

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 20 November 2018 from 11.34 am - 1.05 pm**

#### **Membership**

##### Present

Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Jim Armstrong  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Carole-Ann Jones (as substitute)

##### Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson (Chair)  
Councillor Azad Choudhry  
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim  
Councillor Brian Parbutt (sent substitute)  
Councillor Georgia Power  
Councillor Chris Tansley

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

Steph Brannigan - Parent Champion - Small Steps Big Changes  
Karla Capstick - Programme Director - Small Steps Big Changes  
Zena West - Senior Governance Officer  
Councillor David Mellen - Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years

#### **23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim – unwell  
Councillor Sue Johnson – unwell  
Councillor Brian Parbutt – work commitments (Councillor Carole-Ann Jones sent as substitute)  
Councillor Georgia Power – work commitments  
Councillor Christ Tansley – unwell

In the absence of Councillor Sue Johnson, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Glyn Jenkins.

#### **24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **25 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 18 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **26 SCRUTINY OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR EARLY INTERVENTION AND EARLY YEARS**

Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years, updated the Committee on the performance of targets within the Council Plan which fall under his Portfolio remit, as per the PowerPoint presentation circulated with the

first publication of the minutes. The Plan was started in 2015 and is coming to an end in April 2019. Councillor David Mellen highlighted the following points:

- (a) out of 29 targets, one is red (target will be missed), one is amber (target may be met), and the rest are green (target will be met);
- (b) Primary Parliaments are now held twice per term as there is so much demand from young people to be getting involved. Meetings are also regularly held of the Children in Care Council and the Youth council. Young people are always involved in the recruitment process for senior staff within children's services, and the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Council regularly attend and report to the Corporate Parenting Board;
- (c) the Priority Families programme (the government Troubled Families scheme) supports families to avoid children having to be taken into care. Nottingham City Council is working to protect youth play services, children's centres, social services and children's services from cuts;
- (d) the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme's initial target was rather ambitious, and the project would have cost £500,000.00 if that target was met. However the number of children receiving books through the scheme has more than doubled since 2015 and it is a positive achievement to be proud of. Part of the scheme is funded by Small Steps Big Changes, with the rest funded by businesses, voluntary and religious groups, and individual donations;
- (e) previously the coalition government had announced free school meals for children aged 5-7, and it looked like this would be extended to all primary school aged children. As this has not been extended, Nottingham City Council is now no longer in a financial position to make that commitment, so this target is amber;
- (f) all primary schools in the City did at one point have a breakfast club, however some have now stopped in recent months. Summer holiday hunger is an ongoing issue, with Nottingham City Council working closely with local business and charities to tackle its impact. There is increased child poverty, and more families have referred for support in recent months;
- (g) in the last 6 months there's been a slight reduction from February 2018's peak of children in care, and Nottingham City Council is bucking the national trend at the moment. Priority Families funding is not guaranteed past 2020, the case is continuing to be made to central government that this funding is valuable and is helping in Nottingham;
- (h) the introduction of Universal Credit has been a particular issue for Nottingham citizens. Access is online only, and the change to budgeting monthly has been challenging for some. The introduction of additional free early year's childcare (low income families have 15 hours free from 2 years old, everybody gets 3 hours free from 3 years old) has proved useful for parents, but the nurseries don't receive as much as if they were paid direct from the family, so some

nurseries are struggling financially. The number of “bumped up” hours has reduced so nursery funding has as well;

- (i) Nottingham City Council tries to give every child they work with a Christmas present, not just those in care. There is ongoing work to ensure young people have opportunities to get into employment. For example on Youth Takeover Day, a young care leaver who had trained in catering came and ran the Loxley House kitchen. Care leavers sometimes spend Christmas by themselves, so care leavers hampers have been provided for the last 3 years;
- (j) a new initiative called My Bag, started by foster carers, provides a bag with useful contents (such as a toy, a toothbrush, a book) and one empty bag for adding any of the child’s possessions that can come with them;
- (k) foster carers recruitment continues, from 135 foster carers in 2015 to 185 now, changing the balance from using agency staff to City Council carers. Programmes have been lead in conjunction with churches and religious organisations to encourage more people to sign up.

Following questions and comments from the Committee, some additional information was provided:

- (l) some targets have confusing figures, for examples the target to have 90 children in care finding a permanent home through adoption is 90, however it is showing as green even though the figure is currently 35. This is because the figure of 35 was obtained halfway through the year, and there is usually an uplift towards the end of the year, so projections show that 90 is likely to be achieved;
- (m) it is hoped that the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme will be continued in the next Council Plan, but a more realistic target will be set. Bath University is currently conducting a study on its impact in the UK, however evidence from the United States of America (where the scheme has been running much longer) has shown a marked improvement in literacy levels where the scheme is taken up;
- (n) only two targets within the Early Intervention and Early Years Portfolio will not be met. As demand for services increases and resources are reduced, smarter working and embracing of new initiatives will be required to meet demand in the future;
- (o) sometimes multiple children will be removed from the same parents, so Nottingham City Council has started working with Pause who provide intense counselling, support and contraceptive advice. Some parents have had the capacity to parent their further children. Schemes which have worked in other Local Authority areas are being considered;
- (p) if a perpetrator aged under 18 who is not previously known to the Local Authority receives a custodial sentence, between their arrest and sentencing (whilst on remand), Nottingham City Council pays the costs. This is often not a cost that can be anticipated, and it seems imbalanced that costs for those

aged 18 or over are borne by the Law and Order services. Local Authorities do not pay any costs toward young people in young offenders' institutes permanently, only those there on remand awaiting trial or sentencing. Funding is received based on remand rates two years previously so it's not practical or predictable

**RESOLVED TO:**

- (1) thank Councillor David Mellen for presenting performance information on targets within his Portfolio remit, and note the information provided;**
- (2) congratulate Councillor Mellen on the success of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme, and the lasting positive impact that receiving a book addressed to them each month may have on Nottingham children.**

**27 SMALL STEPS BIG CHANGES PROGRAMME**

Councillor David Mellen – Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years, Karla Capstick - Programme Director at Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC), and Steph Brannigan – Parent Champion for SSBC, presented an update on the Programme, as per the PowerPoint slides circulated with the first publication of the minutes. They highlighted the following points:

- (a) SSBC is funded by a lottery grant of £45,000,000.00 over a 10 year period to work with parents in four key wards. It is a large amount of money and a chance to work intensely and make a difference, and do things in a slightly different way;
- (b) the board is made up of 30-40, around half of whom are parents from those wards. There is a strong partnership with parents and professionals. The programme is about to enter its fourth year, so not yet halfway through;
- (c) the SSBC motto is “Growing our children together with love and respect”. Parents are engaged to make decisions, lead the programme, and are supported and guided by experts;
- (d) in terms of performance, cross partnership system change is the most difficult target to measure. Hopefully these early support schemes will help those children throughout their childhood, education, career and lives, supporting families and their children to thrive and reducing the need and cost for care interventions later down the line;
- (e) work takes place with local parent champions within communities. Aspley and St Anns each have one parent champion vacancy at the moment. Parents also play a vital part in scoring and developing tenders. SSBC tries to work as closely with the parents in those communities as possible, developing genuine co-production. Parent champions are voted into post by other parents in the community and have a 2 year term, after which they can stand for re-election if they wish;

- (f) 35 volunteers have moved on to paid employment. There are currently 50 family mentors, but this will be expanding soon to coincide with upcoming ward boundary changes. These are paid roles, with 80% of family mentors living in those areas where they help;
- (g) currently SSMC is reaching 69% of families within the wards, which is slowly rising as children age as it is a from birth service. The rate is 72% in areas where it's been running longer. Those families may be receiving books, visiting support groups, or receiving support visits. This is on top of statutory and other services offered universally, such as health visitors, children's centres, priority families, family support, targeted services for teen parents etc;
- (h) 91% of those families surveyed would recommend the service. There has been positive feedback from those who've accessed the support, with some going on to volunteer or work with SSBC. There have been over 45,600 interactions, over 62,480 books delivered, and 1,200 children attending groups;
- (i) it is recognised that there is a need to do some re-focusing work, now that SSBC has been operating for three years. There is a chance to pause and reflect on the priorities for the next three or four years. The Lottery's priorities have included increased reach. Some of the children will be starting school soon, so it is hoped that evidence can be gathered around the impact on those children when they attend nursery or school;
- (j) a national evaluation is being conducted by Warwick University to evaluate all five schemes across the country. Locally, Nottingham Trent University has been commissioned to evaluate the Nottingham programme, to analyse what has worked/not worked, why/why not?

Following questions and comments from the Committee, some further information was provided:

- (k) the SSMC programme is offered by health visitors. There is also publicity in wards (though more is needed), and parents are referred by word of mouth from parent champions and colleagues in Early Help and Early Years as well. Signposting help would also be welcomed from Councillors for the four wards;
- (l) the four wards were chosen by specific criteria set by the Lottery fund, such as levels of deprivation and numbers of children and adults. There is an agreement that all children within Hyson Green will be able to access the programme after the ward boundary changes;
- (m) the programme is on track to move towards the intended objectives over the 10 years. It is too early to say whether targets will definitely be met, but outcomes are going in the right direction and improving at a suitable pace;
- (n) in terms of local employment, around 80% of people employed by SSBC live within the city boundary. Some people don't want to work in the area they live to avoid coming into contact with people they know, but a lot do live and work in the area they work in. 80% is positive and SSBC are pleased with the figure;

- (o) staff and volunteers from SSBC are happy to attend any local events to raise awareness of the service, and any suggestions are welcomed;
- (p) the success of the programme will reinforce the value of spending money early on children and families, and will perhaps be worked into services offered by other organisations nationwide in future after the 10 year programme has ended.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) thank Karla Capstick, Steph Brannigan and Councillor David Mellen for their update, and to note the information;**
- (2) invite Small Steps Big Changes back to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee when information is available from qualitative evaluations concerning outcomes at school age.**

**28 WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

Zena West, Senior Governance Officer, presented the Work Programme for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year, which was unchanged from the agenda.