

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**13th March, 2018**

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors Beaumont, Brookes, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Jarvis, Khan, Pitchley, Senior and Short.

Councillors Watson and Steele were in attendance at the invitation of the Chair.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hague, Marles and Marriott.

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

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

**116.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

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

There were no members of the public present at the meeting. The Member of the press present did not wish to ask any questions.

**118.       COMMUNICATIONS**

Councillor Cusworth gave the following updates:-

**Performance Sub-Group**

The Performance Sub-Group had met with officers the previous week to discuss Safeguarding, performance data and how it was captured, benchmarked and monitored. A further meeting would be held to consider Early Help performance data.

**Corporate Parenting Panel**

An update had been circulated to Select Commission Members.

**119.       MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23RD JANUARY, 2018**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018, and matters arising from those minutes.

Further to Minute No. 109(2) (Adult Learning), it was noted that a spotlight review had taken place. A report would be submitted to the April meeting.

Further to Minute No. 109(3) (MASH Visit), it was noted that not all Members of the Select Commission had been able to take part in the visit. Consideration should be given to holding a further visit in the new Municipal Year.

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Further to Minute No. 110(4) (Domestic Abuse Update), it was noted that the Chair had been interviewed as part of the Peer Review.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018, be approved for signature by the Chairman.

### 120. CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON FRIENDLY BOROUGH 2018-2025

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive, gave the following powerpoint presentation:-

“For Rotherham to be a great place to grow up in; where children, young people and their families have fun and enjoy living, learning and working”

Why are we doing this?

- Ambition to become a child friendly borough – result of CSE report and Council’s Fresh Start Improvement Plan
- The Council wanting to improve the Borough for all children and young people – not just focusing on ‘Children’s Services’

Our Approach

- Established a local Child Friendly Board providing governance and help steer the work. This ensured:  
Local leaders were engaged: Elected Members, Chief Executives and Senior Managers  
Partners were engaged who already work with children and young people:  
Voluntary and community sector  
Health, Police and Education

Our Approach

- Children and young people engaged from the start
- Ensured it was not ‘adult-led’ but children and young people had their voices heard and acted on
- Feeding this into everything we do in the Council
- Influencing other partners

Who we spoke to

- We spoke to around 4,000 children and young people using a range of methodologies:-  
Attending meetings (Youth Cabinet/Youth Parliament)  
Events and activities led by young people  
Embassy for Reimagining Rotherham consultation and manifesto  
Online survey  
Lifestyle survey for schools  
Rotherham Show

What children, young people and their families told us

- Children and young people feel positive and proud of where they live
- Enjoy opportunities to be with friends and family and celebrate their cultural diversity
- Enjoy what was on offer – just wanted to have a bit more “fun”!
- Adults much more likely to be negative, critical and concerned about diversity and lack of things to do

Reimagining Rotherham Project – The Reimagined Rotherham Town Plan

- Park – everyone should be able to go to the park to relax or get active
- Art – an arts centre would show off the town’s talent as well as how cultural Rotherham is
- Museum – help people learn about things in an enjoyable way
- Cinema – watching films helps you be more imaginative
- Café – we would like a café where people can gain work experience

Four Themes for ‘Child Friendly Rotherham’

- Analysis of all consultation and CF Board workshop highlighted 4 themes:-
  - A vibrant borough with age-appropriate, fun things to do
  - Places in Rotherham to be safe, clean and welcoming
  - All children and young people have a voice and are listened to
  - Opportunities to bring together and celebrate Rotherham’s diverse communities

‘Our Rotherham’: Achieving the ambition to be a Child and Young Person Friendly Borough 2017-2025

- Using consultation responses and event the board and young people co-produced an action plan
- Plan for 2018-2025 in line with other key strategies and plans
- CF Board identified champions for each theme

‘Child Friendly Rotherham’ already in action

- Young people influencing town centre masterplan
- Influenced ambition to be Children’s Capital of Culture 2025
- Influencing policy and strategic agendas e.g. Safer Rotherham Partnership and Building Stronger Communities Forum
- Continuing to work with the Different but Equal Board and Grimm & co as key partners
- Community journalist project and ‘Our Rotherham’ website <https://www.ourrotherham.com>
- Programme of workshops/events being developed throughout the year

What Next

- Continue to use this initiative to influence everything we do always asking “what is the impact on children and young people?”
- Ensure co-production and meaningful engagement is the norm

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- Not just focusing on what children and young people want but using their influence to make Rotherham great for all ages
- Where can you contribute to the agenda?

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Acknowledgement that there was a risk of over reliance on consulting the same young people and community groups from existing forums which may lead to an in-built bias in responses. An example of how this was being addressed was the Different but Equal Board; work had been undertaken to ensure that the views of a wide range of children and young people were represented. It was recognised that, because of age or circumstances, some young people would only be involved for a limited period of time, therefore, it was important that as many children and young people were given an opportunity to participate and contribute. Methods of consulting had include an online survey and use of some of the voluntary sector groups to widen participation
- With regard to the right balance of engaging young people and children on their own terms, lessons were being learnt on how this engagement should take place and how those discussions were facilitated with the use of the experts e.g. Children's Services, the Different but Equal Board, Grimm & Co. and Defeye Creative & Co.
- The consultation had taken place with children and young people from 6-16+ years with 4,000 participants. The views of a 7 year old would differ hugely from a 13 year old so mindful that when consulting/engaging it was across the whole range to ensure that different views were captured
- The 4 key themes within the plan had been broken down into issues that were more relevant to particular groups for consultation purposes
- The online survey had asked questions with regard to race, age and gender for which there were statistics available. The consultation was also supplemented with other engagement such as the Lifestyle Survey which highlighted issues around health and wellbeing
- The resident survey had revealed that adults were more negative and critical about the areas where they lived; that had not been put to children and young people
- The consultation on the Reimagining Rotherham Town Plan had taken place in the pop up shop in the Town Centre where young people had come in and talked about what they would like to see. It had been an open question about how they would develop Rotherham Town Centre

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- It was believed that, in terms of some of the work that had been carried out so far, some of the most difficult to reach young people and children had been involved
- From a Council point of view, it was felt that the Child Friendly Borough Board had the correct representation i.e. Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and Children and Young People's Services and there was a good level of commitment. The same applied to the voluntary sector. Work was taking place through the Rotherham Together Partnership in terms of having decision makers on the Board from SYP, CCG, Hospitals, Fire Service, College etc. Representation had not been pursued until it was felt that there were examples of good practice. The clearly defined action plan would help organisation develop their own work and show exactly what being child friendly was and how it sat alongside the work of their organisation. The Rotherham Together Partnership was very well represented, supportive and hugely committed to Rotherham as a whole and the challenge of making the Borough child friendly
- It was clear that the young people celebrated diversity and felt that there was no place where they could meet children of different backgrounds and spend time with them. The Town Centre was not seen as a place where they could come and do that. The Reimagining Rotherham work had looked at how this could be addressed
- One of the big differences between the Reimagining Rotherham consultation with children and young people and the adult consultation on the Rotherham Town Centre Master Plan had been that the adult consultation spoke about the retail offer and shops. The children and young people responses differed from this focusing more on the availability of leisure activities. This had been used to influence the Town Centre Master Plan in terms of leisure, entertainment and places to meet and talk rather than just shop
- Leeds had engaged 750 child friendly city ambassadors from the business and voluntary sector. However, there was a high level of support resource required in terms of training, activity and managing it. In Rotherham there were the Rotherham Pioneers; discussions were to take place as to whether some of the child friendly work could be embedded within their work
- Quite a number of the children and young people were on the Child Friendly Board which met on a quarterly basis at Grimm & Co. That membership would continually change. They would receive feedback on consultation, how things had changed and work through the different agencies

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- Activities were planned with local town centre businesses about engaging young people. There had been some activity with other groups with regard to business sponsorship in the town centre but the Council had not necessarily actively led on it
- Work was underway to link Reimagining Rotherham into neighbourhood working and other Council priorities. The 4 key themes were now clear and based on what children and young people had said. The Directorates, through their Service Planning process, now needed to think about what their priorities would be for the next financial year and how they could build in the child friendly work and the 4 key themes. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would receive quarterly monitoring reports and would have the opportunity to question what Service was doing in relation to child friendly borough

Shokat was thanked for his presentation.

Resolved:- (1) That the presentation be noted.

(2) That a workshop be held in 6 months on the Child and Young Person Friendly Borough action plan.

(3) That Strategic Directors be invited to Select Commission meetings to discuss what work their Directorate was undertaking to make Rotherham a Child Friendly Borough.

### 121. **ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

It was noted that the actions for the implementation of recommendations from the Select Commission's cross-party review group on the range of Alternative Management Arrangements (AMAs) for Children's Services had been considered by the Cabinet and Commissioners meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018 (Minute No. 109 refers) and also at the meeting of the Council held on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2018 (Minute No. 161 refers).

Appendix A of the report provided detail in respect of whether the recommendations were agreed, not agreed or deferred and, where agreed, what action would be taken, by when and who would be responsible.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, stated that was an excellent example of work where Elected Members had added a lot of value to the organisation and had been really useful to the Service. He felt that the quality of the report and thought processes that had gone into it should be held up as an example to all Scrutiny work groups.

Councillor Steele endorsed the Deputy Leader's comments.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Review of Alternative Management Arrangements for Children and Young People's Services in Rotherham be approved.

(2) That the draft performance dashboard be submitted to the May meeting of the Select Commission.

(3) That the Select Commission request that the Performance Board consider submitting their reports to the Commission.

## **122. COMPLEX ABUSE PROCESSES**

Vicky Schofield, Head of Service for First Response, presented a report on the Complex Abuse procedures used within the Authority.

The procedures were used in cases where there were believed to be issues of connected, organised or multiple abuse of children. Complex Abuse investigations were governed by the same legislative principals as all other investigations of Child Abuse (Section 47, Children Act 1989 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015). The local authority, therefore, had a duty to investigate where there were reasonable grounds to believe that children were suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, taking all necessary action to ensure their welfare as a result.

Currently there was one large scale ongoing Complex Abuse Inquiry in Rotherham using the multi-agency procedure in place under the Rotherham Safeguarding Board. A bespoke Social Work Team had been established with connected Health, Police and Early Help colleagues. During the recent OFSTED inspection Inspectors had been impressed with the "forensic" and "tenacious" approach in place specifically identifying the quality of assessments and the impact that Social Workers were having in very challenging circumstances.

Organisational learning arising from the current inquiry had been significant; a learning review had been undertaken in parallel to the operational work in children's cases setting out specific developments in practice that go beyond the work on the particular cases.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- There had been learning and development from the current complex abuse work being carried out including historical complex abuse inquiries in Rotherham that was multi-faceted. This included:-
  - working together across the partnership to share information and challenging each other in terms of securing the right outcomes for children
  - how to articulate the information to the South Yorkshire Court, the way in which the Service advocated in individual cases and sometimes challenged within the Court process

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- learning around the way in which the Service understood information when people had been resident in other countries and developing the processes to ensure that information was shared effectively to gain histories/backgrounds
  - some specific learning about families that may be mobile and may move around the UK/across borders to understand where the families went and not lose touch with them/identify where they had moved to
- 
- Brexit – Social Work agencies across the world had to have at some level some sharing of information and protocols. The assistance of Embassies would still be required as it was now to negotiate on the Authority's behalf. There was experience in the Social Care sector of working in non-EU countries and these principles would be applied once the UK had left the EU
  - The Service had been described by Ofsted as “tenacious” and “forensic”. The current complex abuse work could be described in that way for the work done to understand the extent of the issue, using information within the Service and proactively seeking out information and continually pressing for the best outcome for the child. A child would not be left in circumstances that the Service was not uncomfortable with
  - A real strength had been the engagement of partners
  - There were powers under the Local Safeguarding arrangements which could call agencies to account if they were not fulfilling their Safeguarding duties. The Director of Children's Services also had a statutory duty and powers to call to account agencies that were not fulfilling their duties. Neither had had to be used in Rotherham
  - The challenge for the Service was children moving across Council boundaries and ensuring that when they did move they were not lost to agencies. Work had been carried out locally to develop protocols to identify where children moved to/back into the Borough. Children who moved across internal boundaries had also been a feature of the work
  - In terms of “gaps” it was difficult to fully understand the history of children when they had not always lived in the UK as currently within the EU there was not one central place that provided all the information. That piece of work was still ongoing and trying to find a better resolution in that regard; the information could be found but it took time

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- Work was taking place with the South Yorkshire Courts to ensure that when there was complex and complicated information it could be shared in such a way that enabled the right decisions to be made. However, it had to be balanced against a person's Human Rights and the right of privacy as well as the need to share information about numerous people in Court proceedings
- It was not known what effect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) would have when working across countries and boundaries with regard to the sharing of information. Currently the Service was able to utilise the local legislation to enable the protection of children and, until tested in law, the change would not be known
- The Team was a relatively small team and very well supported given the area of work it was dealing with. They had additional input from Advance Practitioners in Children's Social Care
- Social Workers were supervised regularly through scrutiny of performance on a fortnightly basis with the supervision also quality assured
- The Principal Social Worker role was also utilised. This was a Social Worker who did not have management responsibility but was of sufficient seniority to raise issues with the workforce. It was an important role in terms of helping to make sure Social Workers were able to escalate if they felt any stresses and strains. Sickness absence was monitored and continuing to reduce
- There was a culture of sharing information and staff across partnerships feeling comfortable to raise issues
- There was a Detailed Quality Assurance Framework within Children's Services as well a monthly programme of quality audits that look at multiple cases across the whole organisation. All managers were involved in quality assurance activities on a monthly basis as information were re-audited and the quality of audits checked. The learning from the audits was then reviewed and fed back into the Service
- On a monthly basis a Team was selected at random and an announced visit made to look at practice and, with the permission of families, sit in on cases. The Team would be revised 3 months later with the feedback
- The Service was part of a regional Peer Review. As well as the Service being reviewed it had the opportunity to look at other local authorities. It was envisaged that a Peer Review would take place at some point during the next cycle to look particularly at Looked After Children

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- Approximately 70 children had come into the care of the Authority as a result of the inquiry

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That consideration be given to a further report being submitted in the new Municipal Year to include the data protection changes and any ensuing impact.

### **123. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2018, commencing at 5.30 p.m.