

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at LB 31 at Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 27 October 2015 from 10.01 am to 11.18 am.

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Patience Ifediora

Absent

Councillor Josh Cook
Councillor Georgina Culley
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Chris Tansley

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Steve Comb - Head of Children in Care, Nottingham City Council
Rav Kalsi - Senior Governance Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Josh Cook (non-Council business)
Councillor Georgina Culley (non-Council business)
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim (non-Council business)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Glyn Jenkins as Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2015/16.

4 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer at Nottingham City Council, introduced the report of the Head of Democratic Services updating the Committee on the terms of reference and the remit for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED to note the terms of reference for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, as detailed in appendix 1 to the report.

5 CHILDREN IN CARE

Steve Comb, Head of Children in Care at Nottingham City Council, delivered a presentation to the Committee with a brief overview of the Council's children in care cohort, highlighting the following:

- (a) Currently, Nottingham City Council is responsible for 596 children in care in the city, which equates to 94 children per 10,000 population. This figure represents a 30 year high. In the financial year 2014/15, 70 children in the Council's care were adopted. At 1 October 2015, 44 children in the Council's care have been discharged as a result of permanent outcomes, such as an Adoption Order, Child Arrangement Order, or a Special Guardianship Order;
- (b) Since April 2012, there has been an upward trend in the number of children who have been admitted into care. This shows that the demand for social care services remains high with requests for support, referrals and re-referrals continuing to increase. The increase in the number of children coming into care is a trend that is mirrored on a national level;
- (c) This trend is also mirrored through our statistical neighbours who show an average of 784 children in care. Nottingham City Council's ambition is to perform significantly better than its statistical neighbours and as a result, have set a target of 575 children in care for the year 2015 – 16. Work is currently underway to reduce the number of those in care, either by exiting children from care via permanent outcomes, such as adoption orders and child arrangement orders, or by preventing admissions into care when it is safe to do so;
- (d) The performance of reviews for children in care remains consistently strong, with year to date figures showing that 99% of reviews are held within timescales. This means that the vast majority of the Council's children are offered the opportunity to influence their care plan in a meaningful and timely way;
- (e) Although the ethnicity profiles of those in care varies, the majority of those in care are white British. Were Nottingham to take unaccompanied asylum seekers into care in Nottingham and family members subsequently arrived, the Council would look to reunite family members, following robust checks with the appropriate authority which is in line with the relevant legislation;
- (f) Of Nottingham City Council's cohort of Children in Care, the majority (32% or 193) are aged 11-15 years old, 29% (173 children) are aged between 5 and 10 years old and 19% (116 children) are aged between 0-4 years. There has been a drop in the number of 0-4 year olds in care in Nottingham, partly because there has been a focus on speeding up permanent solutions, such as adoption orders. There are behavioural issues to consider for those between the ages of 5 – 10 years and there is a focus on permanence through fostering which should feel more like a family home. To support this, more powers are being delegated to foster carers;
- (g) Of the total number of children in care in Nottingham, 44% are the subject of a full care order and 27% are currently accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (single period of accommodation);
- (h) Nottingham City Council works with a number of agencies and there is an ongoing challenge as the numbers are high. Many agencies continue to recruit and incentivise their staff and where the Council cannot place a child with a

Council foster carer an agency is used at a cost. There is a regional framework on the prices set by agencies but this can often be departed from where there is an obvious urgent need to place a child;

- (i) The Council's focus is on keeping children within the city boundary, however with such a tight boundary this is not always possible. 83.6% of children in care are placed within 20 miles of Nottingham whereas 16.4% are placed over miles from Nottingham. Nottingham City Council is currently undertaking a piece of work with Nottingham Business School to try and understand why people become foster carers and why people fall away having initially signed up as a foster carer;
- (j) With regards to children leaving care provision, between now and the end of January 2016, 26 young people will be leaving care due to turning 18 years of age. The Council Leaving Care Provision ensures all young people between the ages of 18 and 25 years get the best support possible during their transition to becoming care leavers. Each young person is assigned a Personal Advisor who is available to support young people and ensure their Pathway Plan is adhered to and amended appropriately;
- (k) There has been a marked improvement on educational achievement of children in care for the academic year 2014/15 and the Council continues to recognise the achievements of its children in care cohort through its annual Big it Up events. Two events were held, including a daytime outdoors fun-day event aimed towards the young cohort, as well as an evening awards event aimed at the Council's older cohort and care leavers;
- (l) This month also marked the launch of the 5th annual 'Have Your Say' survey, the results of which are used to shape service delivery and influence the Council's strategic priorities;
- (m) Nottingham City Council has developed the Children in Care Council Recognition Scheme and was launched in September to recognise the many contributions that Children in Care Council members offer through regular attendance. At the end of the year, Children in Care Council members are presented with a certificate to celebrate their achievement;
- (n) All internal residential homes are currently graded by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding and work is underway to maintain and improve grades where possible.

RESOLVED to

- (1) thank Steve Comb for his informative presentation on Children in Care at Nottingham City Council;**
- (2) receive a report in the future on the outcomes of work with Nottingham Business School on fostering in the city;**
- (3) review the findings of the Children in Care Council Have Your Say Survey results at a future meeting.**

6 WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer, introduced a report of the Head of Democratic Services seeking to establish the programme of activity for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year for 2015/16.

RESOLVED to

- (1) review Child Sexual Exploitation, Safeguarding in Schools, and a review of Exclusions at the next Committee scheduled for 22 December 2015;**
- (2) agree the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for 2015/16, as summarised in the report.**

7 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED to meet on the following Tuesday's at 10.00 am:

2015

22 December

2016

**16 January
12 April**