

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 September 2017

PRESENT – Councillor C Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, L. Hughes, Kelly, Mills, Storr and Wright. (10)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Lister; Jane Kochanowski, Assistant Director Children’s Services; Mr. P Rickeard and Mr. T. Fisher (3)

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None. (0)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Mrs G. Harrison (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Christine Shields, Assistant Director commissioning, Performance and Transformation; Helen Ellison, Lead Officer Learning and Skills; Rosie Banks, Programme Manager; and Barbara Copson, Performance Manager.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors C. Hughes and Newall.

CYP9. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP10. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 19 June 2017.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

CYP11. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITY (SEND) – The Assistant Director Commissioning Performance and Transformation and the Lead Officer Learning and Skills gave a presentation on Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) and the development of a strategy for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion for 2017 to 2020.

The presentation outlined the definition of SEND which refers to all children or young people who have a special educational need and/or a disability; the SEND Reforms which came into operation September 2014 and the statutory Code of Practice stating what local authorities must have regard to and the links to specific duties under the Equality Act 2010; and presented a number of facts and figures relating to children and young people with special education needs and/or disability and their specific need.

The Presentation also outlined the Strategy for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion 2017-2020; detailed other documents which the Strategy links with; highlighted its values and philosophy; and listed the various organisations which are working collaboratively with the local authority on SEND. Inspections commenced

May 2016 and are conducted jointly by Ofsted and CQC and the presentation detailed the Key Lines of Enquiry which had been identified from inspections to date; self-assessment and action plans to address areas for development; the role of Elected Members in inspection visits and Members need to be aware of SEND and what the Reforms mean for the local area; and outlined the next steps and challenges in relation to SEND.

Members commented on the increase in the number of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and challenged the reasons for the increase and whether this was linked to improved diagnosis or whether more young people were presenting with ASD; and if there was a cross over in the figures for pupils with speech, language and communication needs.

Members also questioned at what stage a determination of special needs was made and by whom and what responses are made in line with Code of Practice. With regard to the Code of Practice a Member enquired what system was in place to act upon changes to the Code of Practice and was advised that it was up to the local authority to interpret any changes to the Code of Practice and advised that all neighbouring local authorities share inspection intelligence and good practice.

With regard to the facts and figures relating to SEND pupils by primary need a Member challenged how early years children are being assessed and Members were advised that this was done by the Early Years Team and Members agreed that it would be beneficial for the Head of Early Years to attend a future meeting to advise Members further.

With regard to the Strategy for Special Educational Need and Inclusion and the consultation exercise that had been carried out Members questioned the engagement by the number of academies within this authority and were advised that a good response from all schools and academies as SEND forms part of their inspection regime so they had been keen to engage with the local authority. It was agreed that as well as receiving facts and figures it would benefit Members to see the outcomes for these families who receive support and to examine ways to encourage the academies to provide some evidence of improvement also.

The Chair expressed his concern at the overall performance of the academies and the working relationships between the authority and the schools and that he intended to impress upon the academies that the local authority still had a role in school performance. The Chair also expressed his concern that his meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner had been cancelled on two occasions.

With regard to the forthcoming Ofsted inspection the Chair asked for reassurance that the authority was in a better position than they were with the recent inspection on safeguarding of young people. The Members were advised that officers had more accurate data and actions plans were in place to address any concerns.

RESOLVED – That Members thank the Assistant Director of Commissioning Performance and Transformation and the Lead Officer Learning and Skills for their interesting and informative presentation.

CYP12. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES PLAN 2017/22 – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) for Members to give consideration to the content of the draft Children and Young People’s Plan 2017 to 2022.

The production of a Children and Young People’s Plan is no longer a statutory requirement but it is one of the identified delivery plans within the Sustainable Community Strategy and is considered best practice for delivering outcomes for children and young people and for setting priorities for the medium term. The Children and Young People Plan also forms part of the Council’s Policy Framework and therefore requires approval by Council.

The submitted report outlined the engagement activity with a wide range of stakeholders, including children and young people and the consultation feedback on the draft ambitions and priority actions had been used to inform the final Plan for 2017 to 2022.

An Equalities Impact Assessment had also been completed for the development of the plan and assessments will be undertaken at service delivery level by responsible managers from partner organisations.

The submitted report also outlined the four ambitions of the Plan and the seven key priority actions that had been identified to achieve all four ambitions over the next five years.

Members questioned the input into the survey of schools and were advised that there had been full engagement from all schools and academies; noted that hate crime training had not been carried out since 2014 and were advised that hate crime, mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people and cyber bullying were areas that had been identified by the young people as areas of concern and will be included in the action plan.

Members agreed that the action plan will be a useful tool to form the work programme of this Scrutiny Committee for areas of concern.

RESOLVED – That the report and draft Children and Young People’s Plan 2017 to 2022 be noted.

CYP13. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17 – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to present the Annual Independent Reviewing Officer report produced by the Children’s Safeguarding Unit and provides an overview of the work by the Independent Reviewing Officer Service in relation to Looked After Children, including the Dispute Resolution Process as required by the statutory guidance.

The submitted report also provided an overview of the performance of the unit in a range of responsibilities, activities and functions, including Child Protection, training and advice to professionals and identifies good practice as well as highlighting areas for further development including improvements to contact with young people, including those who live outside the Borough between reviews; increased participation and attendance of young people and their families in child protection conferences; and an increase permanent appointments which reduced the need for agency staff cover.

Members discussed the report and agreed that for future reports it would be beneficial to receive specific examples of interventions and where they have shown improvement as well as statistics.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

CYP14. WORK PROGRAMME - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on the current work programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

The work programme has been reviewed to link it to the outcomes and conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy and each topic has been linked to performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework to provide accurate data for Members to use when considering topics and the work they wish to undertake.

Following discussion it was agreed to seek to add to the work programme items on Local authority relationship with academies; care leavers stability of accommodation and those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET); and Early Years and SEND and that a quad of aims be compiled for each item.

The Chair referred to the joint review with Health and Partnerships Scrutiny on Children's Mental Health and Childhood Obesity and agreed that Oral Health Care could also be linked in with this review.

Discussion ensued on the work that is being undertaken within the community to help families, in particular in the most deprived areas and ways that Members can work with these organisations to influence what they provide and to offer support.

RESOLVED – That the current status of the work programme be noted.

CYP15. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER ONE 2017/18 – With the prior approval of the Chair to the matter being treated as urgent to enable Scrutiny to consider the Quarter 1 performance at the earliest possible opportunity the Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators for quarter 1 (April to June) 2017/18.

It was reported that the set of indicators included in the submitted report and previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 19 June 2017

were aligned with key priorities and it is intended they will be used to monitor the Corporate Plan 2017/21 which was currently being developed.

The submitted report highlighted where Children and Young People were performing well and where there was a need to improve.

The submitted report also contained the Children's Social Care Monthly Performance and Quality Assurance Report for Quarter 1.

Members discussed the improvement in the percentage of newly looked after children for whom an initial health assessment has been completed within 20 working days showing the effectiveness of Senior Management's collaborative work with partners in Health

Members were however concerned at the percentage of care leavers who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and Members agreed that the target of 33 per cent was too low and that the authority should be demonstrating higher aspirations for these young people. Members agreed to monitor the situation.

RESOLVED – That the quarter 1 performance data be noted.