

Ambitious Plymouth

Monday 6 July 2015

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Beer, in the Chair.

Councillor Singh, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall (substitute for Councillor Dann), Deacon, Downie, Jarvis (substitute for Councillor Bowie), Jordan, Mrs Nicholson, Parker-Delaz-Ajete (substitute for Councillor Sam Davey), Riley, Singh and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representatives: Clare Hamon (Non-Statutory Co-opted Representative).

Apologies for absence: Councillors Bowie, Dann and Sam Davey.
Edith Bayley (Statutory Co-opted Representative) and Jayne Gorton (Lead Officer).

Also in attendance: Alison Botham (Head of Children, Young People and Families), Carole Burgoyne (Strategic Director for People), Judith Harwood (Assistant Director for Learning and Communities), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Public Health), Jo Siney (Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability) and Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.59 am.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

1. TO NOTE THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The panel noted the appointment of Councillor Mrs Beer as Chair and Councillor Bowie as Vice Chair for the municipal year 2015–2016.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

3. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2015 are confirmed as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

5. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Deacon and Councillor Downie to their first Ambitious Plymouth meeting.

6. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The panel noted its terms of reference.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES**

The panel noted the membership of the two existing co-opted representatives (one statutory, one non-statutory).

8. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR**

The panel noted the schedule of meetings for the forthcoming year.

9. **OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES FOR AMBITIOUS PLYMOUTH**

Carole Burgoyne (Strategic Director for People), Judith Harwood (Assistant Director for Learning and Communities) and Councillor McDonald (Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Public Health) provided the panel with an overview of priorities for the forthcoming year.

The panel were informed that –

(a) the Children and Young People’s Partnership had four objectives which set out the priorities for Children, Young People and Families –

- Raise Aspirations
- Deliver Prevention and Early Help
- Deliver an Integrated Education, Health and Care Offer
- Keep Our Children and Young People Safe

(b) key areas of work which were being looked at included –

- the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan which was looking at everything that had been highlighted in the Ofsted inspection last year
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) review
- Children’s Social Care review
- Integrated Commissioning strategy for children and young people

The Chair thanked Carol Burgoyne, Judith Harwood and Councillor McDonald for their report.

Agreed that the Democratic Support Officer would obtain a copy of the Children and Young People’s Partnership’s ‘plan on a page’ and circulate it to members.

10. **SEND FRAMEWORK 2015 - 2018**

Jo Siney (Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability), Alison Botham (Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families), Judith Harwood (Assistant Director for Learning and Communities), and Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Public Health) provided the panel with an overview of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Review and Framework for Education Provision 2015 – 2018.

Members were advised that –

- (a) this piece of work drew together the work that had been carried out to date to review Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision and places across the city;
- (b) the framework described proposals for consideration for meeting the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) over the next 3 years;
- (c) in comparison with our statistical neighbours (in particular Portsmouth and Southampton) Plymouth had a marked year on year increase in pupils with statements, with 4,000 children with statements;
- (d) Plymouth had seven special schools, along with a range of school-based specialist support centres.

Following members' questions it was reported that –

- (e) 2,000 children had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), 1,600 of whom were known to be in school, the others were in pre-school or post-16 education. Plymouth's school population was 38,000;
- (f) data was captured from pre-school settings;
- (g) data was captured from children who moved in to the city;
- (h) Plymouth had a significant amount of SEND provision which was also used by children from outside of the city. Plymouth City Council received payment for providing these services;
- (i) the Children and Families Act 2014 had introduced Health, Education and Care (HEC) Plans which would replace Statements;
- (j) the new HEC plans would span birth to age 25 and would involve parents and carers more than the old system;
- (k) the timescale for completion of Statements had been 26 weeks and Plymouth had a 98% success rate, the timescale for completion of HEC plans was 20 weeks and it was too early to say if Plymouth were achieving this target.

The Chair thanked Jo Siney, Alison Botham, Judith Harwood and Councillor McDonald for their report.

The panel agreed the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report and requested that the panel receive updates on progress at regular intervals.

11. **CHILDRENS' SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Alison Botham (Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families) provided members with an overview of the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the plan was not an Ofsted Improvement Plan, although it focussed around the recommendations that had Ofsted made;
- (b) the plan had been submitted to Ofsted on 14 April and feedback was due shortly;
- (c) a number of the improvement areas were ongoing;
- (d) the plan relied on working with other departments of the Council and partners/agencies;
- (e) an Improvement Board (a sub-group of the Children and Young People's Partnership) had been established to monitor the Improvement Plan;
- (f) the following areas of the plan were highlighted–
 - 1 – Ensure that practitioners have reasonable workloads
Workloads were monitored weekly and service area action plans were in place. Caseloads had increased, and this issue was being addressed;
 - 2 – Improvement management oversight on casework and the quality of staff supervision
A new quality assurance framework was now in place and management had attended the relevant training;
 - 3 – Improve the electronic social care record system so that it delivers accurate and timely data and performance information to improve the quality of service
The Care First system had been upgraded twice in the last six months which had resulted in an improvement. A review of ICT requirements for Children's Services was under way. A trial of portable electronic devices was about to commence which would improve mobile working for social workers;
 - 4 – Robustly challenge commissioners to ensure that child protection medical examinations are conducted without undue delay
The arrangements for child protection medicals had been discussed with medical colleagues and the waiting time was now one hour. This would

- be closely monitored;
- 8 – Ensure that Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and child protection chairs carry out their quality assurance roles in a way that provides robust scrutiny of practice and, where necessary, strong challenge
These tasks and caseloads would be reviewed in due course. The workload had decreased, and in the interim new ways of working were being piloted to improve capacity;
- 9 – Ensure that short-term placement stability is improved for looked after children
Any child who was now on their third placement was a cause for concern. A business review was under way in relation to fostering and residential provision to improve this situation;
- 14 – Work with care leavers and looked after children to develop a local care leaver ‘pledge’ that reflects their needs and that is in clear and accessible language
Work was being undertaken with the Listen and Care Council (LACC) to develop this pledge and ensure that all care leavers were aware of its existence;
- 17 – Take action to ensure that child protection conferences are held within statutory timescales and are attended by relevant partners
69% of conferences were held within 15 working days, with the figure in May 2015 standing at 78%. Police and GP attendance remained poor, there was now a peninsular-wide protocol (with attendance targets) to improve attendance at these meetings. The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would monitor these targets.

Following members’ questions it was reported that –

- (g) the ‘partners’ referred to in area 5 were the Police, health partners, Designated Nurse for Children and Young People, health visitors and schools. The Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACSE) meetings were chaired by the Police;
- (h) the frequency for strategic MACSE meetings was every quarter, and operational MACSE meetings was monthly. These meetings were well attended;
- (i) continuity of social workers was being addressed. Children were now initially assessed by one social worker and then referred to the appropriate social worker to process their case;
- (j) GP attendance at Child Protection conferences was poor due to pressures on their capacity and time. Processes were in force to ensure that relevant agencies were kept informed of the progress of the conferences;
- (k) the number of staff who attended the ‘training’ referred to in area 15 was not known, however attendance at training sessions would now be closely monitored;

- (l) the reasons for delays in holding Child Protection conferences was not known, however any delay would have been caused by a genuine issue.

The Chair thanked Alison Botham for her report.

12. **BE WISE TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

The Chair advised the panel that the request to conduct a co-operative review in to 'Be-Wise to Child Sexual Exploitation' would shortly be re-submitted to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board and requested that members considered committing to sit as members on the review panel.

Agreed that the Democratic Support Officer would e-mail panel members to determine interest for membership on the review panel.

13. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel discussed the draft work programme for 2015– 2016 and agreed to recommend to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board the following items for inclusion:

- (1) regular updates on the progress of the SEND review;
- (2) a report following the recent Ofsted inspection of the Youth Offending Team.

14. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.