

Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 20 September 2017

Present:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, in the Chair.
Councillor James, Vice Chair.
Councillors Dann, McDonald, Tuffin and Tuohy.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Mrs Bridgeman, Deacon, Loveridge, Dr Mahony and Sparling

Absent from the meeting: Councillor Cook.

Also in attendance: Councillor Bowyer – Leader, Councillor Mrs Beer - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Tracey Lee - Chief Executive, Carole Burgoyne - Strategic Director for People, Alison Botham - Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families and David Northey - Head of Integrated Finance, Ruth Harrell – Director of Public Health, Ross Jago – Lead Officer and Amelia Boulter – Democratic Adviser.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.33 am.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel 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.

30. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

31. **Chairs Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

32. **Minutes**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 9 August 2017.

33. **Establishing a Strategic Partnership with Torbay Council to deliver children's services**

The Leader accompanied by Councillor Mrs Beer, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Tracey Lee, Chief Executive, Carole Burgoyne, Strategic Director for People, Alison Botham, Assistant Director for Children, Young People and Families, David Northey, Head of Integrated Finance and Ruth Harrell, Director of Public Health introduced the item. It was reported that this proposal was a result of an invitation from the Children's Commissioner following the on-going issues to address Children Services in Torbay. The Commissioner and DfE were keen to see a sustain improvement in Children's Services in Torbay.

Key areas of questioning related to –

- (a) whether this council had the capacity to support this and the impact of staff;
- (b) the contract monitoring arrangements and the political oversight in both Plymouth and Torbay;
- (c) the language used rather than partnership the City Council would be a delivery partner delivering a contract;
- (d) timescales and clarity around whether this would lead to further arrangements with Torbay other than Children's Services;
- (e) financial support for this and the future funding for Plymouth and Torbay;
- (f) the risk to Plymouth if we were to exit the contract and the exit strategy;
- (g) further scrutiny of the contract;
- (h) Torbay's IT systems;
- (i) how this was being communicated to our staff;
- (j) the contract to include an Executive Member of Plymouth.

The committee advises council to consider, during its debate of the 25 September 2017, the following -

1. That council should consider this a contract arrangement rather than a strategic partnership;
2. That council seeks assurance –
 - a. that there will be no impact upon service delivery for Children and Young People in Plymouth or be of detriment to staff working in frontline social care.;
 - b. that such an arrangement will in no way impact upon the improvement journey for Plymouth City Councils Children and Young People services;
 - c. that the resource requirements for the delivery of Children’s Social Care in Torbay is borne entirely by Torbay Council for the duration of the agreement and that there will be no requirement for the pooling of budgets or cross subsidy which impacts upon the people of Plymouth;
 - d. that Torbay Council will provide access to their overall budget and financial planning process to ensure effective due diligence and that decisions made for the medium term should be assessed to ensure they do not cause any unintended consequences for the delivery of children’s services in Plymouth and Torbay;
 - e. that required staffing structures will not impact negatively upon service delivery in Plymouth, clear controls are put in place for staffing arrangements across the two authorities and that the arrangements improves the recruitment of social workers.
3. That subject to agreement from all stakeholders for the contract arrangement –
 - a. the Department of Education will provide the required funding for the additional burdens that will be placed on both Torbay and Plymouth in setting up such a partnership and that the contract will be developed at no cost to Plymouth City Council;
 - b. a comprehensive risk register is developed and provided to all stakeholders, including the Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee before any final decision is made.

- c. clear lines of both management and political accountability across both Local Authorities are established and Council is assured the reputational impact of serious incidents or negative judgements are contained to the relevant local authority;
 - d. Senior Management at Plymouth City Council have sufficient capacity given the breadth of the current remit.
4. All points as raised above are included in future reports to Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the due diligence process and such reports should also provide clarity on the improvement currently underway in Torbay Children's Services.

34. **Work Programme**

The Committee noted the Work Programme and requested officers to produce the Primary Care Services PID.