

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 11TH DECEMBER, 2018

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held in ROOM 007 A&B, CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on TUESDAY, 11TH DECEMBER, 2018 at 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Neil Gethin

Councillors Lani-Mae Ball, Nick Allen, Jane Cox, Sean Gibbons, John Mounsey, Frank Tyas and Sue Wilkinson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

DMBC;

Damian Allen – Director of People
Riana Nelson - Assistant Director Partnerships and Operational Delivery
Lee Golze – Head of Commissioning and Transformation
Paul Thorpe - Quality and service Improvement Manager
Deborah Burton - Engagement Manager

DCST;

James Thomas - Senior Head of Service: Performance and Improvement
Mark Douglas - Chief Operating Officer
Rob Moore – Finance Manager

Other Councillors;

Councillor Kevin Rodgers
Councillor Dave Nevett

Other Attendees;

Aidan Nicol – Young Advisor
Members from the Youth Parliament

		<u>ACTION</u>
115.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	
	Apologies for absence were made by Councillor Nikki McDonald, John Hoare and Bernadette Nesbitt.	

116.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None	
117.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	Councillor John Mounsey declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items No.8 Attendance Strategy, by virtue of his role as Chair of Governors at Danum and Adwick.	
118.	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER 2018</u>	
	The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5 th September 2018, were agreed as a true record.	
119.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
120.	<u>DONCASTER MEMBERS OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT UPDATE</u>	
	<p>The purpose of this report was to provide an opportunity for Members to give consideration to reports and presentation by Doncaster members of the Youth Parliament. The presentation provided an update on the annual Make Your Mark consultation, the priorities identified from the results and future campaign plans.</p> <p>The following highlights were provided from the presentation, that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 42 schools, colleges and youth organisations supported the Youth Council campaign and voted. • Those schools with a low number of votes did not have students that were also members of the Youth Parliament. • At the top of Doncaster results were 1. Mental Health and 2. End Knife Crime. • Social media platforms were a contributor to the high number of votes. <p>Members were informed that 11,636 11-18 year olds voted this year which was an increase on the previous year. It was explained that various strategies had been used but it was mainly due to the use of social media that had made a significance difference.</p> <p>Engagement - A Member commented that in terms of engagement, it was a big achievement to be proud of. It was outlined that 5 schools accommodated for over half of the response. It was noted that those schools with no Youth Parliament members had made a difference in</p>	

terms of engagement.

The Ward Member for Adwick (who was also the Chair of Governors for Adwick and Danum) suggested that the Youth Council make contact with him in respect of Youth Council representation. It was noted that all schools had previously been contacted.

A Member raised their concern that there was a lack of awareness about the Youth Council within certain circles. In terms of publicising the Youth Council, Members were informed that it had been advertised widely within communities, through local organisations such as libraries and Expect Youth. It was suggested that more could be done to further publicise the Youth Council, for example, Ward Members could help link it to schools and communities.

Members were reassured that the Youth Council had used a number of mechanisms to engage with schools. It was added that a joint letter could be forwarded to invite those schools who had not engaged with the Make Your Mark consultation and ask them to outline how they planned to intervene with young people moving forward.

Mental Health – It was recognised that mental health was a big issue as there was more pressure in schools for high grades to be achieved and progress to be made. Members of the Youth Parliament explained that part-time Counsellors in schools were not always known about by students. It was also the case that a referral could be made to CAMHS without the young person's parent being made aware. It was felt that a significant issue was ensuring that teachers were aware of how to treat children in regards to mental health. It was requested that members of the Youth Parliament returned to the Panel in March 2019 with results of the consultation.

Knife Crime – Efforts were being made to find out more about knife crime and why it was occurring. It was highlighted that;

- A Police Officer (who currently sat on the Children and Families Executive Board) had agreed to work with the Youth Parliament on this area.
- More in-depth consultation was to be undertaken on why knife crime was voted for so highly and to find out whether people feel safe within their communities

A Member spoke about a presentation by the Yoyo project on 'How can I avoid Gun, Knife and Gang Crime at a local school, and expressed that he had found it extremely useful.

RESOLVED that the Panel;

- I. Note the report and presentation
- II. That an update on the issues raised be provided at the Panel's

Senior

	next meeting on the 5 th March 2019.	Governance Officer
121.	<u>PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE OF DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST: QUARTER 2, 2018/19</u>	
	<p>This report provided a review and analysis of the operational and financial performance challenge carried out by the Director of People of the Doncaster Children's Services Trust (the 'Trust') in Quarter 2 of 2018/19.</p> <p>The following highlights were provided, that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the last report to the Panel, a further children's home had achieved an outstanding grading in the quarter, meaning that the quarter ended with all homes managed by the Trust being rated, good, or better. • The Trust which was also registered as a Voluntary Adoption Agency was inspected by Ofsted and achieved an improved grading from 'Good' to 'Outstanding' indicating a pleasing trend of performance <p>It was outlined that areas of good performance included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A2 - Timeliness of Single Assessments – Quarter 2 = 91 % • A3 - Percentage of case file audits rated 'Requires Improvement' or better – Quarter 2 = 100% • • A8 - Children in Need with Open and Current Plan (Quarter 2 = 94%) <p>And areas of potential concern highlighted included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 - Percentage of Re-referrals in last 12 months (Quarter 2 = 27%) – Whilst it was recognised that high demand pressures had the potential to impact adversely on casework, referrals and re-referrals, systemic issues were also having an impact. It was stated that Ofsted had rated practice as 'Good' with appropriate application of thresholds. • E1 - Number of contacts into Social Care (Quarter 2 average = 1898) <p>It was recognised that RAG ratings mechanisms were not to be used as absolute thresholds of judgements. It was felt that comparisons were useful and it was recognised that some cohorts were very small, which can 'skew' the figures year on year.</p>	

The following areas of performance were raised during the Panel discussion;

A4 – Children Seen in appropriate timescales (CIN, CPP and CIC)

– It was explained that the number and volume around Children in Need (CIN) continued to be a challenge to keep this indicator within tolerance. Members were informed that this challenge related to a wider problem and that there was a need to understand the data better and consider how it played into the wider early help system. Members were told that the Council had commissioned the Innovation Unit to help understand the stem of flow and process issues through a separate analysis. It was explained how it could be a symptom of other issues, the robustness of the Early Help Offer and partners contribution. It was noted that the Early Help Offer needed to be addressed and if resolved should have a positive impact on this performance measure.

An offer was provided from the Director of People to circulate the report from the Innovation Unit.

Members were informed that nationally demand was increasing and that there was a higher rate of incidence and social care intervention. It was commented that 3 years ago there wasn't a robust system in place - an area that had significantly improved.

Members were reminded about the regular performance challenge meetings taking place that included the quarterly meetings and monthly finance and performance meetings.

E34/E35 - Number and rate (per 10,000) of Children in Need – (Quarter 2 average = 1677/396) - It was recognised that the numbers of Children in Need remained high. Members were informed that the demand on children's social care was increasing amongst different categories of need and this was something that the Trust would need to address. It was commented that there was a national concern around the rising demand of Children in Need and that assumptions were sometimes made that those in Children in Need were at risk when they weren't. It was viewed that further work needed to be undertaken to identify what the story was about behind the case.

It was commented that at any point around 30% of children were being assessed. It was recognised that the numbers appeared high and it was questioned whether some of those children could be stepped down in to Early Help support and intervention..

It was reported that at the end of March 2018 there had been a 10/11% reduction on numbers, and that other local authorities would release their statistics which would be published nationally by the Department of Education at the end of March 2019 and comparisons could be made. It was stated that there was a confidence that Doncaster's

Director of
People

<p>performance would be closer to that of the comparator group.</p> <p>It was reported that there had been a number of Ofsted inspections recently and that all external inspections of children’s services in Doncaster had shown that children were in the right part of system and receiving timely services.</p> <p>A Member commented that Early Help had various meanings in different organisations which could cause confusion. The Director of People offered to circulate the Early Help strategy that would include definitions of Early Help to Members of the Panel.</p> <p>In terms of what was being undertaken around Children in Need, Members were informed that there would be a joint response with a range of activity (as part of the Early Help strategy). Reference was made to the specific legal term in the 1989 Children Act which stated that a child was in need if their health or development would be impaired without services. From this, it was explained that services could intervene earlier where needs were escalating but that it was also about the wider partnership response who have a duty to collaborate. Concern was also raised around the negative impact that austerity has had to children and families as well as challenging communities.</p> <p>Other improvement work which was taking place, was discussed and this included the following :-</p> <p>Joint Council and Trust Focus for improvement work in the next quarter - In addition to the actions and reviews being undertaken, it was explained that a joint Future Placement Needs Strategy group had been set up with representatives from the Council and the Trust. This group was to consider what joint commissioning work and decisions were needed in regards to the service provision required in Doncaster and would explore options and solutions to reduce the costs of children placed into care outside the area.</p> <p>Annual Contract Review – It was noted that each year, the Council was required by the terms of the contract between the two parties, to carry out a review of the operation of the Children’s Trust and report this by 31st December to the Secretary of State for Education.</p> <p>It was explained that the Council was currently awaiting the outcome of a DfE commissioned review by on the options for the governance of the Trust going forward. Members were informed that so far this had identified the need to work closer together to understand the demand and forecasts across the whole children’s system, which would include the care ladder. It was added that this included considering what immediate controls would be put in place. The DFE report would consider a future operating model for the Trust</p>	<p>Director of People</p>
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	<p>Sector Led Improvement – Members were informed of the Joint Strategic Improvement Group held in October, 2018 when the meeting discussed the Association of Directors of Children’s Services annual regional performance challenge, which included a requirement for all Authorities to identify and evidence their strengths and areas for improvements on which they were challenged by other Authorities. . It was reported that Doncaster’s 6 strengths comprised the following: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership 2. Safeguarding and child protection 3. Adoption 4. Youth Offending 5. Key Stage 2 Outcomes 6. Children and Young Plan Mental Health <p>And the 6 areas of improvements comprised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children in Care Placement and Commissioning 2. Front Door 3. Key Stage 4 Outcomes 4. Attendance and Exclusions 5. Early Years (Inequality Gap) 6. Certain systemic issues early help <p>DCST Finance Update - In terms of the financial pressures being experienced by the Trust, Members were reminded that an updated DCST Finance report would be considered by OSMC on the 21st January 2019. The Chair of OSMC in attendance at the meeting invited Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel to attend that meeting or alternatively, would be welcomed to provide any questions to be raised during the Committee’s discussion.</p> <p>Investment in Technology – Members were told that investment in technology had recently been made to provide 4G enabled tablets to frontline staff to allow mobile working. It was explained that this was being rolled out and that users receiving the new equipment were undergoing training. It was commented that improvements were already being seen in the timeliness of recording.</p> <p>Members commented that they were heartened to see the positive work being undertaken between the Council and the Trust.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel note the report</p>	
122.	<u>ATTENDANCE STRATEGY UPDATE</u>	
	The purpose of this document was to provide the Panel with an update of the Attendance Strategy which had been previously discussed early 2018. Members were reminded that the original Attendance Strategy	

document came about as a consequence of Cabinet's consideration of the trends in school absence in Doncaster.

The Panel discussed the following areas;

Home-schooling - A Member raised concern that children being home-schooled were potentially those children who were being excluded and therefore this presented an easy option for those parents affected. Members were reminded that there were cultural reasons behind some children being home-schooled. It was also acknowledged that some parents had certain opinions around mainstream schooling and that there were clusters of movement taking place around the country.

It was questioned how it was known whether home-schooled children were safe. Members were assured that there were systems and processes in place and that steps were being taken to actively challenge the landscape of provision.

Fixed Term Rate Exclusions – It was explained that figures were based on information from the first two terms of last year, which was all the data that was immediately available. It was noted that the rate of increase had slowed down in comparison with national rates. It was added that the HMI report used exclusions for the whole year in arrears where nationally we was 2nd from the bottom. An offer was made by the Director of People to circulate a report on a termly basis in arrears to Members of the Panel commencing end of January 2019.

It was commented that absence was a proxy for other needs that were not being met and that was the purpose behind the strategy.

Members had been informed that attendance was one of the three strands from the work of the Doncaster Growing Together inclusion board which provided overall governance for the strategy. It was explained that it was strongly correlated with the work of the Social Mobility Opportunity Area.

Engagement with Schools - A Member questioned whether all schools were fully engaging with the strategy. It was responded that although they weren't that was due to the system and the way that some schools interacted with it. Schools had been challenged around existing approaches to attendance and a common approach to leading attendance in Doncaster schools had been developed. It was explained that there were conflicting views around behaviour provided by schools and Ofsted.

Members were informed that the Director of People had attended a recent Secondary Heads meeting and had presented a challenge around the rate of increase that will see Doncaster exceed 2018/19 numbers.

It was added that the Director of People had also allocated 18 half days to allow them to understand problems around behaviour at each individual school using the national inclusion quality mark to check against. It was added that presently there were no schools that had been accredited with the quality mark.

Members were informed that there was a challenge in place for schools to sign up to Opportunity Areas Inclusion Charter in reducing fixed term exclusions across the borough. It was explained that Opportunity Areas would follow by supporting those schools that had signed up.

It was explained that the Regional Schools Commissioner had the accountability to ensure that academies were delivering against the statutory guidance in place. It was added that although the Council did not have the power to convene academies they were able to bring them to the attention of the Regional Schools Commissioner. It was noted that in accordance with the 2010 Localism Act it was possible to write to the Chairs and Chief Executives of academy trusts to positively engage with them through requesting a meeting.

In addition to the above, Members were made aware of the following;

- That consideration would be provided to standards of behaviour and attendance figures at the next trust meeting.
- Timpson Review – That recent reviews undertaken by the Government around school exclusions contained a deep personal commitment outlining some challenging areas, and alongside Ofsted was reviewing the framework.
- Big Picture Model – That there was a need to expand the Big Picture Model to include a more inclusive curriculum and maximise all outcomes for all children.
- Reference was made to a local authority that published their performance league tables for attendance and inclusion report figures within the public domain. Members suggested that Doncaster could also do this and was informed that the information was already published as part of a report brought to Cabinet on an annual basis.

The Ward Member for Adwick welcomed a deep dive into specific issues around attendance and behaviour at Outwood Academy at Adwick and Danum. In view of learning more about those Members who were also School Governors, the Director of People offered to circulate a list of them to the Panel for information.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the report.

Director of
People

123.	<u>WORK PLAN REPORT - DECEMBER 2018</u>	
	<p>The Panel gave consideration to the current work plan position updated December 2018. Members were informed that there would be a Members Briefing held on the 29th January 2019 to consider Child Poverty.</p> <p>The Chair made reference to an email received from the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny around their concerns of suicide rates in the youth justice system as it had been identified as a risk factor. It was also noted earlier on in the meeting, that the Youth Council had presented the Make Your Mark priorities with the top one being that of mental health. It was therefore agreed that an informal meeting around mental health and suicide prevention to take place prior to the Panels meeting on the 5th March 2019.</p> <p>The Panel was also updated on a recent session that had taken place with two Members from the Panel and Children in Care. It was stated that it had been an interesting and purposeful meeting and feedback had been passed on. It was noted that there would be another similar session to be held in the future</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the workplan update for December 2018 II. That a Members Briefing take place with a focus on Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (including that around suicide rates within the Youth Justice System). III. That a joint letter be forwarded from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Council to those schools who did not engage with the Youth Council national consultation ‘Make Your Mark’. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Senior Governance Officer</p>