

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Children and Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 21st July 2017

held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Meeting Commenced: 10.00am

Meeting Concluded: 12:30pm

Councillors:

P Ann Harley (Chairman)

A David Oyns (Vice-Chairman)

Karen Barclay

P Ericka Blades

P Donald Davies

P Judith Hadley

A Kate Stowey

P Liz Wells

P Roz Willis

A Michael Bell

P Mary Blatchford

P Bob Garner

David Hitchins

P Richard Tucker

P Martin Williams

P Deborah Yamanaka

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Other Councillors present: Jan Barber (Executive Member), Chris Blades, Ruth Jacobs, Reyna Knight, Dawn Payne, Lisa Pilgrim (Assistant Executive Member)

Officers in attendance: Shauni Brocklesby, Helen Caldwell, Mark Hughes, Louise Malik, Philippa Penney, Eifion Price, Sheila Smith, Gail Webb

CAY Declarations of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 3)

1

None

CAY Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th March 2017 (Agenda Item 4)

2

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record, with the inclusion of Councillor Deborah Yamanaka as being present.

CAY Educational Transformation (Agenda Item 6)

3

The Head of Education Transformation presented the report, setting out the national arrangements to system led school improvements highlighting how

the system will work in North Somerset. It particularly focused on building positive new relationships, performance monitoring plans and improvements to educational provision in North Somerset.

The Panel's involvement included continued reports and engagement as the new developments progressed. Members were reassured that the council would maintain an overview, with the partnership board reviewing themes, interventions and successes.

Members raised concerns regarding the clarity of reporting lines and that these appeared circular and confusing. It was agreed that the panel would consider writing to the Minister in the future if these concerns continued.

Concluded:

- (1) that the Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel noted the new arrangements to support school improvement and commented on the proposed arrangements in North Somerset as above;
- (2) that the panel consider writing to the Minister in the future if the discussed concerns continued; and
- (3) that this matter be included on the Panel's Work Plan.

CAY 4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (Agenda Item 7)

The Panel received information on the latest developments from the Assistant Director, Children Support and Safeguarding, as agreed at the previous meeting of the Steering Group in April. Members were informed that:

- CSE was particularly evident through the use of social media and, as such, practitioners were receiving new guidance in this area;
- Investigation was underway into making CSE awareness training mandatory for new taxi drivers, although this would require a change to current council policy. There was also consideration for this to be extended to hoteliers;
- Staff were being trained to undertake interviews of missing children on their return. This will include ensuring the quality of interviews and identify any emerging patterns;
- Successful methods of risk assessments used for child exploitation were being broadened to also include adult sexual exploitation;
- Information sharing and multi-agency working was being developed to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in schools, shopping centres, etc.;
- Courses were being organised for parents with children who had been exploited;
- A pilot was taking place in Somerset to look at a proportionate response i.e. to reduce the amount of high level responses to low level risk.

Members raised a concern regarding the wording used in the NSCP Safeguarding Board Guide to Practitioners as the reference to age of consent to sexual intercourse was unclear. It was agreed that this would be checked and revised.

The Panel discussed the need to highlight safeguarding training for youth clubs, public transport, takeaways and similar. It was agreed that they could raise awareness of this training offer by placing an article in the Knowledge. Members agreed to receive a written report at the next Panel meeting scheduled for November, and to hold a meeting of the CSE Steering Group in the autumn.

Concluded: that the Panel agreed to receive a written report at the next Panel meeting scheduled for November, and to hold a meeting of the CSE Steering Group in the autumn.

CAY 5 Children's Support and Safeguarding Strategy (Agenda Item 8)

The Strategy and Policy Development Officer presented the High Standards for Children and Young People in North Somerset Strategy. The Panel were informed that the document was set out in three sections;

1. North Somerset Council – our vision in practice;
2. A culture of continuous improvement: High Standards for Children and Families;
3. Key areas identified for further development 2017-2020.

Members discussed the brief reference to Female Genital Mutilation. It was explained that this issue had been evidenced as a very low risk for North Somerset. However, members were reassured that it was a subject taken very seriously for which information had to be gathered and presented carefully.

Performance was being monitored by the Business Intelligence Service using information provided by children in care/care leavers.

Members were informed that the document was collated by many members of staff to be given to Ofsted. The hard work and long hours of such staff to prepare the live document was acknowledged. Members thanked the team for such a comprehensive and positive document.

CAY 6 Performance and Finance Monitoring (Agenda Item 9)

Members were informed of the investigation into Corpus Christi School, Weston-super-Mare and that Year 6 pupils' SATs results had been annulled following an allegation of 'over aiding'. Parents had been informed and procedures were being put in place for the children and parents in preparation for the next academic year.

The Panel discussed the key corporate performance indicators, as illustrated in the report, and were given reassurance regarding some of the more difficult targets.

Members were pleased to receive the information regarding the preference data for reception year primary school places, although noted the fact that, as the council have no influence over parental preference, this would be subject to variation in future years.

Members noted the overspend on the base budget, which was largely due to the use of agency staff and the cost of placements for children looked after.

Concluded: that the Panel noted the financial and performance information presented in the report and gave comment accordingly.

CAY 7 Report of the Assistant Executive Member (Agenda Item 10)

The Panel received an oral update from the Assistant Executive Member for Looked after Children.

The Assistant Executive Member thanked the officers who had worked on the Ofsted inspection over recent weeks.

The Fostering Team was now fully staffed. A financial review was underway, and the working group would be considering this in more detail. Greater use of social media was being explored for recruitment of foster parents.

CAY 8 The Panels Work Plan (Agenda Item 11)

The Scrutiny Specialist Practitioner presented the Work Plan. The School Organisation Steering Group remained in place to meet as required.

Members would continue to review school funding arrangements in line with the developments from central government.

A further session to review the progress of the High Impact Families programme was to be arranged for Members in the Autumn.

The In-house Foster Carers Working Group would continue engagement with foster carer recruitment and retention following the lull during the recent Parliamentary General Election.

The Panel received the Home to School Transport Policy Working Group Report which gave 10 recommendations to the Executive Member for consideration with regards to the new policy. The policy decision had been re-listed on the Forward Plan with a decision date of not before 1st September, to allow time for the Executive Member to consider the recommendations accordingly.

It was agreed that the group would include an Ofsted action plan within their Work Plan once Ofsted have published their results.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated to reflect work in progress.

Chairman
