

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

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

Meeting held 10 December 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair), Andy Bainbridge, Simon Clement-Jones, Tony Downing, Francyne Johnson, Bob Pullin, Colin Ross, Ian Saunders and Sophie Wilson

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

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

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mohammad Maroof, Abtisam Mohamed and Steve Wilson.

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 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5th November 2018, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom:-

- (a) the Policy and Improvement Officer (Deborah Glen) stated that she would contact Kate Wilkinson (Service Manager – Performance and Analysis Service) in connection with the request made by Councillor Bob Pullin for statistics regarding indices of deprivation for Batemoor, Jordanthorpe and Low Edges, and obtain a timescale for this to be delivered by;
- (b) the Chair reported that he had received a copy of the correspondence sent by Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children and Families) to the Parent Carer Forum, in response to a request by the Forum for further information, and that he would arrange for Councillor Drayton's response to be circulated to all Members of the Committee;
- (c) further to comments made at the November meeting by Councillor

Mohammad Maroof, Deborah Glen stated that she was in the process of arranging for a message to be sent to the Council's representative on the Schools Forum to try and ensure that schools continued to record and report the five-stage proficiency in English code; and

- (d) the Chair reported that he would be contacting Mark Sheikh (Head of Service – Business Strategy) to discuss the issue regarding further investigations into the potential for prudential borrowing with regard to capital funding for schools.
- 4.2 RESOLVED: That, with regard to the statistics relating to indices of deprivation for Batemoor, Jordanthorpe and Low Edges, and to further requests by other Members of the Committee for similar information in terms of their Wards, Kate Wilkinson be requested to provide such information to Councillors Bob Pullin, Andy Bainbridge and Ian Saunders, in respect of the Beauchief and Greenhill, East Ecclesfield and Beighton Wards, respectively.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

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

6. SHEFFIELD SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, attaching the Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18.
- 6.2 In attendance for this item were Jane Haywood, MBE (Independent Chair, Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)), Victoria Horsefield (Assistant Director, Children and Families Service and Professional Advisor to the Board) and Dan White (Sheffield Futures).
- 6.3 Jane Haywood introduced the report, which outlined the progress that had been made during the year, together with the key challenges ahead for the City to ensure that its children were safe from harm, abuse and neglect. Ms Haywood referred to her role as Independent Chair, and reported that the Board was responsible for monitoring performance across its partners and challenging the partners when it considered that improvements were required. She stressed that despite experiencing challenging circumstances, the partners remained strong, and continued to challenge each other when necessary.
- 6.4 Ms Haywood reported on the priorities for 2018/19, specifically relating to the need for the Board to continue the joint transition programme with Adult Safeguarding to ensure that the most vulnerable young people received the right help and support as they moved into adulthood. She added that, whilst this area of work was complex, and there was still room for improvement, it was considered that now that

there was relevant leadership in place, and that partners were clear on their positions, this would assist with this area of work. Ms Haywood referred to the new guidance recently published by the Government, one element of which was to change the name from Safeguarding Children Boards to Local Safeguarding Partnerships, with effect from April 2019. Other key changes resulting from the Government guidance included the decision to remove the Operational Board due to the duplication of roles with the Executive Board, and the recognition for closer working between Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards. It had been agreed that there would be one Chair for each of the two Boards, but that the two Boards would meet annually to agree priorities. A further recommendation from the Government related to proposals for serious case reviews to be considered at a national level.

6.5 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- The Board reviewed its annual Business Plan on a quarterly basis, and noted progress made in terms of its functions. There had been a slight delay in terms of the drafting of the Business Plan for 2018/19, mainly due to the new arrangements required following the Government guidance. Whilst the current Business Plan centred on existing priorities, including child sexual exploitation, transition and neglect, it included two new priorities – child criminal exploitation and contextual safeguarding. Whilst the Board would look at new emerging themes, it was important that it continued to look at the core elements of child protection and child sexual exploitation as they must always remain priority areas.
- It was acknowledged that there had been a large percentage increase in the number of referrals to Children's Social Care, with such an increase having been replicated nationally. It was believed that such an increase was partly due to better reporting practices and processes. There was also a better understanding of intervention thresholds due to work with professionals to help them apply thresholds more effectively.
- It was important to note that the figures in the report related to 2017/18. During that year, the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub was established, and was being embedded into practice. The highest proportion of the referrals came from the police, and related mainly to concerns about domestic abuse. Work was currently taking place to look at whether all referrals to the Hub were appropriate, or could be dealt with by the early intervention services. Ofsted had undertaken a focussed visit in April 2018, looking specifically at the "front door" and referrals into Children's Social Care. Ofsted had been satisfied with the arrangements,

and that correct safeguarding decisions were being made. The increase in the number of referrals could also be viewed as a positive sign, in that the systems were working more effectively, resulting in more children and young people being identified at risk, at an early stage, and who then received the right support.

- There were Community Youth Teams, a multi-agency specialist service for vulnerable young people, which had been commissioned by the City Council. It was confirmed that they operated in the Beauchief and Greenhill Ward. The Teams, which provided a targeted, early help service which aimed to support young people aged 10 to 18 into positive destinations, and reduce the likelihood of them entering the criminal justice system, worked closely with the young people in terms of designing the programmes of activity. It was accepted that there were a number of young people who were not engaging with the Teams, or any other similar services. Officers from Sheffield Futures had met with the Headteacher of Meadowhead School, providing help and advice in terms of how the school could identify, and help stop any vulnerable young people getting involved in serious criminal activity. It had been identified that relevant services needed to work together in order to make best use of the resources and facilities available which, given the current economic situation, was proving difficult. The Teams would also organise a number of outreach sessions, where members of staff would provide a rapid response facility, and organise holiday sessions, where young people would be taken away on trips. Details of the youth activities, including dates and times of sessions, in the Beauchief and Greenhill Ward, would be forwarded to all Members of the Committee.
- Weekly meetings were held to review all areas of the workforce in the Children and Families Service to ensure there was sufficient capacity to deal with referrals and re-referrals. It was accepted that the Service had, and continued to have, difficulties recruiting experienced social workers. This was a national issue, and not just seen in Sheffield. There were currently 192 full-time social workers, with additional investment to recruit over and above this level. The Service had experienced problems over the last few years in terms of a number of experienced social workers moving to other local authorities which, for various reasons, were able to pay higher salaries. Fortunately, this situation had now been largely stemmed. Recruitment campaigns were ongoing to ensure that Sheffield was seen as an attractive place to both live and work.

6.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, and the

Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18, together with the responses to the questions now raised;

- (b) thanks Jane Haywood, Victoria Horsefield and Dan White for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised;
- (c) expresses its support for the Safeguarding Children Board to:-
 - (i) remain a Sheffield-based body; and
 - (ii) continue the joint working with the Adult Safeguarding Board; and
- (d) indicates that it would not be in favour of the Government proposal to have serious case reviews considered at a national level.

7. SHEFFIELD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SERVICES - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

- 7.1 The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive Officer, Sheffield Futures, attaching the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service – Annual Report 2017/18.
- 7.2 In attendance for this item were Dan White (Sheffield Futures), Jane Haywood, MBE (Independent Chair, Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board) and Victoria Horsefield (Assistant Director, Children and Families Service and Professional Advisor to the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board).
- 7.3 Dan White referred to the introductory report, which contained information on the service user profile for 2017/18, key achievements in 2017/18, developments in 2018/19 and priorities for the Service for 2019/20.
- 7.4 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-
 - The reasons for the significant drop in referrals in the West area of the City was due to a mixture of people moving, more people becoming aware of the risks involved and the work of the Service in that area. This was being looked at further to make sure that adequate support was in place, as social media remained a big risk.
 - The large increase in the number of children looked after being referred to the Service, as compared to the figures in 2016/17, was believed to be mainly due to the increased use of social media. The Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service continued to work very closely with the Children Looked After Service and

other partners to gather evidence and disrupt patterns of behaviour. There was a continuing requirement for monitoring and vigilance as safeguarding issues were never “solved”, and effort around awareness-raising was required as an ongoing activity.

- The Alexi Project had been seen as one of the major achievements in 2017/18. The Project had researched child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking, and looked at ways voluntary sector expertise could contribute to supporting statutory child sexual exploitation services. The hub and spoke model that grew out of this meant that the voluntary sector ‘hubs’ would expand their support, learning and expertise across geographical neighbourhoods, and Sheffield had been identified as one of only 15 national hubs. This had resulted in Sheffield working with neighbouring authorities to provide one to one support for young people identified as being at risk from child sexual exploitation, as well as delivering a comprehensive programme of training for professionals. The Service was always looking for the reasons why young people were going missing and whilst being fully aware of the problems of trafficking, aimed to pick young people at risk up at an early stage. In 2018/19, the Children Missing in Education Service was merged with the Child Sexual Exploitation Service, and there were cases of girls being found in other cities, linked to trafficking, and being successfully returned home.
- The Service provided a considerable amount of training, but mostly at a universal level. However, sexual exploitation awareness and training was part of the core and advanced training offer for school staff, and schools were key participants in the “It’s not OK” campaign. The majority of schools had made this part of their curriculum, either through Personal, Social and Health Education or elsewhere. It was agreed that a piece of work was required to try and track this activity within schools.
- It was accepted that there were times when children, who had been identified as being at risk from child sexual exploitation, had been removed from their home and placed in local authority care, in a residential home, or other facility, where they may continue to be at risk. The plans to reform the residential sector would provide more support to families to allow more young people to remain in the family home.

7.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service – Annual Report 2017/18, and the responses to the questions raised;

- (b) thanks Dan White, Jane Haywood and Victoria Horsefield for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests (i) Dan White to prepare a briefing note for circulation to those Members on the Committee during the 2019/20 Municipal Year and, if deemed necessary, arrangements be made for this issue to be scrutinised by the Committee during that year and (ii) Victoria Horsefield to undertake a piece of work to track the rolling out of the child sexual exploitation awareness training “Friend or Foe” within schools.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer containing the Work Programme for 2018/19.
- 8.2 Deborah Glen reported that, due to the Special Educational Needs Service having been subject to an Ofsted inspection, it had been agreed that the next meeting of the Committee, due to be held on 7th January 2019, when this item was to be considered, be re-arranged for 4th February 2019, which would enable the Committee to also consider the outcome of the Ofsted inspection. Ms Glen added that there were two other topics – Support to Roma, Gypsy and Traveller Children and Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS)/Post 16 Provision – for which meeting dates had not yet been identified, and it was hoped that both items could be allocated to meetings during the 2018/19 Municipal Year.
- 8.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information now reported, and approves the contents of the Work Programme for 2018/19.

9. EU FUNDING POST-BREXIT

- 9.1 The Committee received and noted a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer on the future of EU funding post-Brexit and attaching, as an appendix, a list of those projects likely to be affected.

10. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT AND RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

- 10.1 The Committee received a presentation from Carly Speechley (Director of Children and Families) providing an update on the Children and Families Improvement and Recovery Plan.
- 10.2 Ms Speechley reported on the Service’s vision and principles in terms of ensuring that Sheffield’s children and young people were safe and supported to achieve their full potential, and referred to the

Improvement and Recovery Plan, the vehicle for the delivery of the Council's vision. She reported on the outcome of the external Ofsted regulation focused visits on the Front Door in April 2017 and Edge of Care Services in October 2017, and referred to the progress made against the Improvement and Recovery Plan in terms of the workforce, quality and budget. Ms Speechley referred to statistical information regarding the numbers of children in care and children on the Child Protection Register, from April 2015 to August 2018, and the numbers of children in care, in terms of the rate per 10,000 children and young people, both in Sheffield, and as a comparison with figures in other Core Cities, from April 2016 to August 2017. She concluded by referring to the challenges facing the Service, together with details of how the Service intended to address such challenges.

10.3 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- It had been identified, as one of the challenges, that residential care provision was a competitive market, with private companies looking to make a profit. In some cases, particularly when there were a number of different organisations vying for the same placement, this resulted in increased costs. As a result of this, the Authority was constantly looking at what it could do to improve its offer in order to remain competitive. The Authority worked closely with the larger providers with the aim of trying to get them to prioritise Sheffield children and young people in terms of placements, and charge a reduced rate for the second child in a family.
- Although it was inevitable that there would be a budget overspend this financial year, it was hoped that the position would improve over the next four years. The Authority spent approximately £30 million on placements, which was considerably less than some of the other Core Cities.
- In terms of the recruitment and retention of social workers, whilst the position had improved considerably over the last few years, some experienced staff were still moving to other local authorities on the basis that they were paying higher salaries. The situation was not being helped by the fact that, whilst there was a national salary framework for a number of other public service workers, there was no such framework for social workers. Following comments raised at a previous meeting, about a successful approach in Gloucestershire regarding the problems of retaining experienced social workers, the Service had made contact with them, and as a result, had managed to recruit one retired social worker, who was currently working three days a week, as well as continuing to try and attract other former workers back.

- The Council was part of a consortium which had implemented the White Rose Framework, to attempt to overcome the issues with independent foster agencies. This approach has worked better with prospective adopters, but not particularly well with foster carers.
- Whilst the Authority did not hold any information on the outcomes when arrangements had been made for older children and young people to remain with their families, there had been a considerable amount of research undertaken with regards to adverse experiences encountered by such children and young people. Work would continue to look at the level of need children and young people were at, and what level of intervention the Service could offer families to stop any adverse conditions worsening.
- The implementation of the new IT system (Liquid Logic), on 23rd July 2018, had proved very challenging. Whilst it was an improved system, it had caused a number of problems for a considerable number of staff and, as a means of support, four workers and IT champions had been used in order to assist staff.

10.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) expresses (i) its thanks to Carly Speechley for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised and (ii) its thanks and appreciation to all members of staff in the Children and Families Service for the progress made in respect of the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 4th February 2019, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.