

Meeting CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SELECT COMMITTEE

Date 27 June 2022 (commencing at 10.30am)

**Membership****COUNCILLORS**

Sam Smith (Chair)  
Michelle Welsh (Vice Chair)

Callum Bailey	Errol Henry JP - Apologies
Anne Callaghan	Roger Jackson
Robert Corden	Johno Lee
Eddie Cubley - Apologies	Dave Shaw - Apologies
Debbie Darby	

**SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Mike Adams for Eddie Cubley  
Steve Carr for Dave Shaw  
Paul Henshaw for Errol Henry

**OTHER COUNTY COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE**

Sinead Anderson  
Glynn Gilfoyle  
Mike Pringle  
Tracey Taylor

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Pete Barker	Democratic Services Officer
Steve Edwards	Service Director, Children & Families
Karen Hughman	Group Manager, Children & Families
Noel McMenamin	Democratic Services Officer
Lucy Peel	Service Director, Children & Families

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Cubley, Councillor Henry and Councillor Shaw, all Other Reasons.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Service Director, Children & Families delivered a presentation to Members on the work of the Children and Families Department and a **summary** of that presentation is below:

- The Children's Act 1989 placed a general duty on the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in the area and to promote the upbringing of children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.
- There were specific legal duties placed on both the Director and Lead Member of Children's Services to provide the provision required; to work with partners to improve services; to scrutinise the performance of the Authority especially in the fields of children's education and social care; to involve families in the design of services
- Nottinghamshire was one of the largest Children's Services authorities in the country and in 2019 was rated as 'good' by Ofsted
- There were 168,500 children and young people under the age of 18 living in Nottinghamshire which equates to 20.2% of the population. 14% live in poverty and 12% are from a minority ethnic background compared to 22% in the country as a whole.
- The Department provided a range of services:
  - Universal and Early Help Services
  - Specialist Services for children in need of help, protection or care including Youth Justice, Fostering and Adoption
  - Education, learning and skills
  - Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities
  - Commissioning of a range of placements for children in care
- The budget for the year was £162m, £90m of which was allocated to commissioning and resources i.e., external care and £52m on youth, families and social work.
- There were significant national policy changes that would impact on the department's work – the Schools White Paper and Schools Bill, the SEND Review Green Paper, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review
- These sat alongside existing policies and strategies that included the Best Start Strategy, the Early Help Strategy, the Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, the Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- There were a number of departmental priorities in place including embedding strengths-based approaches, embedding consistently good quality social work

practices across the County, accelerating the transformation of services to achieve improved outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people, improving families experience of the SEND system, ensuring sufficiency of school places and early years childcare and developing local responses to the proposals in the Schools Bill.

Members then debated the item and questions were responded to as follows:

- The 14% figure for child poverty was from the HMRC
- That if members would like to spend some time with front line workers this could be arranged. The work was high profile but confidential, so the exact nature of the work was not always apparent.

**RESOLVED: 2022/001**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**4. WORK PROGRAMME – PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ITEM**

The Democratic Services Officer then delivered a presentation on Overview and Scrutiny and a **summary** of the presentation is below:

- The role of this Select Committee was scrutiny and review – it was not a decision-making body.
- It was a positive, constructive, critical friend role.
- It was an opportunity for the Committee to examine services; identify potential improvements; ask questions about how decisions are made; champion issues of public concern; participate in the development of policies and strategies.
- The process of work programming involved identifying of issues; prioritising topics; planning work; doing the work; reviewing and evaluating.
- The guiding principles were:
  - Scrutiny topics should be of high local importance to local residents
  - The issue should be something the Committee can realistically influence
  - Potential scrutiny outcomes should have impact and add value
  - The issue could relate to an area of work where there are concerns about performance
  - The issue could relate to the whole or large areas of the County
  - The review would be in the Council's interest
  - The issue has not been recently reviewed, or recently undergone a substantial change.
  - Avoid duplication of work elsewhere.
  - Sufficient resources are in place to carry out a meaningful review.
  - The remit of the review is well defined with clear outcomes and recommendations.

- The Scrutiny Review process included: scoping the review; gathering evidence; evaluating evidence; reporting and making recommendations; implementation; monitoring.

Following the presentation, Members were shown a slide detailing suggested future topics for the Committee to consider:

- Implementation of the Schools Bill
- Sufficiency of School Places
- Implications of the SEND Green Paper
- Implications of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review
- Performance against the Ofsted framework for the inspection of local authority children's services and associated improvement plans
- Social Care Recruitment and Retention (joint with ASCPH)
- Transitions for children to adult services (joint with ASCPH)
- Early Year's Childcare Sufficiency and Funding

In discussion Members suggested the following topics for Committee to investigate:

- Budgets and how the position ebbed and flowed during the financial year
- Fostering & Adoption Services
- Social media bullying in schools
- Family Centres – which service are going to be provided/when will rollout happen?
- Mental health – how children can be supported
- Child poverty
- Scrutiny of SEND plans
- Support for disabled children
- Rise in free school meals claimants - examine how families on tight budgets can unlock other opportunities
- Look at what support can be given to small rural schools
- Early years – emphasis on affordability of childcare
- Pandemic – the effects on schools / children

Comments and questions were then responded to as follows:

- Overview Committee would be looking at all budgets
- In terms of child poverty, the work the Department was undertaking around the National Review of Safeguarding would take into account the needs of those who require the most support
- Policy on rural schools was set at a national level and though the Committee would take the subject forward it was important to focus on the Committee's remit and what it had influence over
- It was important that every topic was allocated enough resources to allow a thorough examination
- Officers would progress work on appointing co-optees
- Work would begin in prioritising the suggested topics

The meeting closed at 11.37am

CHAIR