

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Councillor Bridgeman(Chairperson)
Councillors Cunnah, Hopkins, Joyce, Melbourne, Molik, Phillips,
Mia Rees and Singh

94 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Patricia Arlotte and Mia John. Councillor Molik had advised that she would be late joining the meeting.

95 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

96 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

97 : VALLEYS, VALE & CARDIFF ADOPTION COLLABORATIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Members were advised that this agenda item provided them with the opportunity to review the Annual Report of the Regional Adoption Service for 2020/21.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Families and Children; Angela Harris, Regional Adoption Manager; Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and Communities; and Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member and Regional Adoption Manager to make statements, after which he invited questions, comments, observations, and comments from Members.

With reference to harder to place children, Members asked whether there was a link between the Children Looked After and those placed on the Child Protection Register. Officers explained that there was a link between the harder to place children including Children aged over 4 years, sibling groups, those with complex needs and from different ethnic backgrounds. Officers assured Members that the issue was discussed regularly locally and at a National level.

Members noted the challenges faced by Valleys, Vale & Cardiff Adoption Service and asked what the main areas of concern were. Members were advised that the main challenges were Post Adoption Support and placing children with increasingly complex needs meant the Service faced hidden and critical costs.

Members discussed funding and whether the Welsh Government grant was sustainable, Members noted that the issue of funding was on the National agenda.

Members referred to the information in the Annual report particularly the graphs and data and sought clarity around the term 'other' used in relation to Children and Young People on the register for over 6 months. Officers agreed to consider the use of this term.

Members asked if there had been any benchmarking or comparison undertaken with Core Cities. Officers explained that this was something they could look into and bring back to a future Committee. Officers also offered to bring anonymous case studies to a future Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

98 : YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE UPDATE

Members were advised that this Item was to receive an update on the Youth Justice Service and progress of the "All Our Futures" Strategy.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Families and Children; Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and Communities; Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services; Graham Robb, Independent Chair of the Youth Justice Board; and Angharad Thomas, Operational Manager, Youth Justice Service to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member and Operational Manager, Youth Justice Service to make statements, after which he invited questions, comments, observations, and comments from Members.

Members welcomed the new role of the Operational Manager who would focus on prevention and partnerships and be instrumental in developing the Prevention Strategy; Members asked for an update on this as soon as was appropriate.

Members discussed the variety of partners that could work with the service and what role/value they would bring. Members were advised that there would be a session early in the new year focussing on this area.

Members noted the references to Crime Stoppers, Starting Well Project, Bright Futures and Cardiff Commitment. Members welcomed the offer of a presentation to a future Committee on the Starting Well Project.

Members noted the use of the resettlement tracker as a means of assuring that the pertinent services are offered at the point of leaving the Youth Justice Service.

Members noted that more work was to be done to look at the offences and what might have happened prior to them being committed, what factors had influenced that behaviour. Members welcomed the prevention and intervention approach taken.

A discussion took place around Child Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Exploitation in relation to cases in the Youth Justice Service. Members noted that this was a

complex issue with many influencing factors. Members also noted the many pieces of work being undertaken on this and asked that they are kept up to date on this issue.

Referring to Mental Health, Members understood that this was a significant factor in the Youth Justice Service. Officers provided more detail on this including Additional Learning Needs and Emotional Needs and Members were advised of the UHB Health Needs Assessment, Members asked for more information on this.

Members referred to the Report Card with Education and asked for more information on this, as to what was being offered and what was being taken up.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

99 : CHILDREN'S SERVICE - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE

Members considered this item along with the following item 'Children's Services Review' together.

Members were advised that these items enabled them to review the 2021/22 Quarter 2 Performance results for Children's Services and to consider the information set out in the Committee papers on issues in Children's Services, including current pressures. In addition, Members had received a copy of the current Children's Services Strategy and were able to consider options for its review and explore opportunities to be part of the development of the new Children's Services Strategy during 2022.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement after which Members were asked if they had any questions, comments or observations to make.

Members noted the significant amount of work that had been undertaken by the Service despite the huge pressures they were under and wished to thank the staff for all their hard work in such challenging times.

Members welcomed the Service Area's commitment to remodelling the Service and working with Resources in relation to the financial remodelling.

Members discussed funding and asked that they are kept abreast about Cardiff lobbying Welsh Government for future funding.

Officers informed Members of various reviews that were being undertaken. Members asked that they are kept informed about these and that Committee receives outputs from the Front Door Review, the Commissioned System Review and the Audit of Adolescent Services by the Advocacy Panel.

Members were keen to work with the Service Area in a Task and Finish Group to look at the reviews and the development of the Children's Services Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations during the way forward.

100 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW

101 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None Received.

102 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18th January 2022.

The meeting terminated at 7.50 pm