

ROTHERHAM IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Friday, 28th November, 2014

Present:-

Mr. R. Vincent, Independent Chairman
Councillor C. Beaumont, Cabinet Member for Education and Children Services
Ms. C. Downs, Chief Executive, Local Government Association
Ms. E Grant, National Children's Improvement Adviser, Local Government Association
Councillor E. Hoddinott, Deputy Leader
Councillor S. Houghton, Local Government Association Member Peer
Councillor P. Lakin, Leader of the Council
Councillor C. Middleton, Conservative Group Representative, Rotherham
Mrs. J. Ormondroyd, Interim Chief Executive
Councillor P. Reeve, Local Government Association Independent Group – UKIP
Ms. G. Taylor, Local Government Association
Councillor C. Vines, UKIP Group Leader, Rotherham

Also in attendance:-

Mr. G. Archer, Department for Education
Ms. M. Atkinson, Press and Communications
Mr. S. Fletcher, Legal and Democratic Services
Chief Superintendent Jason Harwin, South Yorkshire Police
Mr. J. Homer, Seconded Local Government, Yorkshire and Humber
Mr. P. Howe, Director of Human Resources
Mr. D. McWilliams, Designate Director, Commissioning and Performance Management
Mr. M. Newsam, Children's Social Care Commissioner
Mrs. J. Parfremment, Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
Mr. I. Thomas, Interim Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
Mrs. S. Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager

Apologies for absence were received from.

Mr. N. Elvery, Chief Executive, Croydon Council
Councillor David Simmonds, Local Government Association, Conservative Peer

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE IMPROVEMENT BOARD HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER, 2014

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th November, 2014.

Resolved:- That the minutes be confirmed as a true record subject to the amendment on the second page from Derbyshire City Council to

Derbyshire County Council.

16. MATTERS ARISING

Reference was made to Minute No. 10 (Update on Appointments) and the Board wished to congratulate all those involved in the swift appointments processes to date.

With regards to Minute No. 12 (Expected Shape of the Improvement Plan) the Board would provide oversight, support and challenge to the Council's improvement and transformation journey and Jan Ormondroyd, Interim Chief Executive, with support from Justin Homer, due to start a full-time secondment to the Council from Local Government Yorkshire and Humber, would lead on taking the Improvement Plan forward and work closely with various people across the Council.

Sue Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager, provided an update on the draft Improvement Plan, which was circulated, and which would take account of all outstanding inspections to ensure it fully reflected the findings and recommendations, including those yet to come from the going Corporate Governance Inspection.

A preliminary summary was provided on the challenges facing the Council and which should focus on immediate actions with discussion, challenge and support from the Improvement Board. On this basis five overarching and consolidating challenges were proposed:-

- Children's safeguarding.
- Clarity over future purpose.
- An organisation fit for future purpose.
- Delivering change and sustaining strengths.
- Culture and relationships.

The Board were mindful of the need to keep the Improvement Plan's structure simple and not over complicate it and for the framework detail to include electronic links to other relevant documentation.

The Board were mindful of the cultural changes that would have to take place within the Council, which would take time, and the need for corporate responsibility for Children's Service to be instilled. This combined with an improved package of member development would help to improve Rotherham overall.

There was a need for wider transparency to restore public confidence in Rotherham and this needed to be carefully managed, alongside South Yorkshire Police. The Council had to work from baseline customer satisfaction in order to strategically measure improvement moving forward.

The Board welcomed the suggestion of a special Improvement Board for

Children's Services and requested information from the Department for Education on the relationship with the current Improvement Board. There was some potential for shared membership between the two Improvement Boards, which would be closely monitored.

It was suggested that the Designate Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services and the seconded representative from Local Government Yorkshire and the Humber look into the role of a Children's Improvement Board with colleagues from the Department for Education and the Local Government Association, including how this should relate to other improvement governance structures; and report back to the next meeting of this Board in due course.

Resolved:- (1) That the Improvement Plan be updated to include all inspections once complete.

(2) That further information be sought on the establishment of a Children's Improvement Board and this be reported back to the next meeting of this Board in due course. Reference was made to Minute No. 10 (Update on Appointments) and the Board wished to pass on their thanks to all who have helped ensuring the urgent conclusion to the various appointments processes to date.

With regards to Minute No. 12 (Expected Shape of the Improvement Plan) the Board would provide oversight, support and challenge to the Council's improvement and transformation journey. Jan Ormondroyd, Interim Chief Executive, along with Justin Homer from Local Government Yorkshire and Humber, would complete the initial Improvement Plan following consideration of Louise Casey's findings.

Sue Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager, provided an update on the current draft of the Improvement Plan.

A preliminary summary was provided on the challenges facing the Council and which should focus on immediate actions with discussion, challenge and support from the Improvement Board. On this basis five overarching and consolidating challenges were proposed:-

- Children's safeguarding.
- Clarity over future purpose.
- An organisation fit for future purpose.
- Delivering change and sustaining strengths.
- Culture and relationships.

The Board were mindful of the need to keep the Improvement Plan's structure simple and for the framework detail to include electronic links to other relevant documentation.

The Board were mindful of the cultural changes that would have to take place within the Council, which would take time, and the need for

corporate responsibility for Children's Service to be instilled. This combined with an improved package of member development would help to improve Rotherham overall.

There was a need for wider transparency to restore public confidence in Rotherham and this needed to be carefully managed, in collaboration with South Yorkshire Police. The Council had to work from baseline customer satisfaction in order to strategically measure improvement moving forward.

The Board welcomed the suggestion of a special Improvement Board for Children's Services and requested information from the Department for Education on the relationship with the wider Improvement Board. There was some potential for shared membership between the two Improvement Boards.

It was suggested that the Interim Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services and the seconded representative from Local Government Yorkshire and the Humber look into the possibility of a Children's Improvement Board with colleagues from the Department for Education and the Local Government Association and report back to the next meeting of this Board in due course.

Resolved:- (1) That the Improvement Plan be completed and adopted following consideration of Louise Casey's findings and recommendations.

(2) That further information be sought on the establishment of a Children's Improvement Board and this be reported back to the next meeting of this Board in due course.

17. UPDATE ON KEY APPOINTMENTS

Jan Ormondroyd, Interim Chief Executive, provided an update on the appointments process to date which commenced with her own appointment in early November, followed by the Interim Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services and the more recent temporary appointments for two additional Directors for Commissioning and Performance Management and Universal and Targeted Services.

Alongside this there would be two further appointments to an Interim Director of Public Health following the current postholder's retirement and renewal of the Strategic Director of Resources and Transformation position. Expressions of interest from current senior managers had been requested.

The Penna Agency had already been appointed for recruitment to the permanent positions of the above roles and consideration was also being given to exploring the possibility of a shared Director of Public Health arrangement with Doncaster. The advertisement for the permanent Chief Executive position would appear in the Municipal Journal immediately.

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

18. UPDATE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Jan Ormondroyd, Interim Chief Executive, gave a brief update reflecting the four weeks since she came into office. She described a number of changes that had taken place and the desire to move forward.

The Leader of the Council had appointed a new Cabinet and Children's Services now had a new management structure in place.

The Council were facing a challenging agenda, but there was a general willingness to progress and maintain the good momentum that had now started.

It was acknowledged that there was still a need to deal with some historical issues as well as getting the balance right for members of the public to be confident in the Council in the future. It was recognised that this situation would not be fixed quickly.

There had been a presentation to Cabinet looking at the budget for 2015/16 and beyond and the gaps that existed. Work would continue looking at the Medium Term Financial Strategy alongside the Community Strategy and decisions taken given some of the challenges ahead.

The Board were mindful of the budget pressures facing Children's Services, especially around looked after children. They were assured that these would be taken into consideration as part of the budget process.

Resolved:- That the update be received and the information noted.

19. UPDATE ON THE C.G.I. REPORT

The Chairman confirmed that the date for the publication of the Corporate Governance Inspection had been indicated to be the 16th January, 2015, as of that morning.

The Board queried whether the Council would be given early sight of the report before publication and suggested that the communications following publication and the expectations from it be carefully managed.

Resolved:- That the information be received and the content noted.

20. UPDATE ON PROGRESS VS. CSE ACTION PLAN

The Chairman introduced Jason Harwin from South Yorkshire Police to the meeting in his role as Chairman of the Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group. He reported on the background to the Child Sexual Exploitation

Strategy 2013-16 and the progress being made.

This important Strategy and Action Plan took account of recommendations nationally, regionally and locally. The sixty recommendations were inclusive of the Jay Report in relation to child sexual exploitation and would be updated further to include those arising from Ofsted.

Governance of the action plan and the need to move quickly were important, further strengthened by the bringing together of key personnel.

The Strategy and Action Plan set out how it would be scrutinised, the increase in the range of activities to be audited, the need for clear communications, and the need to keep victims at the heart with very clear methods of support. The Sub-Group reported back to the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The Board also noted the governance arrangements involving partners of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Views of the Health and Wellbeing Board needed to be captured and included as part of the golden thread for the Strategy moving forward, further strengthened by the inclusion of the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services on the membership.

An independent Children's Improvement Board may assist partners to drive progress.

The Chairman of the Improvement Board confirmed he was to meet with the Independent Chairman of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Board shortly.

In response to queries about the Crown Prosecution Service and their investigation into historical cases of child sexual exploitation it was noted that a backlog existed across Yorkshire and Humber area. Assurances had been given following meetings between the Chief Constable and the Head of the Crown Prosecution Service that matters would be looked into. It was not possible to put a timescale on this. It was both local and a national issue, which would be escalated following the publication of the Jay Report.

In the last twelve months there had been twenty-six prosecutions and twenty-six convictions and others were in hand.

It was suggested that the Jason Harwin from South Yorkshire Police, the Director of Children Services and other key players discuss further how to take the action plan forward, and how to establish straight forward and effective reporting and oversight arrangements.

Resolved:- That Jason Harwin from South Yorkshire Police, the Director of Children Services and other key players discuss further how to take

the action plan forward and how to establish straight forward and effective reporting and oversight arrangements.

21. FORWARD PLAN AND DATE/TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Consideration was given to dates and times of future meetings moving forward.

Resolved:- That the following dates of the Improvement Board be confirmed with workshop sessions as indicated in the mornings commencing at 10.30 a.m., followed by the formal meeting at 1.30 p.m. (with the exception of the 9th January, 2015:-

- Friday, 9th January, 2015
Workshop – Update on Children’s Services
- Friday, 6th February, 2015
Workshop – Corporate Governance Inspection
- Friday, 6th March, 2015
Workshop – to be confirmed.
- Friday, 17th April, 2015
Workshop – to be confirmed.
- Friday, 5th June, 2015
Workshop – to be confirmed.