

PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 November 2016

Present:-

Councillors S Randall-Johnson (Chairman), A Connett, A Dewhurst, A Eastman, R Hannaford, A Hannan, R Hosking, R Rowe, P Sanders, M Squires and C Mabin

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors S Barker and J McInnes

Apologies:-

Councillors E Barisic, F Biederman, C Channon, J Mathews and R Julian

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Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2016 be signed as a correct record.

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Public Participation: Representations

There were no representations received.

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Beam House Project (Young Refugees in Devon)

(Councillor McInnes, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Skills, attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee).

The Committee received and noted the report of and presentation from the Chief Officer for Children's Services (CS/16/01) on the Council's response to the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), introduced by Government earlier this year. In partnership with the Home Office, PGL and Catch 22, an independent provider of child care services, Devon had agreed that up to 70 young people (boys aged 16/17 years) at any time could stay at Beam House, a large adventure holiday site in North Devon, as a respite centre. To date, 37 young people had been through or were staying at Beam House and there had been 24 reunifications with family members.

Additionally, Devon had also placed 7 girls from Eritrea/Ethiopia as part of its NTS allocation through an independent fostering agency.

The presentation outlined the positive work undertaken by the different organisations, including:

- managing local resource allocation including GPs, local pharmacies, dentists;
- safeguarding issues;
- press and media management – both national and local;
- community cohesion and liaison;
- assessing mental health needs of the young people and involvement from CAMHS;
- a coordinated partnership approach to identify early issues;
- managing the expectations of the young people;
- positive community involvement.

Members' congratulated all agencies and staff involved, especially given the short times scales to implement this strategy, as well as the positive and welcoming response by the local community.

* **25** **In-Year Budget Briefing**

(Councillor Barker (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health Services) attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

The Committee considered and noted the report of the County Treasurer (CT/16/92) on the financial position at month 6 of the People's Services' budget, outlining those areas of specific pressures on budgets, potential under and over-spending in the current financial year and on management action being and to be taken.

* **26** **Adults Performance Report**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Head of Adult Commissioning and Health and the Head of Adult Care Operations and Health (SCC/16/54) highlighting areas of good performance and where further improvement and development were needed. Areas presented in the report and discussed by Members included: the Deprivation of Liberties safeguards, the quality of commissioned services, personal care, Delayed Transfers of Care, unfulfilled care packages and waiting times for assessments.

* **27** **Adults Standing Overview Group**

The Committee received a Report of discussions at the meeting on 28 September 2016 (CS/16/35) which focussed on preparing for adulthood and transitions for children and young people with disabilities and Adult Social Care Performance Framework. Concerns at the meeting were also raised around dementia care, and the Committee noted that a Joint Spotlight Review would take place in January with Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, following a site visit to Mapleton Community Care Home on 29 November.

* **28** **Children's Standing Overview Group**

The Committee received a Report of discussions at the meeting on 23 September 2016 (CS/16/36) including Eclipse migrations, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Integrated Children's Services and Budget Monitoring for 2016/17. Members also noted the positive site visits to Tiverton and Barnstaple Social Care offices on 11 November.

* **29** **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services**

The Committee received a joint report (CS/16/07) on developments in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and ongoing service improvements across the emotional and mental health wellbeing system. This also included how Devon CAMHS, in partnership with commissioners, had developed services for children in need of early help for serious conditions such as eating disorders, and for children and young people in crisis.

Members' discussion points with Officers included:

- disparities in practice across the County;
- improving access to psychological therapies;
- Early Help;
- support for pregnant women and mothers;
- eating disorder pathway model;

- Children in care;
- transitions to adult mental health services;
- Crisis Care Team;
- lengthy waiting times;
- improving outcomes for young people.

* 30 **Care Leavers Task Group Report - Update on Progress against Recommendations**

The Committee received the report of the Head of Children's Social Work and Child Protection (CS/16/06) updating Members on the significant progress and improvements made against the recommendation highlighted by the Care Leavers Task Group in November 2015. These areas included: preparation for adulthood, Involvement in Pathway Planning, Working with District Councils on Homelessness prevention, strengthening Corporate Parenting arrangements and improving commissioning of accommodation.

Members' discussion points included:

- apprenticeship and employment opportunities for Care Leavers, which was currently limited; however it had recently been agreed to build capacity in the participation service for Care Leavers;
- concerns over the volume of very young homeless in Exeter.

* 31 **School Exclusions: Educational Outcomes Task Group - Update on progress against recommendations**

The Committee received the report of the Head of Education and Learning (CS/16/03) updating Members on the progress made against recommendations and actions identified by the People's Scrutiny Task Group, noting:

- the monitoring of educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities;
- a school research project, led by Babcock, to identify reasons why pupils behaviour becomes problematic, seeking information from schools to highlight strategies which work well to promote inclusion and reduce exclusion rates;
- a scoping project which had been completed to identify how effective pastoral support systems could be developed and provided for all pupils, which identified those schools that were high excluders, those schools that managed inclusion effectively, areas of good practice and areas where there was a need for improved skills, training and resources;
- the performance of West Exe School.

RESOLVED that the Report be noted and that the Research Project in relation to Recommendation 2 and the Scoping Project in relation to Recommendation 4 be circulated to Members for further information.

* 32 **School Exclusions Academic Year 2015/16**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Education and Learning (CS/16/05) providing the annual overview of exclusions in Devon benchmarked against the latest national data. The number of permanent exclusions had significantly risen by 54% in 2015/16 compared to the previous academic year.

The percentage of permanent exclusions in key stage 4 had fallen from 51% in 2014/15 to 40% in 2015/16; however this was still above the national average for 2015. The number of permanent exclusions in Key Stage 2 had been relatively stable over the past two years, with the number rising significantly in Key Stage 3. However, the report indicated that the largest

concern was the rise in exclusions in Key Stage 1, which had seen an increase from 3% to 9%, linked to a rise in the number of girls being excluded.

Members' also noted the over representation of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), statements/Education and Health Care Plans, and Free School Meals in terms of school exclusions; and the Council's robust role in terms of school improvement.

* **33** **Devon Education Performance 2015/16**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Education and Learning (CS/16/04) on the latest assessment information for all key stages and updating on performance in relation to Special Education Needs (SEN) and pupils destinations post 16. Members were informed of recent significant changes to the curriculum and exams in Key Stage 4, moving from a modular to linear system, resulting in a national 2% decline in Maths and English, compared to Devon results which had increased.

* **34** **Children's Social Work and Child Protection - Second Quarter Performance Report**

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Children's Social Work and Child Protection (CS/16/02) on the second quarter performance of the service. The Report updated Members on Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, Early Help, Children in Need, Referrals into statutory children's service, single assessments, child protection enquiries, child protection conferences and repeat child protection plans.

General points discussed with the Cabinet Member and officers included:

- an overall reduction in the use of agency staff covering permanent posts; however there had been a slight increase in the number of staff on maternity leave or sickness leave, which had resulted in the use of agency staff covering these posts;
- the difficulty in recruiting Social Workers to Devon, especially North Devon and to the Team Managers post, as salaries were not competitive enough to encourage qualified workers to the area;
- a slight reduction in the number of enquiries into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the number of children going onto Child Protection Plans;
- a reduction of Social Worker caseloads below 20.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.55 pm