

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION  
9th July, 2019**

Present:- Councillor Cusworth (in the Chair); Councillors Beaumont, Clark, Elliot, Ireland, Khan, Pitchley, Price, Senior, Julie Turner, Atkin and Jarvis.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillor Marriott and Joanna Jones (Co-optee Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Consortium).

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

**12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items requiring exclusion from the press or public.

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

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

**14. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair reported on the latest meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel and referred to the report Judith Badger, Strategic Director, had presented on the proposals for the Looked After Children's population in terms of the budget.

Consideration had also been given to the revised capital spend for extensions and adaptations to homes and the larger review that has been ongoing that Councillors Cusworth, Elliot, M. Elliott and Jarvis had been working on. This review would be considered at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel in October and would also be circulated to Improving Lives Select Commission Members.

**15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH JUNE, 2019**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2019, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

Further to Minute No. 6 (Regional Schools Commissioner) the Regional School Commissioner had written to clarify an issue in respect of Census Day and the national funding formula and whether it would include any changes to current arrangements for funding for pupils who arrived part way through a school year. He confirmed that at this moment in time there were no plans to make changes to the 'census day', but consideration was being given to an element to the national funding formula to reflect pupil mobility. This was dependent upon the expected spending review in the near future. The letter received would be circulated to all Commission Members.

**16. ROTHERHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP: MULTI-AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

The Chair welcomed Christine Cassell, Independent Chair of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board, and Phil Morris, Business Manager, along with Jon Stonehouse, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, Sue Cassin, CCG, and Una Jennings, Chief Superintendent, South Yorkshire Police, who introduced the report and how it presented the Rotherham Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children.

These arrangements were developed, in accordance with statutory guidance, by the three safeguarding partners in consultation with the wider partnership and would become effective from September 2019.

By way of a presentation the Independent Chair and Strategic Director provided a summary about the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Rotherham which would replace the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board.

The reason for this change was as a result of the removal of the requirement for Safeguarding Children Boards as they currently existed, but replaced with a requirement for a new partnership.

The presentation using PowerPoint highlighted:-

- Children Act 2004 amended by Children and Social Work Act (2017).
- Working Together 2018 stated that local safeguarding arrangements must be published by June 2019, implemented by September 2019, and include:-
  - Arrangements for the safeguarding partners to work together to identify and respond to the needs of children in the area.
  - Arrangements for commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews.
  - Arrangements for independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the arrangements.
  - Who the three local safeguarding partners are, especially if the arrangements cover more than one local authority area.

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- Geographical boundaries (especially if the arrangements operate across more than one local authority area).
  - The relevant agencies the safeguarding partners will work with; why these organisations and agencies have been chosen; and how they will collaborate and work together to improve outcomes for children and families.
  - How all early years' settings, schools (including independent schools, academies and free schools) and other educational establishments will be included in the safeguarding arrangements.
  - How any youth custody and residential homes for children will be included in the safeguarding arrangements?
  - How the safeguarding partners will use data and intelligence to assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including early help.
  - How inter-agency training will be commissioned, delivered and monitored for impact and how they will undertake any multi-agency and interagency audits.
  - How the arrangements will be funded.
  - The process for undertaking local child safeguarding practice reviews, setting out the arrangements for embedding learning across organisations and agencies.
  - How the arrangements will include the voice of children and families.
  - How the threshold document setting out the local criteria for safeguarding interventions aligns with the arrangements
- Membership of the Chief Officers' Group.
  - Membership of the Executive Group.
  - Delivery Groupings.
  - Wider Safeguarding Partnership.
  - Independent Chair /Scrutiny Role - Working Together 2018:-
- Provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny will be part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorates' single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs).
  - Safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.
  - Should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported.

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- The published arrangements should set out the plans for independent scrutiny; how the arrangements will be reviewed;
  - Safeguarding partners should also agree arrangements for independent scrutiny of the report they must publish at least once a year.
- Independent Chair / Scrutiny:-
    - Chairing of Chief Officer Group
    - Chairing of Executive Group
    - Chair / facilitate wider partnership meetings.
    - Meets with chairs of other Partnership Boards.
    - Meets with Leaders and Officers relating to specific issues across the Partnership.
    - Agree with Safeguarding Partners how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.
    - Scrutinise the work of the delivery groups and the progress of the business plan.
    - Scrutinise the Annual Report developed by the Safeguarding Partners.
    - Acts objectively as a critical friend to promote reflection and drive continuous improvement.
    - Leads challenge sessions in relation to organisations' safeguarding children arrangements (Safeguarding Self-Assessment).
    - Engages with community groups or community representatives.
    - Has access to relevant (single and multi-agency) performance data and quality assurance information to effectively challenge practice and poor outcomes for children.
    - Has an influencing role within and across the partnership with regard to multi-agency practice and outcomes for children.
    - Participate in reviews by Inspectorates when required, including JTAs. Holds partners to account for Improvement Plans arising from Inspection and Peer Review activity.
    - Is alerted to serious safeguarding cases, incidences of whistleblowing relating to safeguarding matters and acts as a point of escalation when safeguarding partners are unable to find a resolution within the partnership.
    - Seeks assurance and scrutinises decision making in relation to Serious Case Reviews(SCRs).
    - Has a line of sight to frontline practice and outcomes for children – where appropriate is able to observe practice, engaged with practitioners, children and their families with regard to their experience of the safeguarding system?
    - Communicates with external local/regional/national organisations and governmental departments where appropriate in relation to safeguarding matters impacting on partnership working and outcomes for children.

The Commission were also advised that as the National Crime Agency was such an important partner they had been added to the Group. The Partnership had also decided to continue having an Independent Chair and ensure that scrutiny was truly objective and act as a constructive critical friend.

Scrutiny should therefore, consider how effectively the arrangements were working for children and families as well as for practitioners and require the arrangements for published arrangements to be published at least annually.

The Chair thanked those present for their very informative presentation and welcomed the decision to retain an Independent Chair.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, also reiterated the positivity of the three lead agencies working together to develop the new arrangements and how they had expertly been facilitated in that work by the Independent Chair.

The strength of the new arrangements were recognised and the work that had gone into building the foundations in ensuring they would continue to be strengthened going forward.

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

- Child Death Overview Panel and its function.

The Child Death Overview Panel had moved out from the Department of Education into the Department of Health. However, in Rotherham it was felt strongly that the Partnership working had made a huge difference locally at looking at preventable deaths so this had been maintained within the structure of the new Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Director of Public Health would continue to chair and would be scrutinised by partners in either Sheffield or Barnsley or the rest of South Yorkshire to look at themes and trends. For example, Rotherham had noticed an issue with safe sleeping and this had also been highlighted in Sheffield. With enough data this allowed investigation into specific areas and whilst there may still be one or two deaths due to unsafe sleeping each year, it allowed relevant organisations to look at how these circumstances can be prevented.

- As with Serious Case Reviews would the findings of the Child Death Overview Panel be available.

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An Annual Report would continue to be provided, but this would be widened out across the South Yorkshire area so that themes and trends would become more apparent and could be acted on accordingly.

The distinction was highlighted between child deaths which were overseen by the Child Death Overview Panel and serious incidents which were overseen by the Child Practice Review Panel.

- With the plans to continue with an Independent Chair what other extracts of the Regulations were Rotherham pursuing outside of those prescribed by the Regulations.

The new arrangements allowed for local determination, but some of the regulations were specifically prescribed in terms of their role, remit composition etc.

Not every area would have a Chief Officers Group, but in Rotherham this demonstrated core agencies were taking full responsibility for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This would provide a clear audit trail of accountability to the three organisations and with the Independent Chair demonstrated a real strength in terms of sub-regional arrangements.

There was some degree of some flexibility in the arrangements and local areas could tailor these to meet their own priorities whilst ensuring certain requirements were met.

One of the subtle shifts in the new arrangements was the emphasis on the role as Chair to scrutinise and challenge what key partners were delivering locally.

The new arrangements were welcomed along with the recognition that Rotherham was a child friendly borough and work was taking place with young people. However, it was suggested that any acronyms be kept to a minimum.

- In terms of the different groups would organisations be challenging each other and how would this work to ensure transparency.

Partners challenging one another was fundamental whether this was at a casework level where people were coming together to discuss a plan for a child and family or at a manager level.

For example, in the Quality Assurance and Performance Group information was distributed amongst partners and each asked to scrutinise different aspects. This gave people the opportunity to ask one another about performance. Challenge sessions were also organised where partners from across the wider partnership looked at one another's quality assurance and challenged by way of questions.

The Chief Nurse representing the CCG and Chief Superintendent Una Jennings also commented on the changes and the processes for positive challenge between partners. From experiences elsewhere, the arrangements were robust and collectively partners would benefit from the legacy that had been left by the outgoing Chair and her level of investment in ensuring that Rotherham was left in a very good place from the activity, relationships and mature conversations between practitioners.

There would be a prominent place within the work programme for each of the partners to present performance and quality reports, informed by case audits and statistics.

- What encouragement had there been to schools to sign up to this voluntary process and could their involvement be enforced.

It was hoped Rotherham would not be in a position of forcing a school to comply. The Safeguarding Forum was for all schools which was very well attended and would build on the Safeguarding agenda. The responsibilities as a Local Authority were very clear and this applied to all schools so any Safeguarding issues and referrals that came to the Local Authority would continue regardless of the status of schools.

- Whilst schools were included regardless of their status, what would be the process for a Free School and could this be enforced?

In setting out these arrangements all educational establishments had been named as this effectively gave the key partners the power to require people to engage around Safeguarding. Whilst it was hoped it would not come to the point where a school was obliged to comply, the power was there should it be necessary.

Rotherham had a very strong Safeguarding Forum and schools participated. There was value in engaging and undergoing the self-assessment around Safeguarding and certainly in their best interests. Compliance would give schools strength in terms of responding to any Ofsted inspections.

- In terms of firm counter-extremism what facility was in operation for the various agencies to raise issues and what capacity was there to respond to concerns?

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Extremism was probably more of a role for the Safer Rotherham Partnership, but these issues should be discussed and shared proactively with schools and other organisation so there was a clear referral process and to fully what support was available to them.

The Council had very clear Prevent responsibility and the Safeguarding Children Board had asked for information on Prevent to be shared so partners could fully understand how well vulnerable children were supported to avoid exploitation, being coerced or introduced to any kind of radicalisation.

- Could there be more clarification on the role of the MAPPA Board.

The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were generally led by the Probation Services and it was their role to protect the public from particular individuals within the Health Service. The Mental Health Team sat on the MAPPA Board and this was overseen by the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure responses were appropriate. There were other agencies represented on the Board whose purpose it was to make sure the package for an individual living in the community was robust.

- Was there a robust information sharing protocol between the three key partners again in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)? Were there any plans to circulate any information on this issue.

There were very clear messages about what information could and could not be shared if there was a serious Safeguarding issue. The statutory Working Together guidance outlined clear information sharing protocols.

The Caldecott Guardians had been heavily involved in the development of information sharing within a clear set of principles.

Different organisations had different viewpoints on information sharing, so it would be valuable to have a set of bullet points that may help some of the smaller voluntary organisations to prevent any blockages to information.

Work had taken place with some smaller organisations where it was unclear whether to make a Safeguarding referral to the MASH or not. Advice had been to talk through the scenario with a MASH representative on an anonymised basis rather than risk a breach in data protection.

- Reference was made in the report about child exploitation and was this based on current child exploitation or historical data.

Learning from historic cases and cases that were currently being investigated would ensure an effective response to exploitation. The Group had been changed to Exploitation because children could be exploited in a number of different ways. The focus would continue on sexual exploitation, but the work would be closely monitored within the new partnership arrangements.

- The arrangements moving forward were more positive and would build on the success that had already been achieved.

Through that wider Partnership it was hoped to obtain a better dialogue with schools and this would be strengthened with a representative from Education on the Board. It was hoped that the wider Partnership would operate in such a way that more people could discuss their views through the operation of a conference or cabaret-style meeting. This would facilitate a much better exchange of information within a wider group of people particularly with the education sector.

- A wider range of voices would be heard and this was a positive change from the former system.

If anyone did not feel that that message had been received then this would be given priority and, as the new arrangements were introduced in September, changes could be made.

- For the first year of the Rotherham Safeguarding Partnership the funding formula would stay the same, but had any agreement being reached yet about future contributions from partners.

Consideration was being given to the support arrangements going forward, but more work was required before any changes could be finalised to the current arrangements. The Council was confident an agreement could be reached.

- It was clarified that the meetings that currently took place between the Chair of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board, the Adult Safeguarding Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Young People's Transformation Board and the Safer Rotherham Partnership would continue going forward.

Continuation of these meetings around safeguarding issues were written into the new arrangements.

The arrangements supported a good level of assurance that the systems and processes that were in place going forward were based on the robust challenge of the former and new Independent Chair. The annual reports should still be presented to the Select Commission to ensure it had oversight of the implementation and transition.

The Chair and the Commission wanted to formally thank the retiring Chair for her investment in the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and for her support and the openness in her discussions.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the decision of the Cabinet to endorse the development and publication of the Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children be noted.

(2) That the future scrutiny of these arrangements continue and the Annual Report be presented to this Commission.

(3) That an update be provided in six months following the implementation and transition to the new process.

**17. PRESENTATION - CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION, CARE AND HOME**

This item was deferred and would be included on the agenda for the September meeting.

**18. IMPROVING LIVES WORK PROGRAMME 2019**

Consideration was given to the Improving Lives Work Programme where it was reported that meetings had been held with the Commission plus input from Strategic Director Link Officers and also the Cabinet Member.

The programme set out meeting by meeting agenda items. There would also be items arising from the Sub-Groups and these would feed into the Commission in due course.

There would also be regular updates in terms of issues to be scheduled and also a summary of the recommendations to inform any future work.

Members would be contacted by e-mail seeking expressions of interest for the Sub-Groups, initially with the Performance Sub-Group. Expressions of interest would also be sought to be part of a group to look at post-abuse support and holiday hunger. The post-abuse support review would commence shortly and the holiday hunger review would be undertaken in late summer/early autumn.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the contents of the report and the Work Programme detail be noted.

(2) That updates be provided to each meeting of this Commission on the progress of the work programme and further prioritisation as required.

**19. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to report.

**20. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 at 5.30 p.m.