

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY PANEL

22ND JANUARY, 2015

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held in THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY 22ND JANUARY, 2015 at 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor Rachel Hodson

Councillors Paul Coddington, Sue McGuinness and Sue Wilkinson.

Mr. Damien Thorpe

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from the Vice-Chair, Eva Hughes, and Councillors Andrew Bosmans, Neil Gethin and Dave Shaw.

An apology for absence was also received from Mr. John Hoare.

	<u>ACTION</u>
12. <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
No declarations of interest were made.	All to note
13. <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS HELD ON 18TH SEPTEMBER AND 9TH DECEMBER, 2014.</u>	
<u>RESOLVED</u> that the minutes of the meetings of the Children and Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Panel held on 18th September and 9th December, 2014 be agreed as a true record.	All to Note
14. <u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
There were no public statements made at the meeting.	All to note
15. <u>DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST – PROGRESS AND UPDATE</u>	
The establishment of the Doncaster Children's Trust on	

1 October, 2014, aimed to deliver much needed improvements to Children's Social Care and approximately 450 staff had transferred from Doncaster Council across to the new Trust to undertake their roles under new direction.

The Director of Children and Young People's Services, reported that it had been agreed within its contract that quarterly monitoring reports would be provided for Scrutiny, and this was the first monitoring report the Panel had received since the Trust had gone live, and aimed to provide a general summary of the arrangements in place.

The Panel was informed that there was now a great deal of emphasis on both the Trust and the Council to work together to maximise the potential benefits of the Trust. It was outlined that there was a lot of work to be done and a good working relationship was needed.

Paul Moffatt, the Chief Executive of Doncaster Children's Trust was in attendance at the meeting, and commented that he wished to provide reassurance to the Panel that he valued the work they did, and would continue to ensure the Panel played a part in the Scrutiny of the Trust. It was acknowledged that there were still a number of challenges ahead, with a lot of work to be done, but the initial feeling was that the Trust and the Council were working well together.

Members were given the opportunity to raise any concerns and issues and a brief question and answer session followed, with queries raised on issues such as performance indicators, staff recruitment, out of authority placements and complaints. Officers endeavoured to answer the points raised, and provided information on the issues covered.

The Chair thanked Officers for their report, and thanked Paul Moffat for his attendance, adding that they looked forward to seeing him again at the next meeting in April.

RESOLVED that the Panel notes the Doncaster Children's Services Trust Update Report. All to note

16. DONCASTER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT 2014

The Panel considered a report that provided information on the educational attainment of

Doncaster's School children for 2014. The report provided a great deal of information for Members and provided figures on children ranging in age from Early Years Foundation Stage, through to 16, including both Key Stages 1 and 2. Over 14,000 children across the Borough were assessed every year in order to establish how well the local authority was performing in terms of its educational attainment.

The key points to note that were outlined in the report, included the following:-

- At Early Years (5 year olds), the performance of Doncaster's children was currently below the national average, but improvements had been made since previous years;
- At Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) were achieving either in line with, or above the national average;
- Key Stage 1 teachers were very strong;
- There was a need for improvement at Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) with Doncaster's performance well below the National average
- At Key Stage 4 (16 year olds), 48.5% of children were achieving the benchmark figure but this figure had declined on that of previous years and remained well below the national average;
- There was the need for better schools and stronger Head teachers.

Following consideration of the report and the information provided by Officers, the Panel was invited to put any questions forward that they required further clarity and information on.

Members were concerned that many families with children at Early Years foundation Stage (EYFS) were not taking up the 2 year old provision. This was acknowledged as a concern, and work was being done to greatly encourage take up of this provision in order to provide more assistance to enable families to maximise the early years support on offer.

With regard to Children in Care at Key Stage 2, Members queried what more could be done in order to make further improvements and greatly improve their progress and attainment. Officers commented that a great deal more 'joined up working' was being carried out, but yet accepted that there was still a great deal more work that could be done. Although the figures in relation to this didn't appear to be very positive,

progress had been made.

Key Stage 2, Members commented, was one of the main areas of concern, as it was acknowledged that these figures were not satisfactory. Officers were in agreement with Members, and felt that much stronger leadership was needed in Primary Schools, and a higher standard of teaching. Training was needed for teachers and it was noted that 88% of schools in Doncaster had signed up to the Teaching Alliance which provided support and training.

The Panel also made reference to the maladministration in 3 schools in the Borough which was highlighted within the report. Members were informed that Officers were looking to put checks into place to ensure that this didn't happen again in the future.

Praise was given in terms of the Special Educational Needs Schools (SEN), as these were continuing to perform well, and it was questioned what they were doing right, where other schools were failing. It was reported that generally, SENs were well managed, with excellent modern facilities, and educates their students in a smaller, closer environment.

Finally, comments were made surrounding the upcoming inspection by Ofsted who would be returning for a further inspection to ensure that improvements had been made. A number of actions had been put into place, with a huge amount of work carried out in order to ensure that changes were made. The Panel was informed that there were no 'quick fixes' to bring about the necessary improvements, but that there was very strong leadership in place, and the Service was now moving in the right direction.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and for the information provided upon close consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the information included within the report, including that the attainment for Children aged 11 excludes three schools that were nulled from the DfE performance tables due to maladministration.

17. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES - OVERVIEW

Members considered a report that provided background on a number of changes that had been made at both national and local level with regard to support for disabled children in Doncaster. The most important changes included:-

- The implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) legislation; and the
- Establishment of the Doncaster Children's Trust.

It was of the utmost importance that a consistent and stable service was maintained for children during this time, and therefore as a result, this service had remained within the Authority. However, it was now timely to review these arrangements in order that the most beneficial structure and processes were in place to support the needs of these children.

It was therefore suggested that a Scrutiny review could add value at this stage. The Chair sought advice from Officers as to what areas they felt they may be best placed to focus on, ensuring a more in depth review could be undertaken. The areas suggested included:-

- Safeguarding;
- Joined-up and partnership working;
- Overview of what the service does;
- Improved outcomes for children and families; and
- Residential Services.

It was acknowledged by both Members and Officers that this was a huge area of work to address and therefore it was important to concentrate on a few areas in order to do the review justice. It was agreed that it would be timely to consider a piece of work on this issue at the April meeting of the Panel to provide an overview and establish the scope of the review. The Chair wished for the review to be undertaken post Elections, in Summer 2015. There was concern voiced that a new Chair may not be best placed to take on a review that was already underway, but the current Chair commented that this should not be a problem, especially considering the prominence of this issue.

RESOLVED that the Panel undertake a review on Children with Disabilities post the Election 2015 and an informal presentation be provided at the next meeting on areas to address.

Senior
Governance
Officer/Assistant
Director
Education

