

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

12th November, 2010

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor McNeely); Councillors Austen, Gilding, Jack, License, P. A. Russell, Steele, Swift and Whysall.

Also in attendance for items 90 onwards were George Bailey, Mateen Duresmain, Emily Green, Daniel Moorhouse, Oliver Newrick, Chloe Shaw and Joshua Whitehouse (representatives of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet).

Danyal Mullen (representative of the Looked After Children Council).

Councillors Fenoughty, Smith (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Environment) and Stone (Leader of the Council)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Hamilton and G. A. Russell .

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

86. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

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

87. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman subject to the addition of Councillor P. A. Russell in the list of Members present.

88. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

- (a) Councillor Whysall reported that further consideration was to be given to the review of PE and Sport in Schools.
- (b) Councillor Austen reported that the latest meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel had considered:-
 - six month review of the Council website
 - delivering electoral services: current and future issues

- presentation on the work of the Women's Refuge
- equality and cohesion update

(c) Councillor Jack reported that the latest meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel had considered:-

- a presentation on stroke services in Rotherham
- annual report of the Joint Learning Disability Service
- Hospital Discharge Process: improving the customer experience

Councillor Jack also reported:-

- it was Domestic Violence Awareness Week commencing on Monday, 22nd November, 2010 with a march on 27th November, 2010
- bogus callers, claiming to be from the Water board, had been operating in the Holderness Ward the previous night

(d) Councillor License reported that the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel would be looking at primary school attainment and he had also requested early consideration of the implications of the coalition Government's education agenda.

89. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.

90. 11 MILLION TAKEOVER DAY - INFORMAL SESSION

At this point in the proceedings, the meeting was adjourned to facilitate an informal session between representatives of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet and members of this Committee and the Cabinet.

The meeting reconvened together with Members of the Cabinet and representatives of Rotherham Youth Cabinet.

As part of 11 Million Takeover Day, George Bailey (Youth Cabinet) chaired the remainder of the meeting.

(George Bailey in the Chair)

George welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

91. THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

Danyal Mullen, Looked After Children (LAC) Council, gave a presentation relating to the recently established Looked After Children Council reflecting on the work being done to establish it on a more solid footing. The presentation covered:-

- LAC Council Terms of Reference
- To improve services for looked after children
- To raise awareness of LAC issues
- Deliver training around LAC issues
- Aiming for 6 formal meetings per year with Councillors
- Meetings to be held at the Town Hall
- Meetings held on Thursdays at 5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.
- Sharing parts of the training programme with the Rotherham Youth Cabinet
- Rotating Chair/ support
- Minuted meetings
- Supported by Youth Workers from the Voice and Influence Unit

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- how children and young people were able to contact key workers should their social workers not be available

- achievements so far and frustration at the speed of changes/ improvements
- need for placement stability.
- progress regarding the development of a pledge
- need to ensure that agreed actions were carried through and any delays were explained clearly to the young people
- opportunity for LAC Council representatives to meet the Leader/ Deputy Leader on a monthly basis to discuss any frustrations/ problems/ issues arising
- publication of a newsletter by the new Corporate Parenting Group which could be informed by the LAC Council thereby ensuring Elected Councillors were aware of the important issues
- offer to give a presentation to the LAC Council on 'How the Council Works'
- possibility of a 'shadow day' whereby LAC Council representatives could work with Cabinet Members
- ensure that Elected Councillors know and understand the issues and what it is like being in care
- first formal meeting to be held in January, 2011.

Resolved:- (1) That the LAC Council consider the offer of:-

(a) monthly meetings with Leader and Deputy Leader and

(b) receiving a presentation on 'How the Council Works'.

(2) That the LAC Council terms of reference be received and referred to the Corporate Parenting Group and Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children,

(3) That Danyal be thanked for a very interesting and informative presentation.

92. YOUNG PEOPLE AND USE OF LIBRARIES

Mateen Duresmain, Emily Green, Daniel Moorhouse, Oliver Newrick,

Chloe Shaw and Joshua Whitehouse, Rotherham Youth Cabinet, gave a presentation focusing on the work they did at the Rotherham Show to ask young people's views about the Library Service. The Committee also welcomed Jo Hinchliffe, Children's Champion (Library Service) who elaborated on the joint working with the Rotherham Youth Cabinet from a Library Service perspective.

The presentation covered:-

- Rotherham Show 2010 questionnaire
- Response to the questionnaire regarding usage of a local library
- What young people told us they also wanted in a library
- Next steps: focus on writing standards for libraries to follow and possibly be involved in staff training
- Important qualities for library staff
- Conduct
 - Approachable
 - Friendly
 - Open Minded
 - Eye Contact
 - Genuine
 - Enthusiastic
- We want them to be proactive
 - Willing to help
 - Having relevant information
 - IT skills
 - Passionate about the job
- Need to respect young people
 - Don't stereotype
 - Be tolerant
 - Accepting of different groups
 - Understanding of young people's issues/ culture
 - Take young people seriously

- Need to be organised
 - Need a knowledge of library
 - Ability to adapt to situations
- Communication
 - Good interpersonal skills
 - Ability to communicate with everybody not just young people
- Roles of Libraries
 - Reaching out, linking to communities
 - Recognise libraries are for everyone and people have different needs
 - Young people should be involved in training staff
 - Bring libraries into the 21st Century and promote the changes to young people (e.g. silence rule)

Jo Hinchcliffe highlighted the following:-

- Framework for the future
- Ad hoc/ sporadic activity in libraries
- Library Service link with the Youth Cabinet, quick and pacy work progressing
- Young People's Committee established in Libraries
- Moving towards a formal action plan
- Next phase to get young people to visit libraries
- Utilise the Youth Cabinet with the consultation approach
- Ensure libraries were the pillar of the community

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- Increased versatility of the role of Libraries
- Rural nature of Rotherham and the Mobile Library Service (better use of resources, look at doing more for the rural network and better advertising of the Mobile Library Service)
- Potential for young people to volunteer to be assistants in libraries when possible
- Need to address the stereotypical view of libraries with the new physical buildings
- What libraries expect from young people not addressed in the survey
- Tensions library book users versus cyber café e.g. spread the siting of computers to avoid congregation, behaviour issues
- Work with the Youth Cabinet to develop a behaviour policy, guideline for staff and involving young people more to try and achieve a balance
- Role for School Libraries
- Essential libraries cater for everyone's needs
- Potential for allowing public into school libraries and encourage the youth/ adult mix
- Important to involve young people in the design/ development of new libraries
- Impact of individual demands on other user groups
- Libraries should also be for leisure not just education

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted and the Youth Cabinet be thanked for their interesting and informative presentation.

(2) That the finished work be referred to the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel.

Before closing the meeting, the Committee wished to acknowledge formally the success of fifteen year old Rotherham Schoolboy Joshua Sayles who had been selected as the Royal British Legion Youth Division's Standard Bearer at the Royal Albert Hall.

In closing the meeting, George thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions to the discussions.