

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 3 May 2022**

Present:- Councillor Pitchley (in the Chair); Councillors Cooksey, Aveyard, Bacon, Browne, Jones, Hughes, Khan, Mills and Monk.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Jones, Councillor Jenny Andrews, Barley, Z. Collingham, Elliott, Griffin, Haleem and Thompson.

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

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

83. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2022

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 8 March 2022 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

85. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: -

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the case studies presented during agenda item 8 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 (information relating to an individual, Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

86. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

87. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

88. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE

The Chair and Vice-Chair provided an update on the activity of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

89. SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Chair, who had chaired a spotlight review that had been carried out jointly by members of the Improving Lives and Improving Places Select Commissions on the Council's Cultural Strategy, presented the findings of the review.

Resolved: -

- 1) That the report be noted and the following recommendations be submitted to OSMB for consideration: -
 - a) That the range of available activities tailored for young residents of the Borough be prioritised for expansion.
 - b) That consideration be given to how best to expand access, especially for young people, to recreational swimming in the Borough, whilst protecting against hazards.
 - c) That the service liaises with CYPS to develop a system to help young carers more easily access opportunities for leisure and culture-related respite.
 - d) With a view to expanding access, that consideration be given to hosting cultural events at alternating and varied locations and venues throughout the Borough where appropriate.

90. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair advised that the new Work Programme for 2022/23 would be developed with members and officers after the appointment of committee members for 2022/23 had been made at the upcoming Annual Council Meeting.

The Chair advised that due to the importance of the issue that the 2021/22 Work Programme had been extended to include the June 2022 meeting in order to enable a report to be scheduled that would provide members with the opportunity to scrutinise the Council's activity over the previous year with regard to Child Exploitation.

91. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

92. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 10am at Rotherham Town Hall

93. ROTHERHAM YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM. HMIP INSPECTION ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services and the Service Manager - Youth Offending Team and Evidence Based Hub attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Inspection Action Plan that had been put into place following the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection of the Rotherham Youth Offending Team that had taken place in September 2020. A previous progress report had been received by the Improving Lives Select Commission on 21 September 2021 (Minute No.26 2021/22). The report also provided information on the findings from the recent YJB Peer Review that had been undertaken in March 2022.

Chief Superintendent Steve Chapman, District Commander for Rotherham, two youth workers and an apprentice youth worker were also in attendance at the meeting.

The report stated that due to the impact of the pandemic that the inspection had been carried out remotely. The inspection had looked at YOT activity over the three domains of Organisational Delivery, Court Disposals and Out of Court Disposals. The Inspection report had been published on 17 December 2020 with the Overall judgement being "Requires Improvement". The inspection report had made five recommendations that were:

The Chair of the YOT Management Board should:

1. Make sure that Board members understand the specific needs of children known to the YOT and advocate on their behalf in their own agencies.

The YOT Management Board should:

2. Ensure the partnership understands the reasons for the significant number of Looked After Children known to the YOT and reviews the policies and practices of all agencies to minimise the possibility of children entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily.
3. Undertake a comprehensive health needs analysis of YOT children to better understand the health provision being delivered and what needs to be developed.
4. Review the quality and accessibility of education, training and employment provision for post-16-year-old children known to the service.

The YOT Service Manager should:

5. Review the quality of risk of harm work and improve the effectiveness of management oversight in all cases.

In response to the Inspection an Action Plan had been produced in January 2021 that contained 46 actions to address the areas requiring improvement that had included actions for across the partnership. The Cabinet Member advised that at the YOT Management Board meeting held on 12 January 2022 that the Board had been advised that all 46 actions had been successfully completed. The full action plan was attached as an appendix to the officer's report.

The Cabinet Member advised that following the inspection the YOT had completed a Youth Justice Peer Review in order to assist the YOT and its partners identify their strengths and to highlight areas for potential improvement in the current provision of youth justice services. The report noted that the peer review process provided an opportunity for YOT's and local authorities to gain a fresh perspective from peers alongside collaborative support in improving local youth justice services.

The Cabinet Member advised that the peer review had taken place between 29 and 31 March and had had four "key lines of enquiry" that were:

- Whether the partnership understood the needs of the YOT cohort and its role in setting the priorities for the YOT.
- The role of the partnership in relation to risk management of justice involved children.
- Looked After Children (LAC) and the disproportionate numbers of LAC in the current YOT cohort.
- Early Help partnership working and the impact that this was having locally on first time entrants to the youth justice system.

The Service Manager - Youth Offending Team and Evidence Based Hub made a presentation to the meeting that detailed the activity that had taken place as part of the peer review and its findings.

The report noted that twenty focus groups had taken place over the three days with representation from the YOT staff team as well as from YOT Management Board Members, elected members, colleagues from across the Council, Early Help, Inclusion, Education, the Virtual School, Children's Social Care, MASH, South Yorkshire Police, Voluntary and Community Sector, Housing, the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP), Community Safety, the Police & Crime Commissioners office, Resettlement Consortium, Young People's CHANCE Group, Probation, Remedi, EVOLVE, the Violence Reduction Unit, Outdoor Learning, the

Clinical Commissioning Group, Outreach and Engagement, Voice & Influence and SEND.

The Service Manager advised that across the four agreed key lines of enquiry, the reviewers had spoken of 'golden threads' that they felt were evident and consistent from their interactions with staff and partners. These included:

- The voice of the child and children being at the centre of decision making.
- Decision making processes placed children at the centre.
- The CHANCE (Change How Adults Notice Children's Experience) group provides genuine consideration of child involvement, providing opportunities for real child empowerment, challenge and system change.

The Service Manager advised that the review had found:

- A positive culture across the partnership that showed a clear commitment to Rotherham's children.
- Excellent engagement and commitment across the workforce
- That the management team and senior leaders were approachable and visible.
- That confidence in the staff team was evident from management and partners.
- That at both operational and strategic levels there was clear shared language and mutual respect shown between partners
- There was a culture of ensuring that children were diverted away from Court and a that there was a strong focus on engaging at the earliest opportunity.
- Clear systems were in place to support risk management.
- There was a strong commitment from all regarding achieving good outcomes for Rotherham children. This had been observed politically, strategically, and operationally.

The Service Manager advised that as a result of the peer review that a series of recommendations had been made that included:

- To develop a new vision and priorities for the Board and to mobilise the Board to help problem solve.
- Broaden the agenda of the partnership board.
- That Senior Leaders to make better use of data to drive performance across the partnership
- To develop the processes that are in place further in order to hold partners to account by agreeing actions and plans.
- To give consideration to a launch event for the Unnecessary Criminalisation Strategy.
- To develop a clear training plan for staff and partners.

The Service Manager noted that an action plan was being developed to address the recommendations that had arisen from the peer review and advised that the Youth Offending Team would be renamed the Rotherham Youth Justice Service (RYJS) in order to reflect its role more accurately.

Members asked which of the areas for development that had been highlighted by the peer review would be prioritised for action first and how performance data would be used to monitor their ongoing implementation. The Service Manager advised that how performance information and other data was used within the service was a priority area for improvement in itself as it was essential that information held by the service were effectively utilised to develop the services that were needed by the young people who the service was currently supporting. The Service Manager noted that data regarding first time entrants to the youth justice system had been used to develop processes that were able to meet the specific needs of this cohort of young people. The Service Manager advised that huge amounts of data and information was held across the partnership and assured members that this data would be used by the RYJS and its partners to develop its services further.

Members welcomed the successful completion of all the activities that had been included in the action plan that had been created in response to the inspection that had taken place in September 2020 and asked what activity was being carried out to ensure that the changes that had been made were becoming embedded in the service. The Service Manager advised that there had been a significant investment made in the provision of training across the partnership to ensure that the changes required in response to the inspection became embedded with both new and existing staff members receiving training. The Service Manager noted the unconditional bias training that had been delivered that would give the assurance that the decisions that were being taken across the partnership were the right ones. The Service Manager advised that the training plan for staff, board members and the wider partnership would be refreshed in order to ensure that it continued to provide the skills that were needed to provide the best possible service across the partnership. The Service Manager also detailed the numerous methods in which the performance of the RYJS was constantly monitored including “check and challenge” meetings where the service was required to show how it had performed.

The Chair asked what activity was being carried out across the partnership to dissuade young people from carrying knives. The Chair noted that some young people who carried knives had no intention of using them but were unaware that being caught carrying a knife was an offence that would bring them into the youth justice system. The Service Manager detailed the education and awareness activity regarding knife crime that was carried out across the partnership and stressed the importance of early intervention in this area to dissuade young people from carrying knives. Chief Superintendent Steve Chapman noted the significant amount of activity that had been carried out with schools before the pandemic as part of the Violence Reduction Strategy regarding the

laws around carrying knives and the consequences for a young person of being caught carrying a knife.

Members sought assurance that the processes were in place within the RYJS to identify areas for ongoing improvement without a formal inspection being made. The Service Manager noted the significant amount of change that had occurred not only in the RYJS but across the wider Early Help Service over recent years that had led to service developments and improvements across the service. The Service Manager also noted the constantly changing regulatory requirements with regard to youth justice that were impacting on how youth justice teams across the country were required to deliver services. The Service Manager advised that the inspection that had been carried out had only examined 10 cases across the YOT, under the small YOT inspection framework and noted that had more cases been looked at then a different conclusion may have been reached. The Service Manager acknowledged though that sometimes it needed someone to come from outside to highlight areas for improvement.

The Cabinet Member noted that during the inspection process inspectors had recognised the improvement journey that was already underway in the service and had acknowledged that had the inspection taken place six months later then the outcome would have been very different. The Cabinet Member also noted the very different type of inspection processes for youth justice services compared to those used for social care and early help and the challenges that the constantly changing inspection frameworks created for youth justice teams.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the recognition that had been made during the peer review that the “voice of the child” was not only listened to but acted upon and asked for an example of how this had worked in practice. The Service Manager advised that as a result of a young person who had left custody stating that they would have found an information booklet to assist them with the transition useful, that the service had then worked with the young person to create a booklet called “Get out, Stay out” that was now used to support all young people leaving custody.

The Chair noted the committee’s approval for the renaming of the service as the Rotherham Youth Justice Service in order to reflect its role more accurately. The Cabinet Member noted that this change had also been recommended by the Improving Lives Select Commission’s review of commissioned post-CSE support services.

At this point the meeting went into private session as it had already been resolved:

“That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the case studies presented during agenda item 8 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1

(information relating to an individual, Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.”

Members received a presentation from the apprentice youth worker that provided information on the work of the CHANCE (Change How Adults Notice Children’s Experience) group. Members also received a presentation from the youth workers in attendance at the meeting that detailed a case study of how the service had worked with a young person who had entered the youth justice service. Members expressed their thanks to the apprentice youth worker and the youth workers for attending the meeting and for bringing to life the work of the RYJS and how it was making a positive difference to young people’s lives and how the service was listening to and working with the young people who were accessing the service to shape how services were delivered.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services, the Service Manager - Youth Offending Team and Evidence Based Hub and Chief Superintendent Steve Chapman, District Commander for Rotherham for attending the meeting and answering members questions.

Resolved: -

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That ongoing liaison takes place between the Youth Justice Team and the Performance team in order to ensure that the service’s qualitative performance measures are fully understood and are incorporated into the performance reporting and measurements of effectiveness for the Youth Justice Service (including the Corporate Parenting of Looked After Children who have come into contact with the Justice System).
- 3) That in recognition that the young individuals involved with the Rotherham Youth Justice Service are some of the most vulnerable residents in the Borough, that work be carried out to establish how the provision of management resources is best able to deliver the operation and maintenance an effective service that meets individual needs.
- 4) That the implementation of the positive language associated with the change of name of the Youth Offending Team to the Youth Justice Team be fully embedded across the service and wider partnership.
- 5) That a further report on the Rotherham Youth Justice Service be brought to the September 2022 meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, with the focus of the report to be determined by the Chair and Vice-Chair in advance of the meeting.