

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
2nd November, 2016**

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors Allcock, Bird, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliot, Jarvis, Keenan, Marriott, Napper and Senior.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from The Mayor (Councillor Pitchley), Councillors Beaumont, Fenwick-Green, Khan, and Short.

Also in attendance were Councillors Cutts and John Turner for Minute No. 30.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Senior declared an interest in Minute No. 30 (CSE Post Abuse Services Update) on the grounds of being a provider of practical, emotional support, advocacy and signposting for individuals and families.

27. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

28. COMMUNICATIONS

- (a) The Chairman issued a warm welcome to Commissioner Bradwell and the Deputy Leader to today's meeting.

Commissioner Bradwell gave a short update confirming her background, the close working relationships she had with the Deputy Leader, the Strategic Director and the Chair of the Safeguarding Board and her plans moving forward.

Commissioner Bradwell welcomed the opportunity to improve services for children in Rotherham and was happy to receive any comments or feedback.

- (b) Councillor Allcock provided an update following the first meeting of the Child Centred Borough Task and Finish Group, which was attended by Elected Members, Officers and representatives from other agencies.

Feedback from future meetings would be provided as part of the Communications item on this agenda.

- (c) Councillor Cusworth, whilst unable to attend the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Group, outlined the items considered, which included:-

- Corporate Parenting Performance Report - July 2016.
- Looked After Children Statutory Health Assessments.

- Independent Reviewing Officer Escalation Report.
- Annual Report for the Rotherham Therapeutic Team (1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016).
- Rotherham Adoption Service Performance Report 2015-2016.
- Children and Young People's Services Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report 2015- 2016.
- Care Leavers Annual Report.
- Placement Sufficiency Report.
- Overview of Corporate Parenting Training for Elected Members.

Councillor Cusworth was happy to respond should anyone have any queries.

- (d) The Senior Scrutiny Adviser drew attention to the Member Training and Development Events scheduled from December, 2016 to January, 2017. These included:-

6 th and 7 th December	Scrutinising External Partners.
8 th December	Scrutinising Performance Information with Confidence.
18 th January	Scrutinising Children's Safeguarding Services.
24 th January	LGA Run Event and hosted by Rotherham "Prevention Matters" – members role in health improvement.

Details on all these events would be circulated in due course.

In addition, an email from Councillor Hoddinott regarding an event in December for victims and support services around child sexual exploitation would be circulated. Anyone wishing to attend should contact the Senior Scrutiny Adviser.

29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2016

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 21st September, 2016, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

With regards to Minute No. 23(c) relating to unregistered schools, it was noted that this information had not been received. This would be circulated in due course.

30. CSE POST ABUSE SERVICES UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 35 of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 16th December, 2015, consideration was given to a report, presented by Jo Smith, Post Abuse Co-ordinator, concerning the progress of the child sexual exploitation post-abuse support services

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established by the Council since the publication (September, 2014) of the report by Professor Alexis Jay.

The report referred to the significant investment in the development and commissioning of child sexual exploitation support services by both the Borough Council and by the Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group. This investment had resulted in a very different support offer for victims and survivors to that identified in the report of Professor Alexis Jay. As such, a comprehensive range of services now existed.

A supplementary powerpoint presentation also drew attention and focus to the report and information was provided on the:-

- Context of Support.
- Service Specification.
- Service Areas.
- Services.
- Monitoring Process.
- The Future.

It was also noted that to ensure that all communities with the Borough had a voice in the development of services Salford University were commissioned to work with a number of voluntary and community organisations to capture their thoughts, ideas and experience post Casey and Jay Reports.

The Salford Report along with the Needs Analysis and other voice and influence work had helped to shape the child sexual exploitation services now in place and being commissioned.

All Commissioned Post Abuse Services were required to include voice and influence elements to their support and monitored alongside other outcome monitoring arrangements.

A discussion and question and answer session ensued with Members and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Availability of evidence to confirm the service being offered was making a difference now and into the future. Services were not commissioned any further than five years and any future provision would be developed in line with the voice and influence work now taking place.
- Monitoring of the service provision and the evidence data outcomes. Case studies and data detail to supplement the monitoring process would be provided as part of future performance reporting.
- Ensuring services were available for minority and ethnic groups i.e through Rotherham Rise.

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- Ensuring services were available for vulnerable children, which were supported through the involvement of Barnardo's and their outreach work in schools and localities.
- Barnardo's also worked with vulnerable young people who had special educational needs, particularly around their levels of understanding, supplemented with the work undertaken by GROW and Rotherham Rise.
- The service specification covered three areas of service and had been specifically commissioned. However, Swinton Lock, whilst not being successful in their application, would continue with their work in supporting individuals and families providing practical, emotional support, advocacy and sign posting from the 1st July, 2016 for twelve months.
- The monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the commissioned services would be evidenced for activity with monthly reports being submitted to the three Commissioning Managers and visits and spot checks undertaken, which had only commenced very recently. An update on any areas for improvement would be reported back to this Select Commission.
- Dealing with spikes in services following high profile media coverage were built into the capacity for the commissioned services and formed part of the rolling programme. Dependency would diminish over time and users once stabilised would be supported to accessing universal services.
- Access to services over a four to forty-nine week period was dependent upon the service user and their needs. However, the commissioned service were able to signpost and handhold to other relevant service areas as part of the process and only the counselling elements were time bound over a period of twenty weeks.
- Flexibility was built into the service specifications and support was available for anyone affected by child sexual exploitation over the age of twelve.
- Was there a need for a 24 hour on call support? It was felt that expectations of service users within normal working hours were being managed, including access to emergency services as appropriate. This was being monitored.
- The costs for the service specifications were set and not subject to budget constraints.

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- Capturing the golden thread as part of the voice and influence work would be established once the relationships with organisational experts and partner agencies involved with children and young people had been developed.

Resolved:- (1) That Jo Smith be thanked for her informative presentation and input.

(2) That the comprehensive report be received and its contents noted.

(3) That case studies and data detail supplement the monitoring process as part of future performance reporting with further evidence of outcomes.

(4) That updates on any areas for improvement of the commissioned services be reported back to this Select Commission in due course.

(5) That a further update be provided in May/June, 2017.

(Councillor Senior declared a prejudicial interest in this item and left the room whilst it was discussed on the grounds of being a provider of practical, emotional support, advocacy and signposting for individuals and families)

31. NATIONAL TRANSFER SCHEME FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN

Further to Minute No. 87 of the meeting of the Cabinet and Commissioners held on 10th October, 2016, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Ian Walker, Service Manager – Looked After Children, concerning the National Transfer Scheme, where on 1st July, 2016, the Home Office and the Department for Education launched a new voluntary transfer arrangement between local authorities for the care of unaccompanied children who arrived in the United Kingdom and claimed asylum.

Reference was made to the report which set out in detail what constituted an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, the reasons why and the legal duty to provide support for children and young people who sought asylum.

The National Transfer Scheme had been launched and provided financial support to encourage all local authorities to volunteer to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, so that there was a more even distribution of caring responsibilities across the country. Under the scheme, a child arriving in one local authority area already under strain caring for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, may be transferred to another Council which had the capacity.

Three options were proposed and one recommended:-

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- Option 1 – Not to enter into the proposed voluntary arrangement.
- Option 2 – Rotherham received unaccompanied asylum seeking children outside of the regional model.
- Option 3 – Rotherham participated in a regional model for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Rotherham was advocating Option 3 which would be led by the regional Association of Directors of Children's Services.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued with Members and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- The demand for additional foster carers would be met and the allocation of suitable foster placements managed through the benefit of a regional approach to ensure the impact on Rotherham's looked after population was reduced.
- The sufficiency strategy, which was under development, would lessen any impact on existing mental health services for children and young people and assist with the capacity of services to deal with the extra demand.
- The CCG were aware of the concerns around the extra burden on CAMHS and it was noted that looked after children were being prioritised as part of the assessment process. However, a regionalised approach would join up services to identify how the children's needs could best be met.
- Work had already commenced to look at a raft of support services and training that could be provided for foster carers in their care of children with specific needs. Appropriate support networks would then be put in place.
- Timescales for the development of placements and support networks were yet to be confirmed, but it was likely the larger cities in the region would be the most appropriate places initially to take children into reception centres.
- Invisible costs, which were those related to the demand on existing social care services, would be mitigated, but the impact minimised as far as possible.
- Rotherham was also an importer of looked after children into the borough as well as an exporter, but it was envisaged that the regional approach would strengthen the current arrangements with independent providers with places being secured on a South Yorkshire regional basis.

- Meeting the educational needs of the children would be demanding, but it was felt transitional arrangements would be developed to ensure children put into mainstream education had learnt the basics of English. Whilst the figure of thirty-nine children were earmarked for Rotherham their integration would be incremental.
- There was little evidence to suggest that the unaccompanied children coming to Rotherham would be considered a risk to others. However, the full circumstances as to why they were seeking asylum would be identified and any risks dealt with.
- The Corporate Parenting Group would be provided with updates in due course.
- The appropriate recruitment/training process associated with social care staff for dealing with these children had already commenced. It was noted that no children had yet been received into Rotherham as the proposals were in the early stages and Member involvement in the working group set up for this process was welcomed.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That Option 3 - Rotherham participated in a regional model for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, be supported.

32. WORK PROGRAMME

Further to Minute No. 25 of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 21st September, 2016, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Senior Adviser concerning the outline work programme for the Improving Lives Select Commission for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

Reference was made to the items as set out in Appendix 1 listed for the various meetings giving Members every opportunity to request any further items they felt fit.

Next month's meeting would follow up on the report on domestic abuse, have presented the Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2015/16 Scrutiny of the Annual Report and the report on CYPS Performance Monitoring.

The February, 2017 meeting would consider the early help impact of early help offer and receive an update on the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

In March, 2017 the meeting would focus on SEND, with further work on the scoping of reports to address Members concerns. Further details would be provided in due course.

Resolved:- That the report be received and its contents noted.

33. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission be held on Wednesday, 14th December, 2016, at 1.30 p.m.