

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 11TH JULY, 2016

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on MONDAY, 11TH JULY, 2016 at 10.30 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Neil Gethin

Councillors Sue Wilkinson, James Hart, Jessie Credland, Andrea Robinson, Nick Allen and Mark Houlbrook

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Jo Moxon, Assistant Director Education

Leanne Hornsby, Head of Transformation and Business Support

Paul Thorpe, Head of Service Performance Improvement

Jacqui Wilson, Director Performance Quality and Innovation, Doncaster Children's Trust

James Thomas, Head of Performance and Business Intelligence, Doncaster Children's Trust

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue McGuinness and

		<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sue McGuinness.	
2.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
3.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest.	

4.	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29TH FEBRUARY, 2016</u>	
	<u>RESOLVED</u> that:- the minutes of the meeting held on 29 <sup>th</sup> February, 2016 be signed and agreed as a correct record.	
5.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements.	
6.	<u>EDUCATION EXCELLENCE EVERYWHERE - THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 2016: A SUMMARY</u>	
	<p>The Panel considered a summary of the Education White Paper 2016 - Education Excellence Everywhere published by the DFE in March 2016. The Panel noted the wide range of proposals for changes across the Education landscape and implications for the Council and Borough's schools.</p> <p>Members noted the three key threads running through the paper in an increasingly school-led system:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Concept of competition whereby the most successful MATs (multi-academy trusts) grow in size and the less successful are taken over by other MATs;</li> <li>2. An ever-increasing level of autonomy delegated to schools, including the accreditation of teachers; and</li> <li>3. The ever-increasing influence of regional school commissioners.</li> </ol> <p><b>Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)</b> – covers 17 local authorities for the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber area. Concern was expressed by Members with regard to the RSC's influence and discussed a number of areas.</p> <p>It was noted that the RSC would be responsible for holding schools to account and held the same powers as those held by the local authority. Examples of the powers include, where a school is failing or causing concern the RSC can issue warning notices or put in place an interim Executive Board or partnership with another school. It was highlighted that where there was a dispute when resolving issues, the RSC has powers to overrule the Local Authority.</p> <p>It the Local Authority has concerns about any school then information can be forwarded to the RSC for consideration and action if required. It was noted that the RSC may not be aware of what was happening in schools, but Local Authorities do have an awareness and any issues of concern were gratefully received by the RSC.</p>	

It seemed that Local Authorities could have an advocacy position but it must be borne in mind that this benefits the children in Doncaster's schools and the approach maintained in Doncaster and relationship with the RSC was effective and working in practice.

The RSC held regular meetings with the Local Authority with open dialogue but ensuring that Doncaster's schools were a priority for the Council with their intervention being welcomed with underachieving Academies.

It was noted that Local Authorities would still hold responsibility for Special Educational Needs, ensuring their voice was heard.

**All Schools moving to Acadamisation** – All schools were consulted in January, 2016 to outlining future options for our schools. Each school has declared its intentions, with some wishing to stay with the Local Authority and others identifying that they wish to join other organisations. It was noted that the schools had been very open thinking about their futures either with or without sponsors and wished to work through the issues to ensure the correct decision was made for the school.

**Local Authority becoming a MAT** – It was noted that a successful local authority could become a MAT sponsor. Currently it was not clear what “a successful local authority” would be classed as but if Doncaster was to be in this position it would need to look at whether being a MAT would be advantageous to Doncaster's schools.

Members stressed that schools could become divorced from the Local Authority and in turn their communities, particularly if Parent Governors were removed. Therefore, a strong Governance role to ensure that these relationships were not lost was required.

**Teaching School Alliance** – The organisation had been working with the Local Authority for some time and was a very valuable partnership that had been developed. The alliance has been very successful, covering all phases of education.

It was noted that the role of a Headteacher would change dramatically in the coming years with the requirement to grow into Executive roles, to lead more than teach and they would be required to oversee administration, legal and finance of much larger organisations. Some Headteachers were not yet in a position to undertake such leadership therefore training and development of system leaders was essential and Local Authorities are preparing for this requirement. If there are Headteachers that the Local Authority recognise as being capable as undertaking such a role they would be targeted for training to ensure local continuation.

Members stressed that the Teaching Alliance was increasingly

	<p>important and pleased to note the support provided by the Council, including the passport funding to help with succession planning ensuring more good teachers were accredited ensuring schools were constantly developing. Past Scrutiny reviews had shown that more support for Headteachers and newly qualified teachers was required and noted that in the last 5 years there had been 40% new Headteachers with some new to the Borough. Support for new Headteachers was provided through Central Government funding but they are also provided with a first year mentor and training course that was Doncaster based. Partners in learning also assist new Headteachers with Governance support.</p> <p>It was noted that Doncaster had three national accredited Headteachers who were available to support other schools and it was the Council’s intention to ensure the number continued to expand.</p> <p><b>Equalities</b> – It was noted that education outcomes for children and young people in Doncaster would continue to be supported equally whether they be white working class boys or from minority ethnic groups, which was supported by the White Paper.</p> <p><b>Interface between Headteachers and the Children’s Trust</b> –It was acknowledged that Headteachers were very active in highlighting issues of concern to the Authority or partner organisations and the Panel was assured that there were many local collaboratives where the Children’s Trust were partners, for example, the Children’s Safeguarding Board where information could be shared. It was noted however, that the relationship between schools and the Children’s Trust needed to grow bearing in mind the lack of resource now available in local authorities. There were improvements being made but further work was required.</p> <p><b>Recruitment and Retention</b> – Recruitment and retention of high quality teaching staff was proving to be more difficult and early fall out from the profession was causing concern. It was stressed that Doncaster would have to try new methods of attraction, like other local authorities.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be received and discussion noted.</p>	
7.	<p><u>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE &amp; PROGRESS AGAINST OFSTED ACTION PLAN - TRUST UPDATE REPORT.</u></p>	
	<p>To accompany the report, the Head of Performance and Business Intelligence from Doncaster Childrens Trust provided a detailed outline of the Contract performance monitoring arrangements and the Panel addressed areas detailed below.</p> <p><b>Case File Audits</b> – It was explained that the Childrens Trust held concerns with regard to this therefore so undertook additional work</p>	

addressing quality of case work, how much is the child's voice was heard ensuring a positive difference was being made to the child's life. Members noted that the Trust had struggled with the long standing culture of lack of compliance with regard to recording all details on case work files but were now working with the Auditors to address the situation. A high bar had been set and it had been found that the quality of work was improving with the last 50 cases improving significantly. The LGA had stated that all children were safe without exception.

Following concern expressed by Members it was acknowledge that it was imperative for all files to be updated with correct information and capture key events in a child's life, particularly if the case worker was away from work for a long period, to ensure as much detail is available about a child, otherwise the latest position could revert to square one. It was noted that if a member of staff was absent from work, the case files became the responsibility of the team manager to ensure they were supported correctly.

**Agency Rates** – It was explained that there had been an active recruitment campaign and the need to remain competitive to attract the right people for positions but it was noted that the turnover rate was low and sickness was at its lowest ever. It was stressed that staff should not be overloaded with cases. It was also accepted that due to the nature of the work, there would always be a need to employ agency staff.

**NEET Figures** – It was confirmed that Job Centre Plus had not been commissioned to provide provision for young people in care, however, it was reported that partners had submitted a large bid to the "Innovation Programme for Children in Care" to equip them with the appropriate employment skills required. There was a real enthusiasm and engagement from partners and it was recognised that Doncaster was a good place for young people at the present time with £4m of investment over 3 years to strength the virtual school and holding providers to account.

It was stressed that if the bid was not successful, there were other targeted activities being undertaken through the Youth Service, including with youth crime prevention. The Panel required if details of training providers and the number of care leavers engaged in training be provided before the next meeting.

**Suitable Accommodation** – In response to Members expressing concern with regard to the percentage showing red of children in care aged 19 to 21 in suitable accommodation, it was explained that this relates to those young people that case workers were currently in contact with. The indicator was assessed for 13 weeks around the young persons 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Some young people could be in the custody suite and this was questioned whether this was suitable accommodation, as the young person should not be in this position in

	<p>the first place.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> that the discussion be noted.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>ACCOUNTABILITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST</u></b></p>	
	<p>The Panel considered a report relating to its current arrangements for holding the Childrens Trust to account. Practice had developed whereby Members currently considered quarterly performance reports directly from the Trust, however, this does not fully meet the contractual expectations to effectively hold to account both the Council and the Trust. The Panel needs to be supported to hold the Council to account for its contract management of the Trust.</p> <p>It was noted that a number of monthly and quarterly meetings between the Trust and the Council are undertaken to assure continuous improvement including Finance and Performance.</p> <p>Members supported the need to move towards a more rounded approach which challenged both the Council and the Trust, but were keen to retain some of the important performance information measures when future reports are presented, for their consideration.</p> <p>Following discussion it was noted that the Trust is accountable to both the Council and the Secretary of State, and there needed to be a system where work was not duplicated and more focused. It was therefore supported that a split screen approach report in two phases be provided to future meetings. The first phase would hold the Council to account for its monitoring of the Trust against the service delivery contract and the second phase would provide an invite to the Trust to respond to the Council's report and the specific performance issues which the Council report had raised.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b> that a 'split screen' approach report including key performance indicators for future meetings, be provided.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL - WORK PLAN UPDATE 2016/17</u></b></p>	
	<p>The Panel considered the work plan for the 2016/17 year and noted the Mayoral response to the review into children with disabilities during 2015/16.</p> <p>The Senior Governance Officer reminded Members of the Mental Health joint meeting with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel on 25<sup>th</sup> January, and to ensure that it was detailed in their diaries.</p> <p>The Chair outlined that he would be attending future Youth Council</p>	

	meetings and would report back to the Panel.	
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**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.