

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held in the Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 17 May 2016 from 11.00 am - 12.39 pm**

#### Membership

##### Present

Councillor Azad Choudhry  
Councillor Josh Cook  
Councillor Georgina Culley  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Neghat Khan  
Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)  
Councillor Chris Tansley

##### Absent

Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim

#### Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor David Mellen	- Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years
Councillor Sam Webster	- Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills
Maria Ward	- NVCS Networks Officer for Children and Young People
Alison Michalska	- Corporate Director for Children and Adults
Helen Blackman	- Director of Children's Social Care
Steve Comb	- Head of Children in Care
Anne Partington	- Children in Care Placements Manager
Pat Fielding	- Joint Director of Education
Rav Kalsi	- Senior Governance Officer
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	- Governance Officer

#### 1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

**RESOLVED for Councillor Glyn Jenkins to be appointed Vice-Chair for the 2016/17 municipal year.**

#### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

#### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

#### 4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2016 were confirmed as a true record by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

## **5 OUT OF AREA PLACEMENTS**

Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years introduced a presentation on out of local authority area placements, and was supported by Steve Comb, Head of Children in Care, Alison Michalska, Corporate Director for Children and Adults, Helen Blackman, Director of Children's Social Care and Anne Partington, Children in Care Placements Manager.

- (a) Usually there are approximately 590 Nottingham City children in care at any one time. In addition to the children placed at care homes, between 440 and 450 young people are placed in foster care which may be within the City or elsewhere;
- (b) The City Council seeks to place 85% of children in care within a 25 mile radius of the City although this is not always possible. There are a number of reasons why children and young people are placed outside of the City and further than 25 miles, including:
- in order to safeguard a child's wellbeing;
  - to ensure that siblings can stay together;
  - in order to place a child with wider family members;
  - to receive specialist care which meet the needs of the child and cannot be provided in or close to the City.
- (c) When a child is placed further than 25 miles of the City challenges are heightened with regard to:
- the child's contact with their family;
  - differences in process and procedures if services are provided by a different Local Authority;
  - co-ordination of combined support services;
  - additional social worker time travelling and associated costs;
  - co-ordination of the transition to adulthood for young person who may be returning to Nottingham.
- (d) Anne Partington, Head of the Placements Team, commented that as part of their role, her team act as brokers for commissioning services. Some of the fostering agencies within the City which are engaged by the City Council (as there are not always suitable City foster carers available) also provide services to other local authorities for children outside of Nottingham City. The Placement Team are working to encourage such local independent providers to make placing local children locally a priority;
- (e) There is an ongoing focus on recruiting more local foster carers. With a broader view, the East Midlands Regional Children's Framework is being developed and includes regional discussions about placements for our children and young people with most complex needs;
- (f) As of 9 May 2016:
- 197 (33%) of the City's children in care were placed in Nottingham;

- 209(36%) were placed within Nottinghamshire;
  - 106 (18% within the East Midlands;
  - 49 (8%) within England;
  - 27 (5%) placed confidentially;
  - 2 (0%) in Wales.
- (g) When a child or young person is placed out of area, under Regional Protocol, the Placements Team must provide written information to the placement Local Authority of:
- the child's name and date of birth;
  - legal status;
  - contact details for Social Care / Independent Reviewing Officer;
  - details of any Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).
- (h) Steve Comb, Head of Children in Care, informed the Committee that even though a child may not be resident in City, the City Council remains the corporate parent whilst the host local authority in the area which the child is placed, takes responsibility under Section 47 or Local Authority Designated Officer enquiries;
- (i) A weekly Placement Panel is held to consider and determine the most appropriate placements for individual children. The panel can also arrange for additional assessments of placements to ensure that they meet the particular needs of young people. The 2014 OFSTED report 'at a distance' highlights the issues of out of area placement risks.

The following information was provided in response to comments and questions from the Committee:

- (j) During the past two years the number of Nottingham's children in care has remained fairly stable fluctuating between 580 and 600. There are direct and indirect cost implications with regard to out of area placements, but the cost of servicing the placement, including social work visits, time and pressure also have a financial impact which can be very difficult to quantify;
- (k) Every effort is made to ensure that out of area placed children receive an appropriately high standard of care so placements are continuously monitored; however this results in a further financial impact. Nottingham City Council spends approximately £33 million on children in care placements. The lowest cost provision is within the City Council, rising significantly with independent fostering and care home provision;
- (l) If an in-area placement were to become available, a child placed out of area would not necessarily be moved unless it was specifically in their interests. Children in care need a stable support workforce, including social workers to provide consistency and with whom to develop a relationship;
- (m) Children in out of area placement care are visited at least every six weeks by their nominated social worker and may also receive additional telephone contact. Independent Reviewing Officer will also have contact with the child to discuss any

- issues or concerns a child may have while ensuring child safety and appropriate progress;
- (n) If a child goes missing, the corporate parent, the responsible authority and police are informed;
  - (o) The City Council is exploring the potential to expand its internal care homes estate via the 'make or buy' panel which investigates and recommends financially viable routes for providing services. If the proposal is accepted, there is the potential for the City Council to develop an income by offering safe and appropriate children in care placements to other local authorities. Nottingham City Homes continues to provide valuable support and has identified properties suitable for small children's homes.

**RESOLVED to thank those in attendance for the informative report and to note its content.**

## **6 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION MODEL 2016/17**

Councillor Sam Webster, Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills and Pat Fielding, Director of Education, introduced a presentation on alternative funding arrangements for high pupil needs, proposed by central government which will be trialled in some Nottingham schools for 2016/17. The following points were highlighted:

- (a) It is proposed that schools take charge of commissioning alternative provision to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, as outlined in the White Paper National Funding Formula and High Needs Consultation. The proposal was considered by the schools Forum on 25 April 2016 and is considered in line with the national direction of travel for schools to take more accountability and work more closely with their young people;
- (b) It is suggested that if schools have direct access to funding they will be better able to swiftly identify potential challenging behaviour problems and react to prevent exclusions, raising standards and improving outcomes for students. The current funding system is not transparent but needs to get funding straight to schools with a transparent, simple, predictable process and it is not appropriate, or necessary, for the Local Authority to continue to be involved as a third party with regard to this funding;
- (c) Stage 2 of the consultation has now commenced and the Local Authority, with partners, will construct an appropriate Service Level Agreement to accompany the devolution of funding. The overall circumstances for schools has changed including an influx of pupils from other countries and the resulting pressures on schools and while there may be many variances gives a higher exclusion rate in schools within some of the more challenging communities;
- (d) Permanent exclusions have increased significantly from 27 in 2012/13 to 107 in 2014/15 which is an unsustainable increase. Under the current arrangements, the number of exclusions is very carefully monitored at a central point and schools may be challenged if the rate is considered a particular concern. In previous years some schools have received penalties for 'over exclusion';

- (e) The City Council has just two years and £1 million to ensure that the funding model is in place and that schools and trusts are able to work together to ensure effective operation. £5.5 million will be required from schools Forum to ensure that the model will work with funds shared out up front with a minimum of £25,000 to each school as a result of a formula which is predicted to be based on population and deprivation factors; including the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals;

**RESOLVED to consider an update on the implementation of the Alternative Provision Model in 2017/18.**

## **7 WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

Rav Kalsi, Senior Governance Officer presented the report which outlined future topics for consideration during 2016/17.

During the Committee's discussion of potential topics, the following were proposed:

- (a) Edge of Care;
- (b) Leaving Care, including the impact of new pending legislation;
- (c) Support for young carers in Nottingham;
- (d) Sex and relationship education, subject to no duplication with Health Scrutiny work programme;
- (e) Youth provision, including youth centres;
- (f) How Special Educational Needs are supported;
- (g) Social worker accreditation/ fitness to practice and the potential re-introduction of a regulatory framework.

**RESOLVED to agree the Work Programme for 2016/17 and to consider an update to the Programme for Scrutiny at the next meeting on 19 July 2016.**

## **8 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

**RESOLVED for the Committee to meet at 11am on the following dates:**

<b><u>2016</u></b>	<b><u>2017</u></b>
<b>19 July</b>	<b>17 January</b>
<b>20 September</b>	<b>21 March</b>
<b>22 November</b>	