

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

Meeting held 17 July 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair), John Booker, Craig Gamble Pugh, Mohammad Maroof, Abtisam Mohamed, Bob Pullin, Jim Steinke and Magid Magid (Substitute Member)

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Alison Warner, (School Governor Representative - Non-Council Non-Voting Member)
Waheeda Din, (Parent Governor Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Sam Evans, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Peter Naldrett, (Parent Governor Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Chair (Councillor Mick Rooney) welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his thanks to the previous Chair (Councillor Ian Saunders) and previous Members for their valued contribution to the work of the Committee.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andy Bainbridge, Lisa Banes, Josie Paszek and Alison Teal, with Councillor Magid Magid attending as Councillor Teal's substitute. Apologies for absence were also received from Gillian Foster (Diocese Representative – Non-Council Voting Member), Joanna Heery (Parent Governor Representative – Non-Council Voting Member) and Alice Riddell (Healthwatch Sheffield – Observer).

3. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 In relation to Agenda Item 8 (Looked After Children and Care Leavers – Annual Report), Councillor Craig Gamble Pugh declared a personal interest as he was an adoptive parent.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

5.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3rd April 2017, were approved as a correct record and, arising from their consideration, it was noted that:-

- (a) In relation to paragraph 5.3 (Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Board – Annual Report 2015/16), a response had been provided to the consultation on proposed changes in legislation and an update would be provided to the Committee when appropriate; and
- (b) in relation to the 6th bullet point in paragraph 5.5 (Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Board – Annual Report 2015/16), the specific officer dealing with the radicalisation of children and young people was Steve Hill (Service Manager, Local Authority Designated Officer) and a briefing note would be provided for the Committee in due course on activities in this area of work.

5.2 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17th May 2017, were approved as a correct record.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

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

7. CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE COMMISSIONING AND DELIVERY OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES - INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, which set out the draft strategic proposals which had been produced with regard to the recommissioning of services for young people in 2018 and which were currently the subject of consultation. The report was supported by a presentation given by Sam Martin (Assistant Director, Integrated Commissioning Unit). Also in attendance for this item was Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families).

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

- Early intervention and prevention was an important part of providing services for young people and it was important to work with partners in this regard. It should be borne in mind that there were lots of activities across the City which were not run by the Council and it was important to ensure that there was a range of provision across all parts of the City.
- Funding the provision of young people's services was a challenge and the continuing quality of the service, in the face of funding reductions, was a testament to the hard work of the staff involved. Targeted work had resulted in a reduction in the number of NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and those involved in the Criminal Justice System over the last five years. A collaborative approach to funding in the future was part of the Council's Vision and it was important for all partners to work together.

- Statistics were available regarding the transition from school into further education, training or employment at the age of 16. This data had been provided to the Committee as part of a report about post 16 learning in 2016.
- There were 20 Youth Officers in the City who worked on crime prevention and Councillor Bob Pullin would be provided with details of their activities in his Ward. Consideration would also be given to Councillor Pullin's suggestion to make links between young people's services and Magistrates.
- It was not possible to simply renew the existing contracts for Youth Services, so this had to go to tender and, in doing this, the Council had taken the opportunity to look at the full picture, but it was felt that the Youth Teams worked well.
- In terms of the monitoring and scrutiny of any services commissioned in the future, the usual contract management processes would apply, with meetings being held with the provider at least every quarter to check delivery and quality.
- The provision of a needs led response to issues in communities was a challenge, but it was felt that Sheffield Futures was currently doing a good job with the resources available. It should be noted that part of the proposal was to free resources to develop a more responsive approach.
- Sheffield Futures had secured some external funding for young people's services, and for the Council it was becoming more a case of providing funding for the services which were required by statute.
- The Young People's Enrichment Fund was designed to be used by a range of voluntary groups and organisations.
- There had been no formal evaluation of the current One Stop Shop. The Council did not directly commission or provide all the services in the One Stop Shop, but played a key role in commissioning the infrastructure that enabled it to operate, such as triage services.
- It was important to have a neutral central location for the provision of sexual health services to young people, which was provided by the One Stop Shop.
- The Youth Cabinet provided opportunities for active joint working between young people and politicians and this could be built upon in the future.
- Sheffield now had the lowest proportion of young people who were NEET compared to the other Core Cities. A good system was in place for tracking the progress of NEETs and Sheffield was a top performing City with regard to apprenticeships.

- These proposals were just about the provision of young people's services and it should be pointed out that the Council supported young people in other ways, such as apprenticeships, training and education and safeguarding.
- These were Council proposals, but they had been arrived at following conversations with partners, such as the Police and voluntary organisations, on their feasibility, and further consultation would be taking place with these stakeholders.
- The biggest part of the proposed budget was to be spent on the recommissioning of Youth Teams, with smaller amounts being spent in respect of the One Stop Shop and encouraging the voice of young people. The spend on the Young People's Enrichment Fund was estimated at being potentially between £250,000 and £500,000, but this depended on matched funding.

7.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Councillor Jackie Drayton and Sam Martin for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and presentation and the responses to Members' questions and comments;
- (c) welcomes being involved at an early stage in the process of the future commissioning and delivery of young people's services;
- (d) expresses its general agreement with the principles of the proposal set out in the report; and
- (e) requests that:-
 - (i) it be kept informed of progress with the proposals for the future commissioning and delivery of young people's services; and
 - (ii) the monitoring of quality and the purchasing of services on an as and when needs basis to provide a degree of flexibility in provision, be included in the final contract.

8. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS - ANNUAL REPORT

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Children and Families which provided an update on the progress of Sheffield's Children in Care and Care Leavers. The purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with the opportunity to review performance and to deliver an understanding of what it was like to be a child looked after by the Council and thus enable Members to use this information to hold officers to account, in order to be the best possible corporate parents to the children in the Council's care.

8.2 Joel Hanna (Assistant Director, Provider Services) took the Committee through the report, making particular reference to the seven priority areas which were engagement and influence of looked after children and young people, educational achievement and attainment, health and wellbeing, permanence, integrated placement strategy, safeguarding and vulnerability, and care leavers. Also in attendance for this item were Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families), Carly Speechley (Director of Children and Families) and Dr. Lorraine Pearson (Looked After and Adoptive Children's Health Team).

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

- The ability to track children with a plan for adoption was improving and officers were looking to undertake this tracking at an earlier stage from the second looked after children review.
- Adopters were recruited through a regional and national consortium, but the Council was looking to get more adopters in the South Yorkshire area, which would serve to reduce delays.
- It would be possible to produce a detailed report on the timeliness of the adoption process, as this was monitored by means of monthly tracking meetings.
- The object of the regionalisation of the adoption process was to increase the timeliness and maximise opportunities.
- Work was being undertaken in South Yorkshire, with both the local authorities and fostering organisations, to increase the numbers of foster carers. This work not only included recruitment, but also retention.
- There were a significant number of care leavers represented in the City's homeless population and it was important to ensure that the housing pathway for them was consistent, with a structured supportive pathway being desirable. A national model had developed a 16-25 pathway in this regard and officers were working with the Care Leaving Service to develop tenancies with support.
- The three year average of 499 days for the average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, was higher than the three year target as set by the Department for Education of 426 days. For children adopted during 2016/17, the average time was 438 days and it was hoped that the target would be met by the end of 2017/18.
- The importance of schools and friendship groups would be considered on an individual basis, but officers would need to be satisfied with any support arrangements.

- The last inspection of the Care Leavers' Service received a good Ofsted report, but it was recognised that there were specific challenges in relation to accommodation, education and training and employment.
- The Committee would be provided with a breakdown of the ethnicity of foster carers and it was acknowledged that there was a need to improve numbers generally, but more so in the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) community. This was an element of the overall strategy and a specific targeted recruitment and media campaign was planned. In addition, a letter had been sent to organisations such as the Universities and the Fire and Rescue Service to encourage retirees to consider adoption.
- A key piece of work was being undertaken on care leavers entering apprenticeships, as efforts had not been successful in matching care leavers to these. In doing this, the focus was on preparation for apprenticeships as the gap was sometimes too great a step for some individuals, so traineeships were being developed. In addition, there was a need to identify specific apprenticeships and traineeships through the virtual school in the Care Leavers Service. It should also be borne in mind that 95% of those with no qualifications were care leavers or had special needs, thus indicating the need for earlier intervention.
- The general decline in the number of Looked After Children in Sheffield since 2007, was a reflection of the investment in intervention, whilst the steady increase in these over the past 18 months reflected an increase in the number of 16 and 17 year olds coming into the system with more complex associated issues. The austerity agenda and increased levels of poverty and domestic violence may also be contributory factors. It should be noted that officers were reviewing all young people coming into care to ensure that the decisions made were robust.

8.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks those attending for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and the responses to questions;
- (c) approves the setting up of a Sub-Group of the Committee, comprising Councillors Mick Rooney, Cliff Woodcraft, Mohammad Maroof, Bob Pullin and Jim Steinke and Waheeda Din (Parent Governor Representative), to further explore the issues raised at the meeting, with a view to identifying an area of focus for a more detailed piece of scrutiny work; and
- (d) requests that:-
 - (i) the Corporate Parenting Board considers performance data for each of the six stages of the adoption process; and
 - (ii) a further report be added to the Committee's Work Programme, to

include performance data on the six stages of the adoption process and a flow chart outlining the stages of the process and expected timescales.

9. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

- 9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer which set out the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2017/18.
- 9.2 Members suggested that items on home education, levels of exclusion in Sheffield schools, skills development for 16-19 year olds and child poverty be considered for inclusion in the Work Programme 2017/18. There was also a request for a briefing paper on research undertaken by the Social Market Foundation's Commission on Inequality in Education, to focus on two of the recommendations in the Commission's findings, around encouraging teachers to work in disadvantaged areas and the provision of academic activities by independent (charitable status) schools.
- 9.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee approves the Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18, subject to the inclusion of the items and briefing paper now mentioned.

10. ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

- 10.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the Adoption Service Annual Report 2016/17.

11. FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

- 11.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the Fostering Service Annual Report 2016/17.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 11th September 2017, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.

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