

IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday, 3rd March, 2020

Present:- Councillor Cusworth (in the Chair); Councillors Jarvis, Atkin, Beaumont, Buckley, Clark, Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Ireland, Khan, Marles, Senior and Simpson.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Pitchley.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at: -
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pitchley.

54. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2020

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 14 January 2020, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jarvis declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9, Recommissioning of CSE Support Services, as she was a board member of RISE.

Councillor Senior declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9, Recommissioning of CSE Support Services, as she managed a charity that supported survivors of CSE.

56. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

57. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions.

58. COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair noted her concern that the Children and Young People's Services Vision Tracker, that showed key service information, and that had been circulated to members of the Improving Lives Select Commission on a weekly basis, was now only being circulated on a monthly basis. It was noted that the weekly report of key performance information had been introduced as a result of a recommendation from

the Improving Lives Select Commission based on a study of best practice at other local authorities.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Neighbourhood Working advised that the change to the frequency of the report had been made due to increased demands being made on the time of the officers who prepared the report to complete other tasks and to prepare reports and other data for the Government. The Assistant Director, Social Care advised that she and other senior managers would be happy to answer any questions that members may have on the report. The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion noted that as some of the data on the weekly tracker changed frequently, receiving the information weekly could present a misleading picture regarding the data, and that providing the data monthly would enable clearer trends to be shown and identified.

The Chair acknowledged these points but noted that any changes to the frequency of the report should have been agreed by members. The Deputy Leader suggested that a meeting with himself, senior officers and the Chair should be arranged to enable the Chair to discuss members' concerns regarding the changes and to establish a way forward.

Resolved: - That the Chair meets with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Neighbourhood Working, and the Director of Children and Young People's Services to discuss the future circulation of the Children and Young People's Services Vision Tracker.

Councillors Jarvis and Senior, who had declared an interest in the following item left the meeting at this point.

59. RE-COMMISSIONING OF CSE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion and two managers from the Commissioning, Performance and Quality team, Sean Hill and Joanne Smith, attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the recommissioning of CSE Support Services.

The report noted that in 2016 the Council had entered into contracts with three local voluntary sector organisations to provide support services for adults who had experienced child sexual exploitation (CSE). These contracts initially ran from 1 July 2016 to 31 March 2019, with the option for them to be extended for a further two years. These contracts had now been extended until September 2020 with the option, if required to continue with a rolling month by month contract up until March 2021.

The Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion advised that work on a needs analysis that would inform the recommissioning of CSE support services had now been ongoing for 12 months. The Joint Assistant Director advised that ACEPPE had been commissioned to undertake an independent consultation exercise and

needs analysis, however this process had been interrupted when significant concerns were raised in relation to clinical governance and service user safety by Rotherham Rise, GROW and the Trauma and Resilience Service. ACEPPE had subsequently provided a pre-consultation report that had been primarily drawn from work with non-commissioned providers, Swinton Lock and Apna Haq. The Joint Assistant Director advised that this work had now been combined with other sources of information to provide a full needs analysis that included contract performance information, an academically led evaluation of the Trauma and Resilience Service and service user feedback facilitated by current providers.

The Joint Assistant Director advised that a public survey had been launched and that this would feed into the development of the needs analysis, that would in turn inform the recommissioning process. The Joint Assistant Director apologised to the members of the Improving Lives Select Commission with regard to the work that a sub-group of the Commission had undertaken during the summer of 2019 where members had conducted a benchmarking exercise by conducting interviews with other Local Authorities who had identified the need for post-CSE services, as the report incorrectly named the authorities that had been approached. The Joint Assistant Director confirmed that the authorities that had taken part in the exercise had been Rochdale, Telford and Wrekin and Oxfordshire.

The Joint Assistant Director provided assurance that a timeline that had been developed by the Council's procurement team that would ensure that new CSE support contracts would be in place prior to the current contracts expiring and that there would be no gaps in provision for the CSE survivors.

Two managers from the Commissioning, Performance and Quality team, Sean Hill and Joanne Smith attended the meeting to provide more detailed information on the commissioning process, noting that the process of developing the needs analysis had taken longer than anticipated due to the need to ensure that a broad range of stakeholder feedback had been gathered and used to inform its development. It was noted that the benchmarking work that had been carried out by the sub-group of the Improving Lives Select Commission would be included in the final draft of the needs analysis and that further work that built on the work carried out by the sub-group had been conducted. The full draft needs analysis was attached as an appendix to the officer's report and it was noted that this would be updated once the public survey had concluded in advance of it being used to determine the service specification for the new support contracts.

It was advised that it was anticipated that the service specification and request to start a tender process would be submitted to Cabinet for approval in June with the results of the tender process being submitted to Cabinet for consideration in October and that the new contracts would

come into operation in January 2021.

Members noted that with regard to the timescales allocated for the development of the needs analysis and service specification that the benchmarking work carried out by the Improving Lives sub-group during the summer of 2019 could have been allocated more time and as a consequence could have been wider in its scope. The Joint Assistant Director advised that due to factors that had been outside of their control and the need to ensure public consultation the timescales for the work had needed to be changed.

Members asked for further information on the increase in waiting times for service users to access services at Rothacs that had been shown in data included in the officer's report. Sean Hill, Manager in the Commissioning, Performance and Quality team advised that the increased waiting times were due to increased levels of demand, and that it had been explored whether other providers such as RISE could offer any assistance in dealing with the waiting list. It was noted that the information included in the officer's report was high level and showed demand from all service users and not just CSE survivors, and as such it was not necessarily CSE survivors who were waiting to access services. The Chair asked if there was any separate data available that showed how long CSE survivors were waiting to access services. Members were advised that separate data was not available, however members were assured that from discussions with service providers that CSE survivors were not waiting to access the support that they required, and that the final needs analysis would include the most up to date and accurate data that was available.

The Chair asked why there had been such a large delay in the commissioning of new support services contracts and expressed concern that this meant that service users were accessing services that were not providing as much support as was possible. The Joint Assistant Director advised that engaging with an independent third party in the preparation of the needs analysis in order to ensure that the needs analysis was as robust as possible had led to delays, but assured the Chair and members that the new project timescales were on track to enable new contracts to start being delivered from January 2021.

Members queried the usefulness of some of the qualitative data included in the report on how service users felt about the impact that the support services offered had impacted on them noting that the broadness of the categories for responses and their subsequent interpretation were very subjective. Joanne Smith, Manager in the Commissioning, Performance and Quality team agreed that for the type of service that was being offered, and because of the very different needs of each individual service user that it was very difficult to measure "success". It was noted that the broadness of the categories for responses had been designed so as to capture as much data as possible in an attempt to give a rounded overall picture of the impact that the services provided had made to individuals. Members asked whether any benchmarking had been completed against

the outcomes of post CSE support in other local authority areas. Sean Hill, Manager in the Commissioning, Performance and Quality team advised that benchmarking had not been completed due to the diverse range of services provided by other authorities meaning that it had not been possible to find a service offer comparable to that of Rotherham's.

Members noted that when support services for CSE survivors had initially been introduced that this had been done quite quickly in order to meet the need for this service provided, and as such had utilised several providers. Members asked that when the new services were commissioned whether a less disparate and more streamlined service for survivors could be provided by using less providers. The Joint Assistant Director advised that the experience of service delivery of the previous years would inform the needs analysis and service specification and meant that the services delivered from January 2021 would look very different from the current service offer.

The Chair expressed her disappointment that the benchmarking work that had been completed by the sub-group of the Commission during summer 2019 and the other inputs made by the members into the process of the development of the needs analysis for post CSE support appeared to have been somewhat overlooked in the development of the draft needs analysis, and hoped that a reconvened sub-group would be able to feed more its development in advance of it being considered by Cabinet

The Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked the Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion and Sean Hill and Joanne Smith managers from the Commissioning, Performance and Quality team for attending the meeting and answering their questions.

Resolved: -

- (1) That the proposal that CSE Support Services be re-commissioned by the Council and that new services commence from January 2020, be noted.
- (2) That the Draft Needs Analysis, supplemented by a public consultation process during March 2020, be noted.
- (3) That the proposal that the service specification be developed based on findings of the full needs analysis, and that the commissioning timescale is aligned with the Trauma and Resilience Service, be noted
- (4) That the timescales for the re-commissioning CSE Support Services be noted.
- (5) That having regard to the revised timescales for the recommissioning of CSE support services, the benchmarking work carried out by members of the Improving Lives Select Commission

that concluded in August 2019 be recommenced in order that it may feed into the development of the CSE Support Services needs analysis.

Councillors Jarvis and Senior re-joined the meeting at this point.

60. UPDATE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) SUFFICIENCY PROJECTS

The Director of Children's and Young People's Services and the Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the capital spending programme of £1.186 million that had been approved by Cabinet in September 2019 to create an additional 111 school places in Rotherham for children with special education needs and disabilities.

In introducing the report, the Director of Children's and Young People's Services noted that a peer review of the Council's Special Education Needs Service had just concluded noting that the process had been a positive experience for everyone who had been involved. The Director advised that the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency Strategy was an integral part of the Council's provision to meet the needs of the growing population of children with identified Special Education Needs in the borough.

The Joint Assistant Director noted that the SEND Sufficiency Strategy would enable an increase in places for children with autistic spectrum conditions, moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and mental health problems, and as such would relieve pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant (High Needs Budget) by reducing the need to place children in high cost independent specialist provision due to lack of appropriate local resources. It was noted that an increase in places provided by the Council would also be required due to the rise in numbers of children with education, health and care plans predicted for future years. The Joint Assistant Director noted the timelines for the delivery of individual schemes that were detailed in the report and provided assurance to members on the quality of the provision that was being provided.

Members asked how the model of provision that was being provided had been arrived at. The Joint Assistant Director advised that this information was detailed fully in the SEND Sufficiency Strategy document that was available. The Joint Assistant Director noted that the provision that was being created was more than just about creating more places and that the Strategy would provide more flexible provision that would support better learning outcomes.

Members welcomed the extra provision that was being created and asked how children would be supported to progress through the system. The Joint Assistant Director advised that each child's Education, Health and

Care plan would be used to ensure that they received the right level of support at the right time.

The Chair, on behalf of the committee, thanked the Director of Children's and Young People's Services and the Joint Assistant Director, Social Care for attending the meeting and answering their questions

Resolved: -

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the report on the peer review conducted on the Special Educational Needs Service be circulated to the members of the Improving Lives Select Commission when it becomes available.

The Chair, due to unforeseen circumstances left the meeting at this point.

Councillor Jarvis, the Vice-Chair took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

61. EARLY HELP AND SOCIAL CARE PATHWAY - PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Children's and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director, Social Care attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the delivery of the Council's Early Help and Social Care Pathway.

In introducing the report, the Director of Children's and Young People's Services noted that like all directorates across the Council savings had needed to be identified, but that Children's and Young People's services still needed to be delivered, and delivered to a high standard. The Assistant Director, Social Care advised that the Early help and social way pathway was part of the transformational activity, alongside demand and market management, taking place in Children's and Young People's Services that would enable services to continue to be delivered at a high standard, but at the same time enable the savings that were needed to be made.

The Assistant Director advised that the pathway aimed to create an environment where children and their families received targeted help at the earliest possible opportunity that ensured that only the children who required more intense support progressed to receiving statutory social work intervention, and that where such intervention was made that intervention was underpinned by a service that delivered excellent social work practice

The Assistant Director made a presentation to the meeting that provided a detailed progress report on the development and implementation of the Early help and social care pathway. The presentation provided information on:

- The principles and objectives that had informed the design of the pathway.
- The activity surrounding the development of 10 workstreams that made up the pathway
- What was working well, including:
 - a well-trained and motivated workforce with reduced reliance on agency social work staff.
 - reduced demand for social work led services.
 - closer and more collaborative working between social care and early help services.
 - audits of the service having provided assurance on the quality of practice being delivered.
 - the delivery of the savings linked to the delivery of early help and social work pathway being achieved during 2019/20.
- Issues with regard to the delivery of the Early help and social care pathway that required further attention, including:
 - the turnover of staff, most notably in case holding social work teams being higher than was ideal.
 - caseloads of early help practitioners continuing to rise.
 - being able to reach a point of assurance where a reduction in the social work workforce could be safely made.
- The next steps in the delivery and development of the pathway, including:
 - completing a review of the work of social work locality teams and corresponding early help teams to inform future service delivery.
 - ensuring that any reduction in numbers of social workers was implemented in line with the principles of ensuring manageable caseloads and ensuring that any reductions were only made when it was safe to do so.
 - continued learning from audit and other feedback so as to share and showcase best practice in order to enable practitioners to learn from each other.

The Assistant Director advised that so far as result of the transformational work that had been carried out savings of £1.435m had been achieved during 2019/20 with further savings of £2.370m anticipated for 2020/21 and an additional saving of £1.935m in 2021/2022. The Assistant Director noted that the savings that had, and would be realised had been enabled by a reduction in the number of cases requiring intervention from qualified social workers, and that better understanding across the directorate of what support Early help could offer had enabled initial

referrals to be made to Early help rather than straight to a social work teams as had previously been the case.

Members asked for information on how managers reviewed and monitored caseloads to ensure that they were being managed and monitored safely and effectively, especially with regards to the appropriate transfer of cases between Early help and qualified social worker interventions. The Assistant Director provided information on, and assurance around the procedures that were carried out by managers to ensure the safe management of caseloads. The Assistant Director also noted how the Liquid Logic case management system that was used enabled regular and effective caseload monitoring. The Assistant Director advised that the monitoring of caseloads not only enabled any areas for concern to be picked up at an early stage but also enabled managers to see examples of good work being carried that could then be shared amongst their teams to demonstrate best practice and develop service delivery.

Members asked for further information on the steps that were being taken by senior managers to reduce staff turnover. The Assistant Director noted that as the retention of good staff across the teams was integral to the success of the Early help and social care pathway this area was being focussed on with particular attention. The Assistant Director advised that current staff were being actively engaged with and listened to in order to ensure that managers understood all the pressures that staff faced in all areas of their work and not just regarding pressures related to caseload size and management. The Assistant Director advised that such engagement with staff not only enabled managers to understand the issues that staff encountered on a daily basis that would enable them to ensure that working conditions were as good as they could be, but also enabled sharing and learning opportunities that came from regularly identifying best work practices.

Councillor Clark thanked the Assistant Director for the excellent and informative presentation, noting how far it showed that the Children's and Young People's Services had come in the last four years, and how much it had achieved. Councillor Clark noted that the progress that had occurred gave members across the Council confidence in the work that was being done to ensure that the borough's children and young people were looked after and kept safe.

The Vice-Chair, on behalf of the committee thanked the Director of Children's and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director, Social Care for attending the meeting and answering their questions.

Resolved: -

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That an update be provided to members of the Improving Lives

Select Commission on the implementation and use of the Liquid Logic case management system.

62. REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF THE ROTHERHAM PAUSE PRACTICE

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Neighbourhood Working and the Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion attended the meeting to provide a summary of the impact that the Pause Rotherham Practice, a project that worked with women who had experienced, or were at risk of, repeat removals of children from their care, had had on its first cohort of women since its launch in July 2018.

It was noted that the Rotherham Pause Practice had been recognised by the national team as delivering good practice. The report noted that women from the current cohort had achieved many positive outcomes as a result of the assertive intervention of the Rotherham Pause Practice in areas such as debt management, dealing with housing issues, registering with a GP, ending abusive relationships, re-establishing contact with children, making new friends and completing college and university courses.

The Joint Assistant Director provided information about some of significant achievements made by the women who had participated in the project, including:

- One woman has had just completed her first semester at University, where she was studying for a BA in Zoology.
- One woman had obtained 9 GCSE's and a Level 3 in Health and Social Care; and was being supported by Pause to explore Open University options.

The report stated that 39% of the women in the cohort were moving forward in their lives by gaining new skills and employment opportunities. It was noted that these outcomes were particularly positive in the context of the distance travelled from the point at which the women on the project engaged with the programme until graduation.

The Joint Assistant Director provided information on the financial impact of the project, noting that due to the nature of the project in influencing the potential future behaviour of the participants, the financial impact of the project had been measured in terms of cost avoidance. The Joint Assistant Director advised that the cost avoidance associated with 20 women on the programme taking a pause from pregnancy and the associated avoided births showed that the immediate avoidance would be £1,292,599 with the potential for avoiding £2,088,480 over a five-year period – of which £1,631,683 would be cashable cost avoidance.

Members welcomed the positive outcomes that the project had made on

the women who had participated in helping them move forward with their lives and noted their satisfaction that the project would continue in Rotherham with a second cohort of women.

Members expressed their appreciation and thanks to Lindsey Knight, Pause Project Lead who was leaving her job supporting the project for all the work that she had put into making Pause in Rotherham such a success and wished her success in her new role at the Council.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Neighbourhood Working noted his agreement with the comments of members and thanked members of the Improving Lives Select Commission for their support of the project from the outset and the role that they had played in getting others to see it's benefits in order enable the initial implementation of the project to happen

The Vice-Chair, on behalf of the committee thanked the Deputy Leader and the Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion for attending the meeting answering their questions

Resolved: -

- (1) That the report on the impact of Pause Rotherham since its launch in July 2018 be noted.
- (2) That a further report on the impact of Pause Rotherham be brought to the Improving Lives Select Commission after May 2021.

63. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

64. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 5:30pm.