

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2017

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the 007 B - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on WEDNESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2017 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Neil Gethin

Councillors John Mounsey, Nick Allen and Jane Cox

Co-optee: John Hoare (Diocese of Sheffield)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Rianna Nelson, Assistant Director Partnerships and Operational Delivery  
Leanne Hornsby, Assistant Director Commissioning and Business Development  
Deborah Burton, Partnership and Engagement Officer  
2 Youth Councillors  
Sue May, Head of LAC Provider Services, Doncaster Children Services Trust  
Mark Douglas, Chief Operating Officer, Doncaster Children Services Trust

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nikki McDonald, Sue McGuinness, Tina Reid and Bernadette Nesbit, Diocese of Hallam Roman Catholic Church.

		<u>ACTION</u>
44.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	
45.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None	
46.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
47.	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24TH FEBRUARY, 2017</u>	

	RESOLVED: That the minutes be agreed as a correct record.	
48.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements.	
49.	<u>DONCASTER YOUTH COUNCIL - 'CHILD VOICE PATHWAYS' UPDATE.</u>	
	<p>The Youth Councillors provided the Panel with an update on the “Child Voice Pathways”.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the Youth Council had been consulting with young people over the last 12 months about what was important to them. This information was shared with decision makers and has been used to help develop the Children and Young Peoples Plan. To launch the Plan an event was held for children, young people and families, the event was planned and facilitated by the Youth Council. As part of the launch event the Youth Council wished to highlight and promote positive images of children and young people by showcasing some of the many opportunities and activities that young people are involved in across Doncaster. To ensure interaction at the event the Children and Young Peoples Plan video was shown followed by a question and answer panel session. This provided an opportunity for children and young people and families to speak directly to decision makers. Every school child and young person that was involved with the filming and the event were provided with a copy of the Children and Young Peoples Plan and child friendly video.</p> <p>The Children and Young People’s Plan would be monitored by the Youth Council with a proposal to host 3 annual summits planned as detailed below. It was anticipated that the half day sessions would be divided into activity workshops focusing on giving children and young people the opportunity to discuss how Doncaster is progressing against the priorities outline in the Children and Young Peoples Plan.</p> <p><u>Annual Summits</u></p> <p>March, 2018 – Primary Schools;  April, 2018 – Secondary Schools; and  May, 2018 – Other groups for example, special educational needs and disabilities and Apprentices.</p> <p>Work was currently ongoing to develop youth surgeries in wards across the Borough, hopefully to commence in September, ensuring there was a wide range of voices heard. This had previously been trialled and proved that relationships between Ward Members and young people had grown and it was an area the Youth Council was keen to redevelop. The surgeries would provide another pathway to capture the voice of children and young people.</p>	

	<p>In response to questions from the Panel the Youth Councillors confirmed that their voices were being heard. They had a comprehensive structure in place and met with students from across the Borough including young carers, LGBT and Ladder group with outcomes from discussions taken to the Director of People and Cabinet Members.</p> <p>The Panel noted that there were approximately 4 schools that did not take part with Youth Council activities but work was being undertaken with them to ensure full school engagement.</p> <p>It was reported to the Panel that the two priorities for the Youth Council to address were transport and emotional health. One young person gave an example that due to current bus service schedules she was late to school every morning which had required her to arrange a late arrival pass with school ensuring her attendance record was not affected.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the report and discussion, be noted and the Chair forward and email to the Mayor relating to the Committee's concerns with regard to some bus service schedules.</p>	
50.	<p><u>DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST - FOSTERING SERVICE 2016/2017 ANNUAL REPORT.</u></p>	
	<p>The Panel considered a report relating to the Fostering Service Annual report 2016/17. The report was a regulatory requirement and informed elected Members, Senior Managers and decision makers about key outcomes in service provision, identify any issues of concern and outline plans for improvement to the equality of service provision.</p> <p>The following areas were addressed:</p> <p><u>Mocking Bird Family Model</u> – an alternative fostering method that brings together up to ten foster families to form a satellite foster family. At the heart of each foster family is a hub home, where specially recruited and trained foster carer supports other carers with the foster family. It offers respite, social activities and just a familiar friend to offer advice.</p> <p>Members expressed concern that not all foster carers were taking part in this family model and asked that its promotion be developed. It was acknowledged that there were some carers who were very experienced and had their own support mechanisms but it was essential that all carers were receiving maximum support.</p> <p>Each foster carer had an annual review which was considered by an Independent Reviewing Officer with personal development plans created. The Plan would include required training and development</p>	

and was set to an individual's needs. There was no requirement that foster carers should attend a support group.

Ofsted – The service was rated as good but there was acknowledgement that this needed to be outstanding, which there was the passion and commitment in place to achieve this. The Children's Trust was aware of the areas of risk and were working on them, for example processes. The service is only rated once in every three years and it was a couple of years since the last inspection.

The last Ofsted judgement highlighted that there were passionate foster carers and social workers that supported the service.

Recruitment – it was noted that this was the largest challenge with the number of foster carers available declining nationally. There were 17 different fostering organisations across the Borough with 5 sets of foster carers transferring to the Children's Trust from independent organisations last year. It was noted that there was a wish to the balance of providers in house as this was more cost effective and good rated service.

This year the service was effectively minus 5 foster care placements however, the offer of placements had increased up to 45. 16 new carers had undertaken the role. Some carers had been deregistered, some were removed to take on special guardianship orders and 3 carers left with the children they have been caring for long term staying with the family.

Remuneration/employment – this has been amended so there were no additional costs and the allowances clear. It enables people to work part time but it was advantageous if the employer was flexible to ensure enough time was devoted to meeting a child's needs. An area of development was to further improve child friendly employers.

Foster carer management – due to the service being so large it was ineffective to site managers throughout the Borough, but working centrally was more advantageous. It was noted that advanced practitioners also undertook case work and lead on foster carers which cause concern.

Length of foster care placements – it was impossible to tell how long a foster care placement would last however there was a distinction between short and long term, with short being a period lasting up to a couple of years. Some Children and young people stay long term which could lead to long term care, eg. never leave and stay with the family.

To conclude, the Chair stated that:

- All Members were corporate parents and that to assist with

	<p>getting an outstanding judgement they need to attend the mandatory training to show their commitment. Members were asked if they could continue to promote in their wards the positives of fostering children;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members must promote and be positive about the children and young people in Doncaster; and</li> <li>• If Councillors were a Member of a school Governing Body, ensure there was challenge about the education of Doncaster's looked after children.</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED : That the Annual Fostering Service report, be noted.</p>	
51.	<u>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2017-2020.</u>	
	<p>The Panel was presented with the Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2020, launched in May, 2017. The event was launched by children and young people and showcased the children's version of the Plan presented in video form. The Panel noted the Plan's four priority themes, that frames the collective effort to improve the lives of children and young people, and key priorities that underpin each theme.</p> <p>The evidence identified a number of issues that were raised through engagement with young people and the Joint Service Needs Assessment evidence including to reduce the levels of childhood obesity, implement the Local Transformation Plan, work to ensure alignment of early help cohort of the Place Plan. The most prominent issue raised by young people was access to emotional well-being and mental health support.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Children and Families Executive Group was the driving force behind the Plan and held to account about achieving against the four themes and key priorities measured through an outcomes framework. The governance structure and how the Partnership would be held to account was highlighted.</p> <p>The Panel stressed the importance of the proposed Participation and Engagement Strategy with and for young people which will set out how they will be involved throughout the duration of the Plan.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Plan be noted and Members be periodically updated with progress.</p>	
52.	<u>SUMMARY OF THE HIGH LEVEL QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE MEETING OF DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST: QUARTER 4, 2016/17</u>	

The Panel considered a report setting out a summary of the business of the high level quarterly performance challenge meeting of the Doncaster Children's Services Trust for quarter 4 2016/17.

It was noted overall that the third Ofsted Monitoring visit indicated significant progress.

Out of Authority Placements - With regards to expenditure it was noted that a Resource Panel meeting was held before any placements were made outside the borough, with scrutiny on cost and controls and measures put in place for each placement made in this category. It was noted that some children were funded jointly with, for example, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Members stressed that they recognised that a child or young person should only be moved if the requirement was consistent with their assessed needs with finance not being the main driver.

Financial and Operational Strategy – it was stressed that the main focus was on financial stability and sustainability, and Members noted that this issue was to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> July.

Risks and performance – with regard to the detail in the report, it was noted that for an organisation like the Children's Trust that was primarily charged with Safeguarding it must be cited that safeguarding failure could result in an inadequate inspection. It was noted that on the last 3 inspections it was found that no children were at risk.

Finance continued to be a pressure with more people seeking support. It was acknowledged that the White Rose Framework was coming to an end with the risk that care prices could increase disproportionately, but was being addressed.

Challenge meetings were being held between the Council and the Trust and address performance against the key indicators ensuring an improving trend in quality of casework. It was noted that rigorous case audits were undertaken by the Trust, with an increasing number being outstanding. Each Ofsted visit case audits were inspected, with all found to be accurate.

Improved confidence has been established with social work practice however caution expressed that they were only as strong as the weakest case. Approximately 18 months ago managers were retrained to ensure they had the corrected skills to recognise what was required to assist social workers to produce excellent case work. If a new social worker starts they were trained, supported and regularly monitored.

RESOLVED: that the discussion, be noted.

53.	<u>BEHAVIOUR INCLUSION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW.</u>	
	<p>The Panel gave consideration to a report relating to Team Doncaster's ambition to have an inclusive education system to ensure young people were being provided with the best education offer to them.</p> <p>A behaviour programme has been established, commencing in the Autumn of 2016 gathering of systems wide intelligence, Spring to Autumn 2017 addressing current unmet need and address demands on the present system with the final phase from Autumn 2017 to Spring 2018 implementing strategic commissioning intentions.</p> <p>As part of the phase one key finding report, it was acknowledged that Doncaster had a higher than average number of pupils in Pupil Referral Units with a statement of special education needs or education, health and care plan and of the authorities that report no permanent exclusions Doncaster has the highest level of fixed term exclusions, amongst a number of other key issues that had been highlighted.</p> <p>It was hoped that by focusing on improvements and the recommendations from the key findings reports, the following benefits to children and young people would be evident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved outcomes for vulnerable children in and outside of mainstream education;</li> <li>• A diverse Alternative Provision offer that would meet young people's needs locally and therefore Reduce the volume of out of authority placements;</li> <li>• Clear, integrated decision making pathways and systems that helps prevent escalation of needs, would improve family experience, reduce duplication of effort and funding across the health and social care system;</li> <li>• Pupil attendance, behaviour and attainment be improved;</li> <li>• Reduce the number of FTE (and PEX) through a more integrated approach to meeting the needs of all children and young people earlier; and</li> <li>• Better outcomes for our vulnerable children when moving into adulthood.</li> </ul> <p>Due to the number of recommendations from the phase 2 findings report, they would be addressed in two stages between July and September with commissioning plans in place for the new academic year 2018/19, with regular progress reports being provided to the thematic strategic board.</p> <p>Concern was expressed by Members that exclusion was what some children or young people with behavioural issues aimed to achieve. Examples of young people being removed from school and helping</p>	

	<p>with projects in, for example, the local park were raised, with some of the young people's behaviour continuing to disrupt those that were wishing and trying to re-engaged. It was stressed that refocusing and a new model of delivery was required within pupil referral units and that they should not be used as a final education destination.</p> <p>Members were saddened to learn that some children at Key Stage 2 age were in pupil referral units and learned that it could be a varying level of seriousness that could have led to them being removed from school. It was recognised that it ranged from a child not wearing the correct uniform to carrying a knife.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that behaviour policies would never be the same across all Doncaster's schools, however it was essential that schools adhered to their policies. Members reiterated that ultimately parents needed to work with the stronger families programme and early help where there was a whole host of support if behaviour was proving to be very problematic and irreversible.</p> <p>Members wished to see an improvement in the quality of education in pupil referral units and for them not to be seen as the last place to educate a child or young person, particularly if they were suffering with autism, mild learning disabilities or emotional issues.</p> <p>It was stressed that it was a school's responsibility to ensure that children and young people remained in main stream education but Members were advised as part of the phased improvements investigations and discussions with Chief Executives of MATs and Head Teachers were taking place into what specialist units or learning centres may be required.</p> <p>Need better evidence of why not working in the classroom – need Wrap around system.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted and an update be provided at a future meeting on progress.</p>	
54.	<p><u>ACADEMIES OVERVIEW - PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONSHIPS AND CHALLENGES</u></p>	
	<p>The Panel considered a report providing the current position relating to the number of academies in Doncaster and future proposals.</p> <p>It was noted that this year had seen 13 schools converting to an Academy, which was its largest number of schools in any one year. To assist schools when considering future options a set of questions have been developed ensuring the right questions were posed, particularly when procuring services. It was noted that schools could be approached by MATs or Academy groups.</p>	



	<p>It was recognised that the Local Authority has a good relationship with its schools, who keep officers informed of proposed changes. Those schools that were considering transferring to academy status or joining a MAT, through conversations with the Local Authority were aware that they need to think more strategically and how sustainable it would be for their school to make this change. It was noted that funding was only provided to schools to undertake the change to an Academy or MAT for example to pay for legal fees.</p> <p>With regard to schools carrying a budget deficit, this was the responsibility of the Local Authority, therefore officers were working with Schools to ensure they were not in a shortfall position.</p> <p>The Director of People and Assistant Director Commissioning and Business Development met regularly with the Regional Schools Commissioner where they could air their concerns. It was noted that engagement has also improved with MATs.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>	
55.	<u>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PLAN 2017/18.</u>	
	<p>The Panel noted the work plan for the Scrutiny Panel and discussed inviting the Children in Care Council to a future meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.</p>	