

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

27 July 2021

-: Present :-

Councillor Bye (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Mandy Darling and Douglas-Dunbar

Co-opted Members

Laura Colman, Primary Parent Governor Representative

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Brent Davison, Devon and Cornwall Police

Mike Cook, Imagine This Partnership

(Also in attendance: Councillor Law)

7. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mills, Tatiana Wilson and Jo Morrell.

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 4 May 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9. Children's Improvement Plan Quarterly Update

The Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, presented the submitted report which provided up to date performance information on the implementation of the Children's Services Improvement Plan. Members were advised that the statistics were up to date, but the narrative was up to May due to moving from Paris to Liquid Logic software. The highlight report had been updated from the original actions in the Improvement Plan to take into account the issues raised from the Ofsted visit in March and to ensure it was based on children's needs and where we needed to improve.

The Board noted that as a result of Torbay's improving position in respect of Children's Services performance we had changed who we were benchmarked against e.g. previously one of our benchmarking neighbours was Blackpool, now we were benchmarked against Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch. This was

seen as a positive step as we were now benchmarking against higher performing Councils which in turn would help us to raise our standards further.

The Chief Executive, Anne-Marie Bond, advised that the Council was being more proactive to understand ourselves and the issues we faced better, as part of this work a review was being undertaken on the theme of Leadership, Management and Governance to see where we feel we were and where we want to be.

The Board asked questions and sought assurance in respect of the following elements, responses were provided by the Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. The Chief Executive also provided assurance and updates in respect of her role and action being taken to help support our children and young people:

- edge or care and how this was used;
- when Liquid Logic would be effectively up and running and fully implemented;
- barriers in respect of timely receipt of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and working with the voluntary and community sector and Youth Offending Team to help support this area;
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) and need for early intervention;
- problems finding suitable accommodation for care leavers, the support available such as the guarantor scheme and the work of the Strategic Housing Board;
- early help current situation and aspirations;
- children's care plans not being robust enough and the action taken to address this;
- the voice of the child at their review meetings and the aspirations to encourage all children to attend their review to hold service providers to account and to automatically be referred to the advocacy service;
- later life letters and the actions being taken to address this;
- homelessness shown overall as amber but a lot of red actions; and
- staffing issues and the learning academy;
- quality assurance and the improvement in this area;
- learning from complaints and how this was raised through management and frontline staff to ensure it made a difference to the child.

Resolved:

1. that all partners be requested to work together to ensure Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision meets the needs of our children and young people in Torbay in a timely manner;
2. that the highlight report be updated to reflect what action is being taken to address concerns in respect of accessing appropriate CAMHS;
3. that the Board receive an update on the guarantor scheme for care experienced young people at a future meeting;

4. that the outcome of the Leadership, Management and Governance review to be reported to a future meeting of the Board; and
5. that an update on housing for care experienced young people be presented to a future meeting of the Board (unanimous).

10. Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Board considered the refreshed interim Corporate Parenting Strategy which had an overall objective to ensure that all children, young people and care experienced young people and adults are safe, happy and healthy in order that they can fulfil their full potential. The Strategy also provided improved governance to recognise the role of corporate parents across the whole of the Council and working with our partners. It was also proposed to acknowledge the key importance of the Strategy by recommending to Council it was included as one of the Policy Framework documents, therefore requiring it to be signed off by all Councillors at a full Council meeting, rather than being approved by the Cabinet.

The Chief Executive, Anne-Marie Bond, explained the rationale for the interim Strategy and the consultation it was going through and highlighted some of the feedback already received from the Corporate Parenting Board and Foster Carer Forum, which would result in further changes being made to the document prior to its submission to Cabinet in August.

The Board thanked Anne-Marie Bond for her leadership and work with colleagues and partners in Children's Services and for bringing forward a more child and family focussed Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Resolved:

1. that the Board supports and welcomes the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy and requests an additional meeting to be arranged, prior to the document being submitted to the Cabinet, to enable it to fully consider the changes made in response to the comments received to date; and
2. that the Cabinet be recommended that the Council be recommended to add the Corporate Parenting Strategy to the list of key Policy Framework documents (unanimous).

11. Update on the implementation of the Youth Offending Team action plans

The Board received and noted the submitted report which provided an update on the implementation of the Cabinet's response to the Board's recommendations on the Youth Offending Team (YOT) action plans.

Members were advised that due to technical difficulties at the first consultation event for Parkfield a second event was planned for September. Members also noted the work being undertaken by the YOT Strategic Board and proposals to co-locate the YOT Team with the wider Children's Services Team to bring the workers together to work alongside the young people and help deliver services to young people within the community rather than at official YOT bases.

Brent Davison, Devon and Cornwall Police, provided an update on his work as the Chair of the YOT Strategic Group and suggested some opportunities to work differently with some of the officer resource rather than providing additional funding for YOT services. Members recognised the need for all partners within the YOT to be contributing fairly and together which may result in further support. Any actions identified by the Strategic Group would be funded from the joint fund as agreed by the partners. The Board was advised that the Children's Services element of the budget equated to between 47 to 49% and in addition to this approximately £140k was funded from the service for business support and accommodation, which should be included as part of the overall budget.

It was noted that work was being undertaken through Supporting Families to help move some of the support to help young people who were on the edge of criminality, which looked at a menu of options to choose from rather than just a single offer.

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

The Board noted the submitted action tracker. The Clerk advised that Laura Colman had been appointed as a primary parent governor co-opted member and the Overview and Scrutiny Board had agreed to extend the membership to enable parents who are not parent governors to be appointed as non-voting co-opted members, where parent governor statutory co-opted member appointments cannot be filled. This would be following an interview with the Chairman of the Board and the Democratic Services Team Leader and they would be expected to sign up to the Code of Conduct for Members as they would not have been appointed through an official body.

The Chief Executive advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had also considered a review of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board following its operation for six months and the Board had unanimously agreed for the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board to continue to be the mechanism for overview and scrutiny of all issues relating to children and young people.

13. Exploitation Update

This item was deferred to 18 August 2021 due to the presenting officer being unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances.

Chairman
