

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 24TH JULY, 2018

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on TUESDAY, 24TH JULY, 2018 at 9.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Neil Gethin

Councillors Lani-Mae Ball, Nick Allen, Jane Cox, Nikki McDonald, Frank Tyas and Sue Wilkinson

Co-optees – John Hoare (Diocese of Sheffield Church of England) and Bernadette Nesbit (Diocese of Hallam Roman Catholic Church)

Invitee: - Jim Board, UNISON

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Damian Allen, Director of People

Aaron Bathgate, Finance Manager

Paul Thorpe, Quality and Service Improvement Management Manager

Leanne Hornsby, Assistant Director, Commissioning and Business Development Manager

Neil McAllister, Learning Provision Organisation

Mark Douglas, Doncaster Children's Services Trust

Robert Moore, Doncaster Children's Services Trust

Tony Hunter, Doncaster Children's Services Trust

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sean Gibbons and John Mounsey

		<u>ACTION</u>
97.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None.	
98.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations made.	

99.	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE, 2018</u>	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 12 th June, 2018 were agreed as a correct record.	
100.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements,	
101.	<u>PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE OF DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST: QUARTER 4, 2017/18</u>	
	<p>The Panel gave consideration to a report relating to the operational and financial performance challenge carried out by the Director of People of the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust, arising from the challenge meetings held between both parties.</p> <p>Following an overview by the Director of People, highlighting areas that were good and remained good and those which had shown a welcome and praiseworthy transformation, in particular the quality of case file audits and assessments undertaken within timescale. The Panel therefore addressed the following areas:</p> <p><u>Front door, service demand and re-referrals</u> – It was noted that high levels of need was not unique to Doncaster and the demand for services was highlighted by the number of contacts at the front door, which continued to be high. It was acknowledged that some contacts and re-referrals were not appropriate and did not meet the threshold for intervention. With regard to inefficient contacts and re-referrals from agencies, the Children and Families Executive Board were investigating where lead practitioner roles were not being undertaken correctly.</p> <p>Members learnt that since January 2018 the Trust commissioned a review of front door challenges and ‘whole system’ efficiency, which would identify the pinch points within the children’s system including demand and other pressures. Recommendations from that would be used to develop a future model. It was hoped that clear options would be available for consideration by the end of the summer.</p> <p>The front door has been assessed 3 times in the last 16 months by Ofsted who indicated that the front door services were safe. Members acknowledged this but were asked to bear in mind the high demand, and it was stressed the system needed to work efficiently through every area. Agencies were being challenged in a number of forums to ensure practitioners were being held to account where specific issues should be dealt with elsewhere.</p> <p><u>Government Intervention - current position</u> – Members were hopeful</p>	

that Children's Services would soon be removed from intervention and noted the hard work undertaken by all partners to achieve this. The Panel was aware of the Trust's savings and expenditure plan reductions but noted that some financial pressures still remained and stressed that it was key to continue with a high quality delivery of service for the Borough's children. The Panel was reminded that the Trust had acted with good corporate due diligence with a high standard of financial work now being undertaken.

Ofsted and good practice – the Panel highlighted the good practice emerging from the Trust and that it had been acknowledged by Ofsted.

Following concern expressed, it was explained that Ofsted may not undertake a full inspection for 3 years but it would still retain the right to inspect earlier and there would be two focused visits under the new inspection framework. More specific inspections would continue, for example, an adoption inspection of the Trust as a Independent Adoption Agency was due to start on 25th July, Oakland respite unit had recently been inspected with an outstanding result and maybe an autumn visit relating to quality and range of provision for care leavers.

Children placed in Doncaster area from other authorities – Further to conversations at the Corporate Parenting Board a Member expressed concern with regard to the number of children and young people living in care in Doncaster Borough from other authorities and requested what cost implications would there be for the Trust, for example, health assessments. It was noted that there was a clear and robust protocol to recharge other authorities for health assessments and this process could also be used to challenge local authorities if children and young people were not receiving the support they required.

It was reported that the Trust was currently aware of nearly 200 young people who were living in the Borough, placed in care by other authorities. It was the opinion that due to Doncaster being affordable, new care homes would be developed and this number could increase.

Neighbouring authorities had recognised saturation due to other local authorities wishing to place children in their area and it was reported as being acknowledged that a regional response was required to address the situation ensuring good care and safeguarding across South Yorkshire. Doncaster may consider, like a neighbouring authority, write to all Director of Children's Services asking where their children in care were placed, providing a more accurate position. Members noted that the Performance Accountability Board, including the Trust and South Yorkshire Police, was currently developing a protocol for transparency of when children and young people move in and out of the Borough, by other local authorities.

Workforce Structure – confirmation was sought that the correct

structures and staff management was in place to support required services across the Trust. It was noted that management of accounts and resources was always a subject of negotiation between the Trust and Local Authority and measures including vacancy freezes were being used to assist with the position, and a range of options were being examined to ensure staffing workload was correct in both the back office and front door. For example, caseload was being addressed and where there is demand then additional support was put in place.

Financial Position – Bearing in mind discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in April, 2018 when the Trust’s Financial Overview report was considered, the Trust assured Members that finance challenge meetings were held with the Council, and progress addressed. The Panel was made aware that some of the issues that required addressing included consequences of demand, costs of legal proceedings and delays in special guardianship orders.

It was noted that prior to a child placement being approved, the offers were being scrutinised to ensure care decisions were appropriate, support a child’s care plan and were value for money.

It was noted that the quarter 1 position was not currently available and the challenge meeting would be taking place following this meeting on 25th July. Members were assured that there was a large focus on finance however there were continuous discussions ensuring that service delivery would not reduce in quality.

Re-offending rates of young people – It was noted that reoffending had significantly improved in the previous 2 years, reducing from 50% to 30%, placing Doncaster in the top 5% nationally. The Panel was pleased to note that the Youth Justice Board Annual Report had recently referenced Doncaster as delivering good practice.

It was reported that a lot of proactive work had been undertaken with the Courts and South Yorkshire Police to ensure that the number of young offenders had reduced. A scheme had been developed to reduce criminal behaviour with multiagency support and early intervention and there had been success with the most challenging complex lives with fewer going into custody.

To conclude the Chair of the Doncaster Children’s Trust Board outlined that he was grateful for the level of Scrutiny being undertaken at today’s meeting and looked forward to working alongside the Local Authority to provide a safe and positive place for the children and young people of Doncaster to live.

RESOLVED that:

	<p>(1) the focus of joint improvement work for Quarter 1, be noted; and</p> <p>(2) a briefing note detailing the actual number of young people re-offending rather than percentage rates and indicators, be provided to the Panel.</p>	
102.	<p><u>LEARNING PROVISION AND ORGANISATION - UPDATE</u></p>	
	<p>Further to the issues considered at the meeting on 5th March, 2018 the Panel gave consideration to a progress report relating to effective delivery of high quality learning provision in response to local pressures and demand for learning places across Doncaster.</p> <p>The Panel was made aware of the discussions with each school pyramid and groups of headteachers, to provide high quality learning provision across the borough. Feedback and information on designed plans would be assessed over the summer holidays prior to the areas of development being proposed in the autumn term.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding and Access Fund</u> – the Panel was pleased to learn about the projects provided to schools through this funding.</p> <p><u>School Exclusions</u> – Members expressed concern with regard to school exclusions, particularly for those children and young people who were dealing with complex family behaviours and stressed the need to ensure good quality places in schools were available across the borough.</p> <p>With regard to Pupil Referral Units, it was recognised that the needs of young people were often inappropriately met and some pupils needed to be in a specialist setting.</p> <p>The Panel acknowledged that school practice was challenged with a key focus of attendance and fixed term exclusions with Ofsted taking the stance that they would directly challenge schools in it’s inspection process. The Local Authority was also working with the Regional Schools Commissioner to address the position.</p> <p>It was noted that school attendance/exclusion policies were very broad across the school spectrum but it is stressed that schools need to maintain a learning environment with a robust behaviour policy. The use of exclusion may be required however and early intervention to improve standards was essential.</p> <p>Members wished for the exact numbers of children and young people who had been excluded and also bearing in mind earlier discussions were interested in learning if there was any direct correlation between young people excluded from school and whether they were being</p>	

	<p>supported through the Youth Offending Service. Member requested if a case study could be provided relating to this issue.</p> <p><u>Quality of school places</u> – it was acknowledged that parents tend to move into areas or provide travel to where there were good school placements, but Members expressed concern that not all parents were able to do this and that quality placements must be provided across the whole Borough.</p> <p>It was explained that it was the Council’s priority to ensure that all children and young people achieve their potential with admission and transport policies supporting this. The Authority and partners were now also taking a long term approach by looking at individual area plans, pyramid by pyramid to meet the need of locality rather than just building another classroom on a school.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The discussion be noted; 2. The number of permanent exclusions for 17/18 to be provided to Members; 3. A case study(ies) be provided to a future meeting relating to the correlation between non-school attendance and crime of young people who were known to the YOS – case studies to be addressed at a future meeting (DMBC/Trust). 4. An annual review of progress be provided to the Panel. 	
103.	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2018/2019 - JULY 2018</u></p>	
	<p>The Panel gave consideration to its work plan for the 2018/19 year. Further to attendance by the Youth Council at the last meeting and to encourage increased attendance of young people at the Panel, the Chair expressed his wish to have a permanent young person as an invitee on the Panel membership. He also expressed a wish to hold meetings at 5pm.</p> <p>The Panel also requested that an invite for the meeting in December, be forwarded to the Children in Care Council when the Panel will address the Social Mobility Opportunity and Essential Life Skills item.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report be noted 2. The Children in Care Council be invited to attend the December meeting when the Panel gives consideration to the item on Social Mobility Opportunity and Esstential Life Skills; and 3. That consideration be given to meetings of the Panel being moved to a 5pm start time and 4. The Youth Council provide an update on their priorities. 	