

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION  
12th September, 2017**

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors Beaumont, Cooksey, Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Jarvis, Marles, Pitchley and Senior and Joanna Jones (Children and Young People Voluntary Sector Consortium).

Also in attendance: John Rowley and Julie Saville-Fell for Minute No. 83

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Allcock, Brookes, Allcock, Brookes, Hague, Khan and Marriott, Khan Marriott and Watson (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services).

**76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**77. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.**

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

**78. COMMUNICATIONS.**

**Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP)**

Councillor Cusworth provided Members of the Select Commission with a written summary of the last meeting of the CPP which has been circulated by email.

**Health Safety and Welfare Panel**

The Chair asked the Senior Adviser (Scrutiny and Member Development) to re-circulate details to members of this Committee and seek expressions of interest.

**Co-optee**

The Chair asked that the best wishes of the Committee be passed onto to Mrs Clough, co-optee from Rotherham's Older People's Forum.

**79. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25TH JULY 2017**

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017, be approved as a correct record.

**80. SCRUTINY REVIEW - ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICE IN ROTHERHAM**

**(COUNCILLOR CUSWORTH TOOK THE CHAIR FOR THIS ITEM)**

Councillor Maggi Clark introduced the report as Chair of the review, thanking other councillors and officers for their input and support. **In October 2016, (former) Lead Commissioner Sir Derek Myers wrote to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive**, and asked that the Council consider the lessons learnt from other Alternative Management Arrangements (AMAs) in children's services. The report set out the latest analysis and current thinking of the Improving Lives Select Commission's cross-party review group on the range of AMAs for children's services which might secure the long-term success of Rotherham's Children and Young People's Services (CYPS). It evaluated the relative strengths and challenges of the primary options available to the Council and provides initial recommendations for future management arrangements.

The supporting evidence underpinning this report was gathered through visits/conversations with other areas to identify the impact their delivery arrangements had on improvements. In addition, Isos Partnership (with the support of the Local Government Association) used an independent research methodology to enable an objective assessment of the model/s most likely to secure sustainable improvements. Alongside this assessment, external peer reviews, practice partner feedback, Commissioner's reports, and Ofsted monitoring visits were also used to assess progress and improvements that have been made in CYPS. An option appraisal was also undertaken to provide an objective analysis of the range of alternative management arrangements available to the Council.

The review concluded that given the improvements made over the last two years a Practice Partner model would secure the most rapid and sustainable improvements in the short term (two years) and present the lowest risk to the Improvement journey. In particular, its evidence suggested that the Practice Partner model will:

- Establish the right balance of political ownership, oversight and accountability for CYPS at the same time as rigorous external challenge;
- Enable the good progress being made on the improvement programme to continue at an accelerated pace with minimal disruption to partners, wider council priorities or management focus; and
- Avoid high transition and operating costs associated with each of the AMAs and enable spend to be focused on front line delivery.

The review acknowledged that the peer practice partner model is by definition temporary. Once there is consistent good quality front-line practice, the Council will actively consider other options to work with

others through integration, collaboration or further commissioning if this would secure more rapid and sustainable improvement.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

The Chief Executive commended the work undertaken by Members in this review. The option appraisal was steered by key principles arising from the review and independent research. The learning from the review had been shared with partners and received positively.

Clarification was sought on the role of overview and scrutiny in authorities with alternative management arrangements. It was stressed that the importance of ongoing external scrutiny, support and challenge would be central to considering options for future delivery. This included a principle that strong oversight of children's services should be maintained by elected members, which would involve exercising their corporate parenting and scrutiny roles (and in case of lead member statutory responsibilities) to secure the best outcomes for children and young people in Rotherham.

Resolved:

- 1) That Improving Lives Select Commission approve the report and recommendations as outlined in Section 11 of Appendix 1;
- 2) That Improving Lives Select Commission forward the scrutiny review to Cabinet and Commissioners for their consideration;
- 3) That the response of Cabinet and Commissioners be fed back to this Committee; and
- 4) That the Review Group reconvenes to consider the additional learning points from the review and these be fed back to the Senior Leadership Team for consideration.

**81. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Head of Inclusion, Education and Skills provided an update on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Strategy. The Primary mainstream school population has increased by 15% and the Secondary mainstream school population has increased by 1% since 2010. As the primary pupil population has increased in recent years, there has been additional demand placed on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision currently available within the Borough.

Following completion of the SEND sufficiency analysis (see Appendix 1), an additional 125 SEND places will be needed across the Authority to meet current and expected future demand up to 2021. 75 places are required to reduce out of authority placements by half and 50 places to add additional capacity and provision within the Borough to support future increase in demand from population increase.

The report outlined the timetable for submission of the SEND Sufficiency paper to Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making meeting in order to gain approval to consult on the planned programme with stakeholders including parents and carers.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

The pattern of rising demand for SEND service is faced both regionally and nationally; these include greater numbers of children living with complex conditions, earlier diagnosis and rising numbers of children with complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Whilst a recent health check from Derbyshire County Council commented favourably on the authority's conversion of Education and Health Care Plans and Rotherham's ability to meet demand pressures, it was recognised that in the past there had been poor practice in commissioning and planning placements. This was being addressed to increase local placements in both mainstream and special schools. The relationship with schools and health partners are positive across all provision and conversations are taking place with school leaders to ensure that the needs of children with SEND are met, with appropriate levels of funding in place.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Improving Lives Select Commission receive and note the information in this briefing and the progress made towards a completion of a SEND Sufficiency Strategy.
- 2) That the Improving Lives Select Commission seek a further update on the progress being made on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, should authorisation be given by Cabinet and Commissioners to develop the strategy, and when consultation has taken place.

## **82. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES 2017/2018 QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE**

The Deputy Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Service, with the Head of Service Performance & Planning provided a summary of performance under key themes for Children & Young Peoples Services at the end of the first quarter in 2017/18 reporting year and also represents the monthly report for June 2017.

Good and improved performance in the last quarter includes:

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- Good levels of compliance across Early Help, Child Protection and Look After Children Services
- Timeliness performance for Initial Contacts in Early Help has continued to increase reaching 63.6% engagement within three working days compared to 54.1% at the beginning of quarter 1.
- 41 out of 104 Early Help Assessments were completed within the target timeframe of 35 days which equates to 39.4%, a 4% improvement from May (35.4%).
- Performance against the annual target for young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET's) was 4.1% against a local target of 4.2%.
- At 15.1% the in-month re-referral rate is at its lowest and therefore best performance since monitoring was introduced in 2015.
- Initial Child Protection Conferences completed within 15 working days is good and improved on last month to 96.3%.
- We continue to have no children subject to a child protection plan for two years or more.
- Use of agency social workers continues to fall. There were 71 across the service at the end of June compared to 72 at the end of May and 78 in April.

### Areas for further improvement

- There were 288 contacts screened in June 2017 by the Early Help Triage Team which shows a decrease of 53 when compared with the previous month (341 recorded in May).
- Uptake of Early Help Assessment by partners dropped during June with 9 out of a possible 97 (9.3%) being completed.
- By the end of Quarter One data shows that 25% of children aged 0-5 across Rotherham had engaged with activities in a children's centre (the annual target is 66%).
- Following low performance in May contact decision making within 1 working day of 78%, June has seen a further decline to 59.1%.
- Although the number of new S47s started in June has decreased in previous months our rate per 10,000 population for the last 12 months has increased. (However the outcomes for the completed section 47s demonstrates that in the large majority (89.2%) the concerns are substantiated.)
- Compliance in terms of CP plans remains low when compared to previous performance levels. 87.6% of children have up-to-date plans compared to 96.2% at the end of 2016/17 and 100% at the end of 2015/16.
- Looked after Children (LAC) numbers continue to rise. At the end of June there were 522 LAC compared to 488 at the end of 2016/17 (7% increase in 3 months) and 432 at the end of 2015/16 (21% increase in 15 months).
- Of the LAC Reviews completed in June 89.1% were completed within timescale an improvement on May's position of 85.7% but below 2016/17 performance of 91.3%.

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- At the end of June 63 of the 522 LAC have had 3 or more placements within the last 12 months and increase on the 58 at the end of 2016/17.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

An explanation was sought on the children in need figures and rise in children in care. The overall trend for children in needs is falling, which reflects the developments in early help and developments such as 'Signs of Safety'. In respect of children in care numbers, court judgements support the care applications.

Clarification was sought on the appropriateness and timeliness of assessments. The Safeguarding Board has issued guidance on referral thresholds to reinforce standards and feedback is given to partners if referrals are not timely.

Further details were asked in respect of foster placement sufficiency and stability. It was outlined that whilst some placements were changed because of planned moves, there were some placement disruption and breakdowns. Details were provided of support provided to foster carers to promote stability. Further clarification was provided in respect of additional investment into CYPS although current numbers of looked after children was exceeding projections and creating further budget pressures.

An explanation was sought in respect of case escalation from early help to child protection and further details would be provided in the next performance report. Assurance was given that early help were dealing with appropriate caseloads, some of these would be more complex, however these would not require a social care input.

Further details were requested on the stretch target for Families for Change and if the payment by results would be secured. Work was underway to establish how school attendance and employment can be improved across the cohort.

Resolved:-

- 1) Members are asked to receive the report and accompanying dataset (Appendix A)
- 2) That an update be provided be on Family Group Conferencing and Edge of Care in six months' time.

### 83. LIQUID LOGIC PRESENTATION

The Senior Programme Manager gave a presentation on the implementation of the "Liquid Logic" case management system.

There were criticisms of the previous case management systems in both the Jay and Casey Reports, resulting in the Commissioner for Children's Social Care asking that a new case management report be commissioned.

An outline of the project's timeline was given from commencing the tendering process in February 2015 and implementation activities starting in June 2015 - with the new systems going live from the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 (CYPS) and the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016 (NAS). This process was subject to internal checks and balance.

Extensive training and support was given across CYPS and Adults, with over 1400 staff trained. Support packages were in place to provide close 'one-to-one' support at its roll-out, with on-going support being provided to problem solve as required.

There is ongoing monitoring of developments and implementation which is reviewed by project boards.

A Senior Practitioner gave a demonstration, giving assurance about oversight and security, triggers, prioritisation and authorisation of tasks and accessibility of information compared with the previous system.

Further discussion took place on the implementation process, with input from the Deputy Strategic Director and specialist colleagues from the Liquid Logic Team. It was outlined that Liquid Logic had also been 'rolled out' in other local authorities, however, Rotherham was seen as an exemplar of good practice, with clear ownership and leadership of the project. This was seen as key to the improvement and transformation process. The speed of its successful implementation was in line with, if not better than, many other local authorities.

Whilst feedback from some staff on its implementation was mixed, it was felt that Liquid Logic was a tool to support consistent, high quality social work practice. Confidence that this culture is embedding is evidenced by the suite of performance information. Assurances were given about levels of security and resilience of the system in cases of ICT failures. Furthermore, integration with other public sector ICT systems were starting to be put in place.

**Resolved:-** The Chair thanked invited guests and officers for their comprehensive presentation and providing assurance on the implementation of this system.

**84. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETINGS: -**

**Resolved:-** That the next meeting of Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Tuesday 31st October, 2017 at 5.30 p.m. (pre-meeting for Members commencing at 4.00 p.m.)