

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SERVICES
Monday, 10th November, 2014

Present:- Councillor Beaumont (in the Chair) and Councillor Roche.

F18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

F19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SERVICES HELD ON 13TH OCTOBER, 2014.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children and Education Services held on 13th October, 2014, were considered.

Under Minute No. F8 (Minutes of the previous meeting) it was requested that the 'Effective' in the second paragraph be amended to 'Elective'.

Resolved: - That, subject to the above amendment being made, the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

F20. ROTHERHAM INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE - WEBSITE DEMONSTRATION.

Representatives from Rotherham's Integrated Youth Support Service (Schools and Lifelong Learning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) were welcomed to the meeting to provide a demonstration on the development of the new website for young people – www.youthi.org.uk – which provided information for young people.

The process had started at the 2013 Rotherham Show when consultation was undertaken with 550 young people on the colours, logo and topics to be included on the website.

The website had been launched and the following areas were included: -

- Job vacancies;
- Links to other relevant websites across the Council and other organisations – to avoid the duplication of content;
- Events programme specific to young people;
- Careers information;
- Health;
- Life;
- Education.

The website had a 'full' and 'mobile' version as most young people would be accessing it on their phones/tablets or mobile devices. All information would be easily-accessible and available within three clicks. The website would constantly evolve based on feedback from young people, schools and professionals. It linked to relevant Youtube clips and would soon contain photographs of Rotherham's young people.

The young people who were consulted on the content were really keen for it to include a 'tips from young people' section about each topic. Future developments to the site would include a parents' and carers' section, and a professionals' section. A range of stakeholders had been involved in the start-up process, and would continue to be involved. A search bar had been added to the website following feedback that it was desirable.

The information page relating to Child Sexual Exploitation was considered. It provided a brief outline and contact telephone numbers and addresses where young people could go to get support.

Demonstrations on the website had been provided to schools and the website would include a key part of the publicity campaign that would be launched on the Rotherham Integrated Youth Support Service around Christmas, 2014.

'Google Analytics' and monitoring of the website's use was continuing to evaluate the access and use. Currently, the two pages most frequently accessed were job vacancies and homelessness.

Councillor Roche confirmed that the website was accessible via a mobile device and asked whether information would be added following the recommendations of the Jay Report and the Council's response, such as the creation of counselling services. The website would be updated when new information was available.

Feedback from stakeholders would continue to be welcomed and new website content would be added when it was useful.

Councillor Beaumont thanked Jayne Bowns and Andrew Danylkiw for their positive presentation and contribution to the discussion.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

F21. YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICES - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - QUARTERLY UPDATE.

The Youth Offending Services Manager (IYSS, Schools and Lifelong Learning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) attended the meeting to provide a quarterly performance management report on key performance (national) and local performance indicators for the Service.

Rotherham's performance had been rated 'Red' in relation to first time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10-17 (based on rate per 100,000 of the 10-17 year old population). There had been an increase of 19.1% comparing the outturn between January-December 2012 and January – December 2013. The Youth Offending Services manager explained that a rise was being observed in the first time entrants' data and work was continuing to determine why this was the case. In November, 2013, new Youth Cautions and Youth Condition Cautions had been introduced. The impact of these would require more analysis. The Youth Offending Services Manager was a member of the South Yorkshire wide scrutiny panel that looked at trends in youth offending data.

Performance against the National Indicator, as measured by the Youth Justice Board through collection of the data on the Police national computer and then disaggregated to local authorities, was showing an increase in the number of first-time entrants. However, the data represented an increase of 5 individuals, which continued to show a decrease.

Performance against the National Indicators relating to the quality checking of new assessments, new assessments meeting quality standards and the quality of cases were on hold due to the Youth Justice Board's audit of National Standards. Rotherham continued to be compliant with the casework requirements.

Reductions in the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system had meant that, over time, the Youth Offending Service had seen a decline in the numbers within the Youth Justice System. However, the decline in numbers entering had not been matched by a decline in re-offending and those remaining in the system were re-offending more often. In addition, case managers were reporting that these young people were more difficult to engage and the occasions on which the Youth Offending Service had to resort to Breach were increasing. This suggested that the Youth Offending Service was working with a group of young people whose characteristics meant they were more likely to reoffend, more likely to have complex needs and may be more demanding to support and divert away from offending behaviour than in the past.

Re-offending was most likely to happen within 2/3 months of the original Order. The Youth Offending Service did co-ordinate diversionary activities to try to prevent re-offending. Another factor was that when a young person entered the Youth Justice System a back-log of other offences were dealt with. Conviction for these offences led to increased re-offending statistics.

Rotherham's Youth Offending Team's Youth Justice Strategic Plan, 2014/2015, was submitted for information. It was a requirement of the Grant funding received.

- Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.
- (2) That the Youth Offending Service's quarterly performance be noted.
- (3) That quarterly performance updates be provided on the Youth Offending Service.

F22. SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

The Service Manager for Strategy, Standards and Early Help (Safeguarding Children and Families' Services, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) presented the submitted report that gave an update on social worker recruitment and retention.

Rotherham had maintained a consistently low vacancy rate over the last three years. The 2013 outturn vacancy figures were 4%. This compared to a national average of 14% and 8% in Yorkshire and Humber region.

Rotherham's overall turn-over rate for the same period was 11%, against a Yorkshire and Humber and England average of 12%. This meant that whilst Rotherham experienced a healthy turn-over rate in line with industry averages the recruitment and selection systems in place meant that the impact was reduced. Rotherham had the highest number of new starters during 2013 compared to statistical neighbours and an agency usage rate lower than the reported annual vacancy percentage that compared favourably to all other comparators.

The submitted report outlined the historical position of the Local Authority when the social work vacancy rate had been 37% and more than one in every two team manager roles had been vacant. This had led to a spiralling demand for agency staff which came at a significantly higher cost than establishment employees and without the same controls over quality assurance and practice.

Despite continuing testing budget reductions, the Children and Young People's Services Directorate had maintained a strong commitment to preserving infrastructure to ensure there was a fully staffed establishment workforce with minimal use of agency organisations. The challenge remained for Rotherham to recruit experienced social workers. This was mirrored across the local region and the country.

Sickness absence rates in Safeguarding Children and Families' Service were 8.96 days per year, compared to 8.26 days in Children and Young People's Services Directorate and 7.93 days across the whole Council. Sickness absence continued to be closely monitored by team and service managers and supernumerary appointments provided cover for long-term sickness absence.

A watching brief was also in place relating to resources, workload allocation, workforce stability and baseline establishment.

Discussion ensued on the terms and conditions of employment for the social work workforce.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

F23. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT - QUARTER TWO, 2014-2015.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Performance and Quality Manager (Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate) that outlined Children and Young People's Services performance indicator report for Quarter Two, 2014/2015.

The report provided an update against targets and showed each indicator's direction of travel and comparisons with statistical neighbours and national data. The report was structured against the Corporate Plan Priorities that were relevant to the Children and Young People's Services Directorate.

The performance indicators were assigned a RAG status.

Red rated indicators were where performance was below the local target and statistical neighbours or the national average. Commentary was provided on the current Red related areas: -

- National Indicator 40 / LPI 3.4 – percentage of assessments completed to target date; and,
- National Indicator 41 / LPI 3.6 – percentage of assessments completed within 35 days working days (local upper limit).

The 2014/2015 target for the completion within timescale rate was 75.0% and 80.0% respectively. Performance at the end of Quarter Two was 63.40% and 62.70%. The direction of travel was also down. Whilst meeting these timescales was important, consideration needed to be given to the quality of the completed assessments and ensuring that this was consistently high. National comparator data was available but there was a time lag in this being available, so data relating to Quarter Two performance across the country was not yet available.

Discussion ensued on the Red and Amber rated indicators. Further information was requested on: -

- National Indicator 52 – Chlamydia diagnosis rate (15-24 year olds);
- National Indicator 59 – Free School Meals – eligibility and take-up; and,
- National Indicator 20 – Percentage of schools (including academies) with an inspection rating of good or better.

Discussion followed on the amount of time that many front line staff members were spending on the service inspections that were taking place. This could contribute to a drop in performance at Quarter Three and was a service risk.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and the performance indicator report at Quarter Two, 2014/2015, be noted.

(2) That the report be submitted to the Children, Young People and Families' Partnership for information.

F24. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2014.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Finance Manager for Children and Young People's Services and Schools (Financial Services, Resources Directorate) that provided a budget monitoring update on the Children and Young People's Service revenue budget to the end of March, 2015.

The budget monitoring report was based on actual income and expenditure to the end of September, 2014. Overall, the Directorate was projecting an over-spend outturn position of £3.505 millions, which was an increase of 8.1% of the total budget. The reported position at the end of September was an increase of £658k since August's report.

The report gave the net budget and forecast outturn for each division of service within the whole Directorate, and the variations.

The main variances were outlined, along with the underlying reasons in the submitted report. The main areas of over-spend related to: -

- Academy conversions – treatment of deficits - £147,000;
- Safeguarding Children and Families' Service wide - £28,000;
- Child Protection Teams - £60,000;
- Children in Need Social Work Teams - £388,000;
- Looked After Children - £3,046 millions;

Some of the over-spends were off-set against under-spends in other areas.

As at the end of September, 2014, there were 400 Looked After Children, which was a reduction of 4 since the August budget monitoring report and the same number as at March, 2014. The submitted report outlined the type of looked after children's placement, along with current and previous financial year costs.

Management actions had contributed £592,000 of cost avoidance which would otherwise have been incurred. These related to a reduction in placement costs of £518,000, the Fostering Framework had achieved £34,000 of cost avoidance, the Block contract had avoided £40,000 and the multiagency support panel and the Valuing Care review would identify potential areas for cost renegotiations and ongoing savings in 2014/2015.

Further information was provided in relation to: -

- Agency spend totalled £511,000 as at 30th September, 2014. This compared to an actual cost of £392,000 for the same period last year;
- Non-contractual overtime totalled £40,000 as at 30th September, 2014, excluding schools. This compared to an actual cost of £58,000 for the same point last year. The over-spend related mainly to cover in Residential Units. These establishments had a cover budget that was not currently over-spending;
- Consultancy costs totalled £107,000 as at 30th September, 2014, compared to an actual cost of £97,000 last year. The majority of these costs were for projects funded by external grants.

Discussion followed and the following issue was raised: -

- The treatment of deficit balances when schools converted to academies.

Resolved: - That that latest financial projection against budget for the year on actual income and expenditure to the end of September, 2014, be noted.

F25. PROPOSAL TO MAKE PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS TO KELFORD SCHOOL.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Principal School Admissions and Organisation Officer (Schools and Lifelong Learning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) that outlined a proposal to undertake Pre-Statutory Consultation to make a prescribed alterations to Kelford School.

The proposal included: -

- Re-designation of the School as one for pupils with learning difficulties. This would enable the Local Authority to provide greater flexibility in placement decisions;
- To increase the Published Admission Number at Kelford School from 100 to 205 pupils through the creation of a network of satellite provision to the School.

The submitted report referred to the Children and Families Act (2014) which promoted a new approach to special educational needs and disability for 0 – 25 year olds to empower, increase options, raise aspirations and achievement, improve transition and target multi-agency support.

Over recent years there had been an increase in the numbers of children and young people who presented with profound and multiple learning difficulties, sensory and or physical needs and autism spectrum disorder. This trend was likely to continue. There was also a need to extend the range of post-16 opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and a need to strengthen partnerships to improve inclusive practice.

The submitted report outlined a timetable for a Pre-Statutory and Statutory Consultation phase. The Department for Education's School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools (England) Regulations (2013) required a formal pre-statutory and statutory consultation process to be undertaken when proposed expansions were above 10% of an existing special school and/or where there was a change of age-range or type of Special Educational Need provision.

Resolved: - (1) That Pre-Statutory Consultation commence on the proposal to make prescribed alterations to Kelford School.

(2) That a report be presented to the Cabinet at the end of Pre-Statutory Consultation detailing the outcome/s.

F26. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children and Education Services take place on Monday 8th December, 2014, to start at 10.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.