

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board - Children and Young People held on Tuesday, 24 May 2022 at 10.30 am in Conference Room A/B, Cumbria House.

PRESENT:

Mr P Dew (Chair)

Mrs C Bowditch
Mrs S Evans
Mrs EA Mallinson
Mr CP Turner

Mr K Hitchen (Vice-Chair)
Ms C McCarron-Holmes
Mr GRPM Roberts

Also in Attendance:-

Mr D Barton	-	Assistant Director - Education and Skills
Mrs F Musgrave	-	Assistant Director - Integration and Partnerships
Mr J Rasbash	-	Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor
Ms S Starmer	-	Interim Service Manager - Youth Offending Service
Mr D Hamilton	-	Democratic Services Officer

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dr K Lockney, Mr B McEwan and Mrs V O’Dea.

2 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair asked members to note that Mr K Hitchen had appointed Vice-Chair of the Board.

3 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest made on this occasion.

4 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items of business on the agenda.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED that, the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 February 2022 be agreed as an accurate and complete record.

6 CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION REPORT

Members considered a report from Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships which provided an update to the Board regarding the progress of the Cumbria Children's Participation Framework, as well as providing an overview of the work undertaken during the Covid pandemic and key developmental activity.

The Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships explained that the participation strategy prioritised the active involvement of children and young people in experiences, opportunities and decisions that affected their lives. Members heard that work to embed a culture of participation was a key priority in the framework to ensure the service was able to create opportunities for sharing good practice around participation activity.

Following the sign off of the participation framework on 2 March 2021, it was agreed that the participation officers would move from the oversight of Assistant Director - Children and Families to the Assistant Director - Integration and Partnerships to sit alongside the Children's Rights Officers, resulting in a wider Rights and Participation Service.

The Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships acknowledged the importance of having children and young people know that their voices had been listened to and what actions have been taken because of their involvement. Strategic lead for participation reports into Children's DMT, and also links with local area committees and local children's partnerships. Members heard that it was also a priority to ensure the engagement of members of the Scrutiny Board and it was **AGREED** that regular updates would be brought before the members of the Board.

Members asked whether the Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships would consider whether young people with autism or learning difficulties of all types who might require an advocate to speak on their behalf. The Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships agreed that this would allow for the participation of many more children and young people with learning difficulties.

A discussion took place whereby members praised the report for its engagement with a wide array of local stakeholders and for being consistently guided by the voice of the child or young person throughout.

Members discussed the importance of championing the role of the Children's Rights Officers and the Participation Framework in general and ensure that it's learning and achievements be promoted to the new Unitary Authorities.

Members asked whether young people's opinions had been sought on the topic of Local Government Reorganisation. The Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships explained that a Q&A had taken place with officers from Children's Services. Members heard that the three areas that young people were most concerned about were:-

- Transport to school
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Social workers and where they would be based.

The Chair asked that young people be invited to the Board in the future to participate in the briefings. The Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships agreed and suggested arranging it around school holidays. It was **AGREED** that the Our Promise E-Learning course be shared to members.

RESOLVED that,

- 1) members note the progress being undertaken regarding the implementation of the framework as well as noting the work still to do.
- 2) members promote the Participation Framework and ensure that it is central to the discussions around services in the new authorities.
- 3) members undertake the E-Learning Our Promise training and the face-to-face training developed by the Children in Care Council.
- 4) members to note that being involved in their local communities is important to young people, and support opportunities through local area committees for their voice to be heard and engage them in local projects

7 YOUTH JUSTICE UPDATE

Members considered an update from the Youth Offending and Prevention Officer which highlighted the key themes of the Youth Justice Strategy.

A presentation was delivered which highlighted the following areas:-

- Child First approach – prioritising the best interest of the child/young person

- Achievements – Strong performance in targets areas, increased support and oversight, all staff and volunteers trained in AIM3, more targeted intervention and data analysis, participation agenda and strengthened management board
- What we have delivered – Reducing first time entrants, low custody rates, reduced reoffending
- Measuring impact - 82% of those asked said that the Youth Offending Service had given them excellent or good help, 100% of those asked felt they were treated with respect by their case officer.
- Looking forward - Increased government funding and support for Youth Justice services, Impact of LGR: *Option of one Youth Offending Service*, Support to staff to ensure service delivery.

The Chair thanked the Youth Offending and Prevention Officer for the positive report and the achievements of the Youth Offending Service. A discussion then took place about the importance of engaging with the public to ensure their understanding of the Child First approach.

Following a question from members regarding the preventative approach to anti-social behaviour. It was proposed by the Assistant Director - Integration and Partnerships that some joint work take place with the Community Safety Group on the topic. It was **AGREED** that the Community Safety Group work with the Youth Offending Service on the prevention of antisocial behaviour.

The Youth Offending and Prevention Officer was asked about national youth justice trends and it was explained that the rate of first time offenders was reducing nationally and Cumbria was in line with national trends. In response to a follow up question the Youth Offending and Prevention Officer stated that this trend was a continued downward trend and was not simply as a result of the Covid pandemic and its resultant lockdowns.

RESOLVED that, members note the report.

8 LGR UPDATE

Members considered a presentation on the delivery of Local Government Reorganisation and the ongoing work to ensure that children and young people are put at the heart of the process.

The presentation highlighted the following areas:-

- Working with service leads and their teams
- Considering potential for service configuration in more detail, with starting premise as disaggregation
- Engaging with system leaders/partners to consider shared arrangements and alternative models where appropriate
- Mindful that any proposals for shared or alternative models is a decision for the two shadow councils
- Children’s Programme Board – Independent report
- Baseline Capture

- Determining Day 1 Requirements
- Options and Appraisals
- Discussions with the wider system
- Design Phase
- Further follow up sessions with the technical leads e.g. IT, HR
- Relationships with new Members
- Continuing our conversations with system leaders and partners
- Delivering improvements and Business as Usual

In response to a question, members heard from the Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships that discussion were taking place regarding whether the to keep the strategic partnerships team as one service or whether it should be divided between the new authorities based upon geography. The Assistant Director – Education and Skills explained that the footprint of the School Improvement Service was similarly being discussed.

A discussion took place regarding staff morale whereby members were assured that every opportunity was being taken through a range of mechanisms to keep staff as informed as possible and that wrap-around support was being provided.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director – Education and Skills for the detailed presentation.

RESOLVED that, members note the contents of the report.

9 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

Members received the written statements of the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services and the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Learning.

10 BOARD BRIEFING

Members considered a report from the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor which provided an overview of the Board’s business and opportunities for further scrutiny.

RESOLVED that,

- 1) members noted the contents of the report
- 2) members agreed the agenda for the next meeting of the Board.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board – Children and Young People will take place on 21 October 2022 at Cumbria House, Carlisle.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified