.
- Officers would be delivering sessions to students of the University Technical College in the next few months.
- Information would be sent to the Policy and Improvement Officer for circulation to Committee Members on the proposal by Thurrock Council to allow teachers and parent volunteers to issue parking tickets outside schools.
- In comparison with other authorities in the UK, South Yorkshire appeared to be somewhere in the middle. An exercise had been undertaken which looked at other Safer Roads Partnership Plans and South Yorkshire seemed to be undertaking the same sort of interventions as those which came out best. Road casualties across GB had gone up in all severity categories in 2014 whereas killed and seriously injured casualties in South Yorkshire in 2014 had reduced, thus bucking the national trend.
- Officers would check on the effectiveness of the reported use of 3-D road markings in other countries in reducing pedestrian casualties. In Sheffield, some bollards had been installed which had the appearance of children.
- In relation to the School Keep Clear Review, officers were undertaking work with Parking Services, who were putting together a presentation to schools, with consideration being given to which schools to target.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks the attending officers for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and responses to questions;
- (c) congratulates the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership on its achievements in the face of decreasing budgets;
- (d) notes the extensive range of interventions being delivered in Sheffield and across South Yorkshire to address road safety for children and young people; and
- (e) requests that officers consider what steps could be taken to encourage schools and colleges in the City to engage with the Council's road safety

initiatives, with the aim of reducing injuries to children and young people, including educating parents.

## **7. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014**

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, which provided an update on progress in implementing in Sheffield the new requirements created under the Children and Families Act 2014. The report was supported by a presentation which covered the relevant sections of the Act.

7.2 In attendance for this item were Dorne Collinson (Director of Children and Families), Jon Banwell (Assistant Director, Provider Services), Debbie Mercer (Assistant Director, Fieldwork Services), Dee Desgranges (Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities), Cathie Tandy (Assistant Service Manager – Strategy, Policy, Development and Performance) and Anna Brook (Policy and Strategy Officer).

7.3 The presentation was introduced by Dorne Collinson and the officers addressed the Committee in turn on the different parts of the Act. Jon Banwell spoke on Adoption and Contact, including Fostering, Debbie Mercer spoke on Family Justice, Dee Desgranges dealt with Special Educational Needs, Cathie Tandy referred to Childcare Reform, and Anna Brook covered other relevant parts of the Act.

7.4 Members made various comments and asked a number of questions to which responses were provided as follows:-

### **7.4.1 Adoption and Contact**

- In relation to Fostering to Adopt, comparison of Sheffield's performance with that of other local authorities would be sent to the Policy and Improvement Officer for circulation to Committee Members.
- The length of Fostering Post 18 Placement Support was based on individual needs, but usually lasted for about 18 months.

### **7.4.2 Family Justice**

- Changes to procedures in care proceedings had been made as a result of some court cases going on for up to a year. Whilst officers shared the concerns expressed about the focus being on meeting deadlines rather than outcomes, it appeared that quicker outcomes produced better results.
- There had been no negative feedback in reducing the time limits on care proceedings from 33 weeks to 27 weeks, but the limit could be extended if necessary and would always be kept under review.
- Positives resulting from the reduced time limits on care proceedings were that

children had been placed with relatives and long term placements had been arranged more quickly. It was recognised that other local authorities had shorter deadlines, but it was important to focus on outcomes.

- Outcomes were the driver in the process, with the best interests of the child being of the highest importance. An independent reviewing service fed back on any issues and Sheffield had good rates of kinship care and adoption, with 25 adoptions having taken place so far this year.
- The Act designated the Social Worker to be the expert witness in care proceedings, unless the case was particularly complex.
- The likely impact of Legal Aid cuts would be a rise in Section 7 reports and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service had reported that this had been the case.

#### 7.4.3 Special Educational Needs

- The Council was on schedule for the next batch of conversions.
- It was considered that the Council had adequate numbers of people working on Special Education Needs (SEN), with four staff managing a team of 23 people. These were split into a Conversions Team, a Support Team and an Administration Team, and there was an Education Health and Care Co-ordinator.
- Half of the financial resource for Special Education Needs was from a Special Education Needs grant, but this finished in March 2016.
- The SEN teams were structured according to localities.
- The Y6 cohort, which was to move through, was bigger than the Y7 cohort last year, so planning was required and there were no extra resources. Any new schools would need to build for inclusion, with the target being the same offer for all children.
- More children were coming through with SEN year on year. This might be down to improved diagnosis, but autism was also providing a spike.
- Schools at Nook Lane and Birley Spa were supporting children with SEN in mainstream school and it was hoped that this approach could be widened across the City.
- There was a need for an excellence hub in each location.

#### 7.4.4 Other Parts of the Act

- The legislation on tobacco, e-cigarettes and smoking elements could be

enforced by local authorities and a note on what was being delivered locally would be sent to the Policy and Improvement Officer for circulation to Committee Members.

- In relation to sexual assaults on children in schools, systems were now in place to identify situations, respond and protect children and young people. It was emphasised that child protection was the responsibility of everyone as the statutory organisations could only perform effectively with the assistance of the public.
- Child abusers had become more complicated and, whilst the Social Workers' job was a difficult but rewarding one, it had become more complex.
- The City's Tackling Poverty Strategy, which incorporated duties in relation to child poverty, included links to the Food Strategy. There had been recent discussions about work on child hunger, with much of this being related to identification involving schools and health providers. Creative ways of bringing money in to address child hunger were being explored, as well as creating solutions in communities themselves.
- A small pilot on child hunger in the school holidays had been undertaken in the City during the summer and this had been packaged as a holiday activity to avoid any stigma.
- Different organisations were looking at food poverty in the City and the role of community businesses in providing food was being examined. Food banks and advice services were working together and the early feedback was that this had been helpful, particularly in relation to supporting families who were not otherwise accessing help.
- An invitation could be extended to Committee Members to attend meetings of the Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee where items on obesity and food were to be considered.
- It was felt that the Council had sufficient Social Workers, with a stable workforce having been built up, without a large agency cover. It was important that the right environment was created for Social Workers in terms of their education, training and support, and there had been some success in retaining staff. Final recruitment was now taking place for Social Work Managers.

7.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks the attending officers for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and presentation and the responses to questions; and

- (c) requests that a further update on progress made in implementing the requirements created under the Children and Families Act 2014, be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time.

## **8. WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

8.1 The Committee received its Draft Work Programme 2015/16.

8.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes:-

- (a) the Draft Work Programme 2015/16;
- (b) that the first meeting of the Prevent Task and Finish Group had been arranged; and
- (c) that 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015, was being considered as a date for the Member training session on Data Analysis.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015, at 1.00 pm, in the Town Hall.