

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 DECEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),  
Councillors Cunnah, Joyce, Naughton, Parkhill, Phillips and Singh

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative),  
Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor Representative) and  
Matthew Richards (Parent Governor Representative)

Connor Clarke (Youth Council Representative)

### 18 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Linda Morgan and Rhys Taylor and from Carol Cobert (Church Representative)

### 19 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Phillips declared a personal interest in Item 4 on the basis that the family have engaged with some of the services covered in the item.

### 20 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 8 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

### 21 : EARLY HELP AND PREVENTION BRIEFING

The item enables Members to be briefed on the progress being made in the implementation of the Early Help and Prevention Service.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families), Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services) Jane Thomas (Assistant Director, Adult Services) and Avril Hooper (Operational Manager, Early Help) to the meeting. Members were shown a video detailing the impact of the Early Help Service.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed the detail of the new model; what has changed and what is to be achieved. Members were advised that the development of a new system was important to bring together a variety of multi-agency provision with the aim of reducing the impact of adverse childhood experiences on well-being. Of particular concern was the access to and contact with the various services. The new model now provides families with a single point of contact be via telephone, email, text or the internet and from there contact can be made with the correct team. Members were advised that there is adequate resource and that the case load is being managed. Currently there are targets for the calls received,

they are also monitored for training purposes. There are no targets for intervention, however, there is to be a quality framework.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

## 22 : REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

This report provided Members with the opportunity of reviewing the Annual Report of the Regional Adoption Service.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families), Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services) and Angela Harris (Regional Adoption Manager) to the meeting. Angela Harris presented her report.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed the number of children, 35, who had been placed outside of the region and the reasons for that. It was noted that there is still a lack of adopters, particularly when dealing with sibling groups, children and young people with additional learning needs and older children. This is a national problem. Members noted the need to better engage with both BME and faith communities to encourage adopters.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

## 23 : CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

This item enables Members to review and assess the Committee's Annual Report prior to being laid before Council.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families), Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills & Chair of the Committee), Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director, Children Services) and Natasha Hilderley (Operational Manager, Children Services) to the meeting. Natasha Hilderley presented the report.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

## 24 : YOUNG OFFENDERS PROGRESS REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families), Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director, Children Services) and Finn Madell (Operational Manager, Restorative / Leaving / Edge of Care, Children Services).

Finn Madell, who took up post in September of this year present the briefing to Members.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members noted that there had been 9 robberies in this particular quarter. Members were advised that it is hoped that that is not the start of an upward trend, the figure is unusually high and that further analysis is required in relation to reasons for that.
- Members discussed resources to support County Line. Members were advised that work is ongoing with the Youth Service Community Safety Board and that an Adolescent Strategy is being developed.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

## 25 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE REPORT

The report provides the Committee with performance information for the second quarter of 2019/20 and enables an assessment of the progress being made in improving outcomes for children in need and children being looked after.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families), and Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director, Children Services)

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed both the recruitment of foster carers and also the recruitment and retention of social workers. Members were advised that there were currently 28 applications foster carer applications being processed. It was noted that it is very difficult to reduce the assessment period to under 6 months.

Members were advised that currently the percentage of social work vacancies are not improving. The recruitment drive is still ongoing.

AGREED – That Members noted the report.

26 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members are asked to agree the Committee's Forward Work Programme for the next regular meeting together with an indicative list for the following 3 months.

AGREED – To approve the contents of the updated Forward Work Programme.

27 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled.

28 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee is on Tuesday 14 January 2020 at 5.00 pm, and that the Budget Scrutiny meeting will take place on Tuesday 18 February 2020 at 10.30 am.

The meeting terminated at 4.00 pm