

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 12 November 2018 in the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chair), Logan (Vice-Chair), Carlin, Cassidy, Horabin, Leck, P. Lloyd Jones, Rowe, J. Stockton and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor P. Hignett

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. McIntyre, T. Coffey, J. Farrell, C. Johnson and D. Roberts

Also in attendance: One member of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP23 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

CYP24 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes relating to the Children, Education and Social Care Portfolio that had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix 1 for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes are noted.

CYP25 BUSINESS PLANNING 2019 - 20

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, which informed of the timescales for the development of the Council's Business Plan for the coming financial year, 2019/20. Members were invited to contribute at this developmental stage of the planning process, by

identifying key themes and developing specific activities for the coming financial year.

It was noted that since 2016 and the annual preparation and production of a unified Council Business Plan was endorsed, which was structured as a series of extracts themed around the six strategic priorities of the Council. These extracts contained details of objectives and milestones and key measures/targets which were most relevant to that particular priority. This approach was consistent with the scrutiny arrangements of the Council and the responsibilities of each of the Policy and Performance Boards; and provided an effective monitoring means for Officers and Elected Members.

Members were referred to the timeframe adopted for plan preparation, development, and managerial and political endorsement (paragraph 3.7 of the report, and to Appendix A: *Progress against the Business Plan Objectives for 2018-19*), and Officers provided additional commentary to the service objectives listed from PED01 to PED07.

Following the presentation of Appendix A, the following responses were given to queries made by the Board:

- How many CAF's were initiated by schools?
It was not possible to answer this at the meeting however the number of CAF's currently being led by schools would be sent to Members following the meeting.
- It was commented that as the demand on social care had increased, so had the need for early intervention services as well.
- Further to PED02, it was clarified that the numbers of new admissions to care had reduced but there had been an increase in children remaining in care for longer. This was due to lower adoption rates and the difficulty in recruiting foster carers; it was noted that there was presently a recruitment drive for foster carers which had seen an increase in enquiries recently.
- What was the strain on budgets considering the demand for children's services was increasing?
There were considerable cost pressures resulting from the increasing costs of looked after children placements and support services for children in care and the overall increase in demand for these services.

- What was the length of time looked after children were in care for?
There was no fixed length of time as such but children were in care for longer for the reasons mentioned above. Looked after children would only come out of the care system when they were returning to their parents; they were allowed back home to live with the parents but remained the responsibility of the Council; via an adoption; via a Special Guardianship Order (SGO); and to live with foster carers under an SGO.
- It was noted that consistency of care was important for LAC and revised guidance had been issued by Government regarding assessing a person's suitability to be a guardian.
- What was the uptake from schools of a recent seminar to discuss the Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs of children and young people in Halton?
This was very well attended by all schools with the exception of two, who were being inspected by Ofsted at the time.
- How can investing in a Free School work with the Local Authority (LA)?
A joint bid with St Helens was being prepared to secure funding for a Free School for children with SEMH needs. Under the Government regulations, any new schools built had to be Free Schools so would not be run by the LA.
- Despite the good news regarding gains made in all Early Learning Goals, it was noted that there was still a lot of work to do in this area.
- NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) related to 16-17 year olds only, which was a national Government Policy. It was commented that 18+ year olds also found themselves in the NEET situation but were not included in the data.

Overall Members agreed with the Business Plan objectives for 2018-19 as presented. The Chair invited Members to contribute further to these by emailing him by the end of November, with any suggestions they may have after giving the subject further thought. In the meantime Officers would prepare the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

RESOLVED: That the Board accepts the report as

Operational
Director -

the mechanism by which Elected Members could contribute to and monitor the development of the Children and Young Peoples' Services Business Plan.

Education,
Inclusion and
Provision

CYP26 ANNUAL REPORT - COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 1ST APRIL 2017 - 31ST MARCH 2018

The Board received an analysis on complaints processed under the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure, and evidence on how feedback from service users had been used to improve service delivery.

It was reported that the aim of the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure was for children and young people to have their concerns resolved swiftly and wherever possible, by the people who provide the service locally. It was noted that a complaint may generally be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which required a response.

The four categories to the representation process and the four stages to the formal complaints procedure were outlined. The report continued, providing detailed information and data relating to the numbers of complaints received between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, which saw a 30% increase on the previous year.

RESOLVED: That the report be accepted as the mechanism by which Senior Management and Elected Members could monitor and scrutinise Children's Social Care complaints and compliments.

CYP27 COMPLIMENTS (SERVICE USER FEEDBACK) RELATING TO PEOPLE DIRECTORATE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES 1ST APRIL 2017 TO 31ST MARCH 2018

The Board received a report on the compliments made by clients and positive feedback from workers and professionals relating to Children's Services in the People Directorate for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Overall there had been a 22% increase recorded this year and the report provided a breakdown of compliments and positive feedback from those departments within the Children and Families Department; and those departments within the Education, Inclusion and Provision Department.

Members welcomed the report and enjoyed reading the comments and feedback provided by service users and

other agencies. On behalf of the Board the Chair passed on his congratulations to all staff involved in Children's Services and commended the good work that they do which clearly made a difference to people's lives.

RESOLVED: That the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board note the contents of the report.

Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.