

MINUTES of a meeting of **the IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PEOPLE** held at County Hall, Matlock on 5 September 2018.

PRESENT

Councillor J Twigg (in the Chair)

Councillors N Barker, Mrs A Fox, A Griffiths (substitute member), G Hickton (substitute member), R Iliffe and D Taylor.

Councillor A Dale, E Partington and C Flinton.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors L Chilton, J Coyle, and R Flatley, Helen Jones and Deborah Turner.

21/18 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22/18 **DISCUSSION WITH CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**
Councillor Alex Dale, Cabinet Member for Young People, gave an update on the key achievements and challenges faced by Children's Services over the last year.

Amongst the successes acknowledged were:

- grants totalling £1.5m to support and encourage youth activities, with focus on pursuits that were less established;
- an investment of £5.4m in social care towards the recruitment of 100 social workers and practice supervisors to replace the reliance on agency staff;
- the regional adoption agency partnership between Derbyshire County, Derby City, Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City Councils which had widened the pool of adoptive parents. Improvements were being seen in adoption rates and the partnership had allowed the implementation of permanence teams, who oversee adoptions from start to finish of the process;
- the children's homes in Derbyshire had obtained good Ofsted reports. A new facility opened in Hopewell, near Clay Cross which included a specialist provision and Linden House in South Derbyshire was being refurbished;
- the budget had received an additional £18m this year which amounted to a significant input into resources.

It was noted that the challenges faced by the department were primarily around the budget, with £2.9m savings having to be achieved by the end of the financial year.

Councillor Dale thanked the Committee for their scrutiny report on the review of permanent exclusions and responded to the following recommendations made:

1. *The Authority makes representations to the Government regarding the unintended consequences created by the schools accountability system, Progress 8, and the associated narrowing of the curriculum that impact on less academic students.*

A letter was in the process of being drafted to the Secretary of State.

2. *The Authority explores the feasibility of a policy that ensures that when a pupil is excluded and transferred to another school, funding is made available to the receiving school in the same term as the transfer occurs.*

It was not in the Council's remit to make this decision, but the Council was working with the School's Forum to explore the transfer of funds when an excluded child moves to another school. One possibility was to have an interim fund that could be accessed in a timely manner and then reimbursed at a later date.

3. *The Authority reviews how the Higher Needs Block is allocated and explores the feasibility of some of the funding being transferred to schools so that more support is available within schools before a young person is permanently excluded.*

The Council was looking to commission a review to ensure that the Higher Needs Block was allocated to best effect. It was anticipated that during the review the ISOS Partnership would interview parents and schools.

4. *The Authority explores the feasibility of a proportion of Support Centre funding being ring-fenced so that the service can plan and provide preventative support throughout the academic year and an outreach service to schools.*

The allocation of Support Centre funding was a decision for the Schools Forum, however the Council was supportive of more preventative work being undertaken. The Council was exploring opportunities of working more closely with academies that have developed their own in-house support centre provision.

5. *The Authority (through the mechanism of the Future in Mind Programme and associated commissioning activities) ensures that the expectations placed on schools to support the mental health needs of young people are not overly reliant on schools filling the gap in community provision to the detriment of the time available to teachers to fulfil their primary role of educating children.*

Councillor Dale acknowledged the concerns highlighted in the review about the growing demands being placed on schools to support the mental health needs of young people, but stated that there was a delicate balance to be made. Young people with low level mental health needs respond well to support provided in the school environment, particularly peer to peer support. A government Green paper has proposed that schools should play an active role in mental health provision.

Councillor Dale also responded to concerns raised about access to the Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service CAMHS. This was a service provided by Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Groups designed to meet the needs of young people with more severe mental health needs. There was high demand for this service, particularly as there was a gap in provision for young people with low level mental health needs. To manage the demand placed on CAMHS a triage model had recently been introduced, and the CAMHS website had been enhanced to signpost people to advice and support services in the community.

The current figure for children in elective home education in Derbyshire was 703, down from 825 at the end of June 2018. This figure was likely to fluctuate throughout the year. There was no legal requirement for parents to inform the Authority about their decision to home educate their child or to state what provision was being made for learning. There were systems in place to monitor home education but the Authority had no powers to impose compliance.

The Chair thanked Councillor Dale on a very informative report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

23/18 MODERN SLAVERY Christine Flinton, Head of Community Safety and Liz Partington, Emergency Planning Manager gave a presentation to the Committee explaining modern slavery, an umbrella term used to describe offences of human trafficking, slavery, forced labour and domestic servitude and slavery-like practices such as debt bondage, sale or exploitation of children and forced or servile marriages. All involve one person depriving another person of their liberty in order to exploit. In the last year, 53 victims had been rescued from trafficking and exploitation; these were made up of mainly eastern Europeans and Asian nationals.

The Derby and Derbyshire Modern Slavery Partnership had been formed to work together through four strategic themes in line with the Government's Modern Slavery Strategy: Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare. The Partnership had also established a multi-agency tactical intelligence group, developed a referral pathway, delivered training to multi facet groups, developed a communication strategy to raise awareness and commissioned the provision of essential emotional support for victims. The many signs and indicators of slavery and exploitation were detailed and the public were encouraged to recognise these and details on how to contact the authorities if they had concerns.

The Emergency Planning Team work alongside the police and other authorities to assist in modern slavery operations by way of establishing a reception centre management team and to co-ordinate the voluntary sector response and multi-agency approach.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM), a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support, was introduced in 2009 to meet the UK's obligations under the Council of European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Where potential victims do not want to be referred, authorities have a duty to notify the government where they have reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking.

The Chair thanked Christine and Liz for the presentation.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

24/18 **WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19** Roz Savage, Improvement and Scrutiny Officer, advised that the working group undertaking the review of the enablement service had held its first meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.