

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 6 December 2022**

Present:- Councillor Pitchley (in the Chair); Councillors Cooksey, Andrews, Aveyard, Bennett-Sylvester, Elliott, Griffin, Haleem, Hughes, Jones and McNeely.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Atkin, Bacon, Barley, Z. Collingham, Mills and Thompson.

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

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

35. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 6 September 2022 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

37. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items of business on the agenda that required the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

39. COMMUNICATIONS

There was none.

40. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE

The last meeting was held on 20 September 2022. The leisure card was discussed with a view to ensuring the young people could access the leisure card by December.

41. OUTCOMES FROM THE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EARLY HELP STRATEGY

The report was provided for information. In September 2022, Members had held a workshop to scrutinise the draft Early Help Strategy.

The report summarised some of the issues that had emerged from the

workshop. Due to the timescales required to ensure that the recommendations were considered by Children and Young People's Services and Members of the Cabinet, the Chair submitted a letter to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to outline the recommendations to ensure they could be considered at an early stage.

The Early Help Strategy was due to be considered by Cabinet early in the new year.

The Chair felt that the workshop had been a good development session and that it was a well written report.

Resolved That: The Improving Lives Select Commission:

1. Noted the outcomes and recommendations of its review of the draft Early Help Strategy as outlined in the report.
2. Noted that the recommendations have been approved by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and submitted to Cabinet for consideration.
3. Receives further updates on the progress and implementation of the Early Help Strategy as approved.

42. OFSTED INSPECTION - DRAFT ACTION PLAN

The Joint Assistant Director, CYPS introduced the report highlighting that an inspection had been carried out in June and the authority had to publish its action plan in response to the recommendations made from the inspection outcome.

The inspection covered how the Council helped and protected children, the experiences and progress of children in care, its arrangements for permanence for children who were looked after, including adoption along with the experiences and progress of care leavers. Ofsted also evaluated the effectiveness of the Council's leaders and managers as well and the impact that they had on the lives of children and young people.

Ofsted found the following:

- the overall effectiveness was good,
- the quality of services that were provided to children and families in Rotherham was good,
- the impact of leaders was good,
- the experiences and progress of children in need were good, and
- the experience and progress of children in care and care leavers was good.

The report contained lots of positive references however some areas for improvement were identified. Children's Services were striving to become outstanding, so all comments were welcomed.

The four areas identified within the action plan were the four areas in

which Ofsted made their recommendations. They also provided lots of advice that would help the service move towards outstanding.

Ofsted indicated that services had continued to be delivered effectively during the pandemic. The new Director of Service and strengthening of the management had helped drive the continuous improvements forward.

The first area where improvement could be made was 'Consideration of previous history and current circumstances when responding to 'front door' contacts and child protection concerns.' For context, Ofsted identified a very small number of contacts that had come into children's services where no further action had been taken where it was felt that the history wasn't recorded within that contact as being fully considered to inform decision making. This was where children had previously been contacted and Ofsted identified no concerns or safeguarding risks, but it was felt that the way it was recorded didn't evidence that the service had taken into consideration and analysed previous contacts.

Action number two was regarding the 'Assessment of the identity needs of children when planning for their future.' Ofsted specifically considered the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and some care leavers within that recommendation. Ofsted that whilst every individual child's experience was recognised that for some children with particular cultural needs or experiences that may have influenced their identity, that this hadn't been recorded within the assessment as robustly as it could have been.

The third action was regarding 'The level of ambition for individual care leavers, the support for them to achieve their aspirations and the detailing of this in pathway plans.' During the inspection the services ambition for all children in Rotherham was acknowledged however it was regarding how it was described within the pathway plans along with the level of ambition included and needed to include their ultimate ambition and their aspirations.

The final action was around 'the quality of individual case audits to inform wider service learning.' Ofsted indicated that the services quality assurance was very robust, however they couldn't see how the information was used to inform wider service planning.

It was noted that some of the actions were listed as 'in progress and on track' but the deadline for completion had now passed. Could the reason for this be clarified? The reason for this was that the copy of the action plan had been submitted to Ofsted for consideration however it had not been assessed but it was being chased. A copy of the updated action plan could be provided to Members once approved by Ofsted.

During discussions the following was noted:

- It was clarified that the action plan would remain a live document for as long as needed.

- It was confirmed that all identify issues were considered and would be reflected across all cohorts of children and young people.
- In response to a query around the term 'pushy parent', it was clarified that this term was used regarding pushing services to do their best along with the children to active their best.
- Ofsted had provided positive comments on the Early Help Service and the way that it seamlessly worked with Children's Social Care.
- In response to a query regarding 'dip sampling' it was confirmed that the service did look at random cases however the recommendation mentioned in section 2.9 was in relation to supervision audits.

Resolved That: The Improving Lives Select Commission:

1. Noted the outcome of inspection and note the draft action plan.
2. Agreed that a briefing note be provided, within an agreed timeframe detailing how actions were re-visited to determine the impact of the actions carried out.
3. Agreed that an update would be provided in September 2023 on all the expected outcomes from the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan.
4. That a copy of the updated action plan is circulated to Members of the Improving Lives Selection Commission upon acceptance by Ofsted.

43. **ROTHERHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT**

The Joint Assistant Director, CYPS provided an updated on the Commission's recommendations from a previous meeting. The first recommendation was regarding liaison between the Youth Justice Team and the Performance Team to ensure that the performance data was understood and incorporated. It was confirmed that the liaison had improved.

The Youth Justice Service Manager confirmed that quarterly feedback was provided, and a monthly development day was held where all practitioners attend ensuring shared learning and promoting best practice.

The second recommendation was in recognition that the Young People involved with the Youth Justice were among the most vulnerable residents in the borough and that work was to be carried out to ensure the management resources were utilised to ensure the operation could be delivered.

The Youth Justice Service Manager explained that the name had been changed to promote the child first approach. It was hard to understand the difference the name change had made to the children however our professionals expressed that there was less stigma attached to the service meaning the young people would feel that they hadn't been labelled for life.

There had been a number of actions centred around the national

standards for which the time frames had been removed to highlight that the actions were more important than the timeframes assigned.

The delay in going to tender was around having the correct commissioning framework in place to ensure a consistent approach across the council, however this was now being addressed.

On update could be provided to the Commission regarding whether the service interacted with Rotherham Sight and Sound.

In response it was clarified that the number of offences listed was not the same as number of offenders. The Commission felt that having a breakdown of this included in the reports going forward would be beneficial.

Resolved That: The Improving Lives Select Commission:

1. Noted the contents of the report and the accompanying action plans.
2. Agreed that an update be provided, within an agreed timeframe, to members of the Improving Lives Selection Commission detailing how actions are re-visited to determine the impact of the actions carried out.
3. Agreed that the update submitted to the September 2023 Improving Lives Select Commission meeting specifically include details on how the target has been met in relation to item listed as Area for improvement 7. Enhance Board oversight of effectiveness of Out of Court Disposal (OoCD) decision making across the partnership.

44. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its Work Programme.

The Chair invited Members of the Commission to contact her directly if they wished to discuss potential topics for inclusion.

The Chair sought Member's interest in taking part in the Young Producers Spotlight review which was to be scheduled around January to Early February 2023.

Resolved That: The Work Programme for 2022/23 be approved.

45. **IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SUB AND PROJECT GROUP UPDATES**

The Chair provided a progress report on sub and project group activity, explaining that all current activities had been completed.

Resolved That: the update be noted.

46. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

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

Resolved That: the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission would take place on Tuesday, 31 January 2023, commencing at 10am at Rotherham Town Hall.