

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 20 July 2015

**PRESENT:** Councillors Chris Rosling-Josephs (Chair), Nasima Akther, John Booker, Steve Jones, Mohammad Maroof, Karen McGowan, Pat Midgley, Chris Peace, Lynn Rooney, Colin Ross, Ian Saunders, Jack Scott, Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair) and Denise Reaney (Substitute Member)

*Non-Council Members in attendance:-*

Jules Jones, Education Non-Council Voting Member  
Joan Stratford, Education Non-Council Voting Member  
Alison Warner, Education Non-Council Member

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### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families), Councillor Katie Condliffe (with Councillor Denise Reaney attending as her substitute), Councillor Aodan Marken and Gillian Foster (Education Non-Council Voting Member).

### **2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 Councillor Jack Scott declaration a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 7 (The Police and Crime Plan and Current Issues) as he was the Chief Executive of Home-Start Sheffield, which had received a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner, but chose to remain in the meeting due the nature of the item under discussion.

### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015, were approved as correct records and there were no matters arising.

### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

5.1 In response to a series of questions from Diana Stimely, requesting statistical information regarding investigations into Child Sexual Exploitation, Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, stated that these issues would be covered in his report and he would speak to her outside the

meeting if necessary.

## **6. THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN AND CURRENT ISSUES**

- 6.1 Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), reported on the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan 2013/17, which had been renewed in March 2015, and current issues. Also in attendance for this item was Sally Parkin, Office of the PCC.
- 6.2 Dr Billings explained that the Police had to show him how they had put the Police and Crime Plan into practice, so that he could then hold them to account, and that he had deliberately kept the Plan concise and brief. The aim of the Plan was that South Yorkshire would be and feel a safe place to live, learn and work, with the strategic priorities being protecting vulnerable people, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and enabling fair treatment, with safety being a common thread. The Plan did not contain any targets for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and was outcome focused, rather than target driven. In relation to protecting vulnerable people, Dr Billings emphasised the need to adopt a wider definition to account for such issues as the ageing population and increased use of the internet.
- 6.3 Dr Billings went on to refer to the difficult financial situation, where the Police had been affected by grant reductions, with continued reductions expected. He added that there were two particular difficulties in South Yorkshire, the first of these relating to the funding formula, with South Yorkshire receiving 80% of its funding from the Government and only 20% from the precept. Consequently, when Government funding was cut, this represented a bigger proportion of the funding in South Yorkshire. It was also unlikely that the Government would tilt the funding formula in favour of urban areas. The second particular funding challenge in South Yorkshire related to the 'legacy issues' of Hillsborough, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Orgreave. In relation to Hillsborough, the PCC was legally obliged to fund the representation and participation of the Chief Constable, the Match Commanders on the day and a small number of others, in the inquests and inquiries. There was provision for the Home Office to refund these sums, but it was never envisaged that something on this scale would occur. There were separate inquests presently taking place at Warrington into the deaths of each of the 96 victims and, if a verdict of unlawful killing was found, then it may be that further actions would take place, so officers would need further representation. The costs so far had been £17m, of which the Home Secretary would fund £10.7m, thus leaving a gap. Dr Billings had contacted the Home Secretary, with a view to meeting her to discuss this shortfall. In relation to CSE, some Police Officers had been referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and the National Crime Agency investigation in Rotherham was expected to go on for up to three years at a cost of £3m-£5m per year

and discussions were taking place in relation to funding this.

6.4 Members made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-

- There was still a strong district identification in the four South Yorkshire Police Divisions and getting cross-fertilisation was not easy. Steps were being taken to achieve more cohesion across the area, with the review by Professor John Drew into South Yorkshire Police responses to CSE looking at practice across the whole area. In addition, the number of staff engaged in public protection had been increased, there had been co-location of staff in Rotherham, which was to be extended to Sheffield, and specialist training for CSE officers was being developed, using feedback from the Victims' and Survivors' Panel.
- Statistics on the progress of legal proceedings in relation to CSE could be found on the South Yorkshire Police website. There had been a number of arrests in the past three weeks and these would move towards Court cases. It should be noted that the Police were getting better in relation to prevention work. It was also important to ensure that the figures were not distorted, as most child abuse had been shown to take place in the family, and there was also the issue of online grooming.
- The Advisory Panel for Minority Communities (formerly the Black and Minority Ethnic Advisory Panel) would be asked to consider how the Police would ensure fair treatment in relation to the enforcement of such items as dispersal orders. It was hoped that the Committee membership could also be broadened to include members of the Roma/Slovak community, but different ways were being considered in relation to the involvement of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender community. Funding for diversionary activities had been reduced dramatically, but the Yorkshire Community Foundation ran a small grants scheme on behalf of the Commissioner and had some funding available.
- A small team of Police Officers in South Yorkshire were funded by the Home Office to work on the Prevent agenda, which related to preventing terrorism. This team worked with local authority officers and undertook visits to schools and colleges.
- As part of his report, Professor John Drew would look at the figures quoted in the media for the number of CSE victims/survivors and would meet with the retired Police Officer who had been quoted on BBC News as having information in relation to the numbers of victims/survivors and perpetrators. In so far as Rotherham was concerned, the National Crime Agency would be going through the relevant files.

- The numbers working in the Public Protection Units were reviewed continually, but it was getting increasingly difficult to find people to work in these areas due to the IPCC investigations.
- Professor Drew would have direct contact with the victims/survivors and their families by meeting with the Panel comprising these individuals which had been set up. At the last meeting of the Panel, Police Officers had attended to listen to victims'/survivors' experiences. It was important that Police Officers were sensitive to the different attitudes of the victims/survivors.
- The failure to value women was not confined to any particular culture and it should be noted that, whilst the perpetrators of some incidents of historic grooming in Rotherham had come from one part of the community, this had come as a shock to other members of that community, as it had offended their religious and British values and some of the work funded had been in this field. It was also worth bearing in mind that there was an ongoing struggle in institutions such as the BBC and the Church of England in relation to the equal treatment of women.
- Consideration would be given to the training of the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in how they dealt with under 18s on the street, but the overall impression was that they knew their communities well. There was however some concern at the numbers of people they were dealing with who had mental health issues. In terms of numbers, South Yorkshire had been almost unique in holding the line, as there had only been a small reduction in the number of PCSOs in the last 5 years. The numbers of Police Officers had reduced by about 16%, which was around the national average.
- There was a need to maintain a neighbourhood focus in policing and the Response Policing and Neighbourhood Teams were to be combined into single Local Policing Teams, which would manage all anti-social behaviour and most crime. Officers would be issued with laptops and handheld computers, which would result in timesaving efficiencies as well as keeping officers in the community.
- Police Officers and PCSOs were trained to deal with people of all ages, so there was no cut-off created by any specialist training in dealing with under 18s on the street.
- It was sometimes possible for a case to be built without witnesses having to give evidence in Court, but this could be

complex due to changes in legislation regarding cases involving the age of consent in relation to sexual offences.

- The reduction in numbers of Police Officers and PCSOs was due to the austerity agenda. Locally, consideration was being given to the type of community and VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) meetings attended by Police Officers and PCSOs, with other forms of contact such as e-mail being seen to be just as effective in some cases.
- In response to the questioner, Diana Stimely, Dr Billings stated that the South Yorkshire Police website was updated weekly with statistical information of the sort which she required. If there was insufficient information there, or she had further questions, he encouraged her to write to him and to speak to Sally Parkin who would advise her as to how to contact him.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Dr Alan Billings, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, for his contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the information reported and responses to questions; and
- (c) agrees to set up a Task and Finish Group to consider the implementation of the Prevent agenda, with Councillor Cliff Woodcraft as Chair and Councillors Chris Rosling-Josephs, Ian Saunders and Jack Scott and Jules Jones and Alison Warner as members, to report back to the meeting of the Committee in September 2015 with a proposal for the review and with a final report at the meeting of the Committee in January 2016.

## **7. ADOPTION PERFORMANCE**

- 7.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, which provided a more detailed update on Sheffield's current performance in relation to the two main performance measures, A1 and A2, following a request at the last meeting of the Committee.
- 7.2 The report was presented by Dorne Collinson, Director of Children and Families, with Stephanie Kerr, Assistant Service Manager, Children and Families, also in attendance.
- 7.3 Dorne Collinson took the Committee through the report and, in relation to Indicator A1 (average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted), she explained that Sheffield's performance ranked 64<sup>th</sup> out of 152 local authorities, which was better than comparators but outside

national thresholds. In Sheffield, the average time for a child to be placed after entering care was 535 days in the last year, which meant that in order to achieve a threshold of 426 days by March 2017, children would need to be placed within 370 days over the next two years. It should be noted however that there had been no adoption breakdown for a considerable time in Sheffield and that, due to comparatively low numbers of children in care, Sheffield was more likely to have children who had more complex needs, which made them more difficult to place.

7.4 In relation to Indicator A2 (average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family), Sheffield's performance ranked 122<sup>nd</sup> out of 152 local authorities last year, with performance being poorer than all averages for comparators. There had been a marginal improvement in three year performance averages for 2014/15, however, the gap to national expectations had increased and the improvement was mainly due to previous poor performance no longer being counted. The average time between receiving a placement order and matching a child in 2014/15 was 293 days, with thresholds for this indicator being 121 days.

7.5 With regard to improving performance, Dorne Collinson made reference to the City Wide Adoption Tracking meetings, the appointment of additional staff to identify those suitable for adoption and the use of proformas to highlight important milestones in the process. She also referred to regional working through the Yorkshire and Humber Adoption Consortium, which sought to make adopters more available, but still ensured that children were placed locally.

7.6 Members made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-

- Officers were aware that some children had been in the system for too long, but it was hoped that tracking and scrutiny could influence change. It was recognised that there was a need to have a view on the present cohort, so that decisions could be made on permanent outcomes.
- Data that assisted in predicting future performance would be sent to the Policy and Improvement Officer for circulation to Committee Members.
- There was a significant difference between Sheffield and its statistical neighbours in that its in care population was different. There was a need for more analysis and information in relation to this matter.
- The last adoptive breakdown in Sheffield took place during the

year 2010/11 and enquiries would be made regarding the performance of Sheffield's statistical neighbours in this regard, with the results being sent to the Policy and Improvement Officer for circulation to Committee Members.

- Like Sheffield, other authorities had young people who were unlikely to be adopted and, in these situations, it was necessary to decide on other permanent outcomes such as long term foster care. These situations did not impact on performance as the targets focused on those who were adopted.
- Education was a priority for all children in care and would be part of any adoption support plan. It may be that decisions were made for children to change schools if risk issues were involved.
- The process for selecting adopters was rigorous to ensure that the most appropriate adoptive parents were identified.
- Work was being undertaken to learn from other high performing authorities.

7.7 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Dorne Collinson and Stephanie Kerr for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and responses to questions; and
- (c) requests that an update on Adoption Performance be presented to the Committee in six months' time.

## **8. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

8.1 The Committee received its Draft Work Programme 2015/16.

8.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes:-

- (a) the Draft Work Programme 2015/16; and
- (b) Members' comments in relation to:-
  - (i) the inclusion of issues relating to the school run, 20 mph areas, young drivers and the work the Fire Services undertook with regard to road safety in the report on Road Safety and Education for Children and Young People in Sheffield to be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015;

- (ii) the effect of a different form of presentation in assessing City Wide Attainment Outcomes in Schools and Academies, which is to be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016;
- (iii) inclusion of an item on Youth Services on a future Committee meeting agenda; and
- (iv) some assurance that the Work Programme of the Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee covered young people's health.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015, at 1.00 pm, in the Town Hall.