

Minutes of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board

20 September 2021

-: Present :-

Councillor Bye (Chairman)

Councillors Mandy Darling, Douglas-Dunbar and Mills (Vice-Chair)

Co-opted Members

Tatiana Wilson, Church of England Diocesan Representative

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Brent Davison, Devon and Cornwall Police

Mike Book, Imagine This Partnership

(Also in attendance: Councillors Law and Brown)

18. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barnby, Laura Colman (Co-opted Member) and Jo Morrell and Charlie Hine (non-voting Co-opted Members).

19. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 18 August 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. Engagement and participation of children and young people and their families - including Torbay Pledge

Becky Thompson, Head of Regulated Services provided an update on the engagement and participation activities undertaken with children and young people and their families and the progress made in implementing the Torbay Pledge.

Members acknowledged the significant amount of work being undertaken to help ensure the voice of the child and their family was taken into account when designing and providing services for children and young people. The work undertaken also recognised that there were a significant number of bright spots within the care experienced community. Many of our cared for children and care experienced children and young people had been going out of their way to help

others and this was now being acknowledged formally through Acts of Kindness nominations to celebrate this work.

Members asked questions in respect of the following areas:

- progress in implementing Liquid Logic software – the implementation had gone well but more training was required to ensure it becomes more intuitive for the users;
- how do we ensure participation was with all our children, not just those who responded to the survey – the survey was for children aged 7 and older and officers were exploring how children and young people can tell us what they want in different ways. The feedback from the survey and actions identified were shared widely to enable additional ideas or changes to be made before the actions were implemented;
- what was involved in the life story work – there were some statutory requirements e.g. life story book aimed at 0 to 5 year olds and later life letter, but also change map, pictures taken to show the journey and places a young person had been, memory box collated over the child's life experience, each designed to meet the needs of each individual child or young person;
- what information on the child's life story goes to adoptive parents – an adoptive support plan makes clear what support the family will receive before and after adoption, which included details of the child's life story so that they can understand what they had been through, most of this work was co-ordinated through Adopt South West (the regional adoption agency);
- how were other Council staff going to help our children – a presentation on Corporate Parenting had been given to Senior Manager's Forum and at an All Colleagues Briefing to raise awareness of our cared for and care experienced children and young people, this had resulted in 8 volunteer corporate parent champions coming forward;
- what was the role of the participation officer – the aim of this role was to centralise the work to capture the voice of the child as well as learning from the family to embed this across all the work of the service.

The Board expressed their thanks and appreciation to all those people involved in the work underway to ensure that the voice of the child was heard and appropriate action taken.

21. Family Friendly Vision

Councillor Law, Cabinet Member for Children's Services outlined the submitted presentation on the work underway for the Child Friendly Torbay initiative, which had taken inspiration from the work from Leeds City Council on their journey to make the area 'child friendly'. The Child Friendly Torbay Vision is:

“We want Torbay to be a great place for all of our children and young people to grow up in. We want to work together to deliver this; every contribution counts, and we can all play a part in making a difference.”

Members noted the importance of ongoing conversations with our children and young people and ensuring that some of the actions could be implemented quickly in order for them to feel like they were being listened to and making a difference.

A Child Friendly Sub-Group had been established by the Torbay Together Partnership, who had set up the following Task and Finish Groups to create an action plan, choose their own priorities and identify who were best placed to undertake the actions needed:

Priority 1 – Child Exploitation – Police lead;
Priority 2 – Early Help – Children's Services lead;
Priority 3 – Where I live – Imagine This lead;
Priority 4 – Corporate Parenting – Children's Services lead; and
Priority 5 – Ambassador programme – Torbay Together lead.

The Board discussed the proposals and the need for wider work with the community and local businesses in order to support the Child Friendly Torbay Vision. They acknowledge the important role of all Councillors in helping to get the right messages across in their communities to promote this work.

Resolved (unanimously):

- (i) that the Board acknowledge the positive work to date in developing the Child Friendly Torbay Vision;
- (ii) that an all Councillors briefing be held on the Child Friendly Torbay Vision to raise awareness of this work and to enable Councillors to support their communities in sharing positive messages and encourage engagement; and
- (iii) that an update on the work of the five Child Friendly Task and Finish Groups be presented to the Board in January 2022.

(Note: Councillor Mandy Darling left the meeting following consideration of this item.)

22. Torbay Children's Services - A Review of Leadership, Management and Governance

The Board considered the submitted report which provided an update on the review of Leadership, Management and Governance, which had been instigated by the Chief Executive as part of her approach for overseeing progress against the Children's Services Improvement Plan and the associated Sufficiency Strategy. Steve Hart, Independent Chair of Torbay Children's Services Improvement Board attended the meeting to provide his perspective on the review and responded to questions.

Members noted the positive improvements made and highlighted in the report and discussed the eight proposed recommendations which provided focus on what we needed to do to continue to develop Children's Services but also for them to sit

alongside other departments in the wider Council improvement journey. The recommendations were being taken forward, with the development of detailed action plans to address the issues raised.

Resolved (unanimously):

That a copy of the action plan arising from the eight recommendations from the review of Children's Services Leadership, Management and Governance be circulated to the Board and an update on their implementation presented to the Board in three and six months time.

23. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board Action Tracker

The Board noted the submitted action tracker.

Chairman