

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale. on Wednesday 11th July 2018 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor S Rees - Owen – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

H. Boggis	J. Davies	M. Griffiths	W. Lewis
J. Brencher	S.M.Evans	L. Hooper	M. Powell
A. Calvert	H. Fychan	G. Jones	G. Stacey

Co-opted Members

Mr J. Fish – Voting Elected Parent/ Governor Representative
Mr S. Emanuel - Voting Elected Parent/ Governor Representative

Officers in Attendance

Mr G. Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services
Ms C. Tyler – Service Development Officer
Mr P Nicholls – Head of Legal – Litigation, Planning & Environment,
Community and Children's Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: County Borough Councillor J Harries, S. Powell and Non – Voting Co-Opted Member Mr C. Jones

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – that in accordance with Members Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of personal interests made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

3. MINUTES

RESLOVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 21st March 2018 subject to it being noted that Members felt there was lack of detail with regards to Minute No: 69.

With reference to Minute No; 69 the questions asked that need clarification were :

1. Significant changes to the CSC delivery module are proposed, not least due to the closure of Ty Dysgu as its operational hub. The Member stated that there was no mention of it in the report of the Managing Director Central South to the Committee on 24/01/18. What will the new model be, what will the brokerage service look like and what are the cost implications to RCT.

2. Improving education is still a cornerstone of the Corporate Plan, but given the recently imposed efficiency savings on delegated budgets, which cause the Member considered were not clearly explained to Council 28/02/18, how are schools to meet the challenges with reduced staff and resources.

It **RESOLVED** to provide Members with information as soon as possible.

4. DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES DAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Group Director, Community and Children's Services presented Members with the Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report for 2017-18.

Member were informed that the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 includes in Part 8 a Code of Practice with regards to the role of the Director of Social Services which shows an ongoing requirement for the Director of Social Service to publish an Annual Report.

The Group Director Community and Children's Services explained to Members that the Committee's comments were sought on the contents of the Director of Social Services Annual Report 2017/18 which would form part of the formal consultation process.

Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the Director of Social Services Report in great detail and put their views and observations forward to the Group Director of Community and Children's Services which will be taken in to consideration when preparing the Final Report for Cabinet.

Members considered the delivery, performance, risk and planned improvements of the Social Services function in the Council. Members were informed of the good practice and multi agency working to consider the mental health needs and emotional wellbeing of both service users and staff alike. It was explained that the resilience family preventative and early intervention service is a development which the Local Authority has focused on and will continue to evaluate throughout the coming year.

A Member congratulated the Group Director and his Service for the hard work that has been done throughout the year and praised the Resilient Family Service for the work that has been done so far. The Member felt that there is still some work that needs to be done to get the service to the next level especially when looking at emotional and mental health needs of the child. This will require even better joint working with key partners e.g. Health and the relationship with CAMHS is also an important issue to consider.

Members commented that the early indicators for the Resilient Family Service were very positive but it is still in the early stages of implementation and will need to be monitored closely in terms of impact.

A Member raised concerns in respect of the issues surrounding the long summer holidays with the children and young people within the Authority and asked what support was available to them. Officers highlighted the opportunities provided by schemes such as the holiday fun scheme and agreed to provide more information for Members to consider at a later meeting.

A Member asked if the Committee could receive the information regarding direct payments in the form of numbers as well as percentages for greater clarity.

A range of further questions were put to the Group Director of Community and Children's Services covering areas such as the Stay Well at Home Service, Teenage Pregnancy figures. Members also questioned the level of uptake of the online survey and felt a piece of work could be done to look at this in the future. In respect of Children Looked After a Member asked for greater clarity regarding the cost of in County and out of County Placement. The Group Director agreed to provide a separate note on this issue.

The Group Director Community and Children's Services thanked members for their input and agreed to consider Members comments in finalising his report for Council.

Following robust discussion Members **RESOLVED** to

- Form a small working group to consider the way the Authority can improve engagement with respect of the online survey.
- Receive figures regarding cost of in county and out of County Placements for Children Looked After.
- Provide Members with the presentation relating to the Stay Well at Home Service Review that was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in July.
- Consider the Comments of the Members in the Final report that is to be presented to Cabinet.

5. RHONDDA CYNON TAF CHILDREN'S SERVICES CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER QUALITY ASSURANCE PANEL WORK PLAN 2018/19

The Service Development Officer presented the Rhondda Cynon Taf Children's Service, Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel Work Plan for 2018/19.

Members were informed of the purpose of the report. It was explained that the Panel's function is to ensure the right children and young people are being brought into the children looked after system and those who can return home from care do so as soon as possible.

It was brought to the Members attention that the children looked after population within RCT has increased over the past five years from 621 in 2013 to 676 at the end of 2017-18 financial year, an increase of 55 children. Over the years, however the numbers and profile of the children and young people becoming looked after has changed and numbers have fluctuated with 2017-2018 seeing an overall decrease in admissions of 42% compared with the same period in 2016 -17 . The profile of overall admissions in 2017 -2018 also showed that of those children becoming looked after 34% of children were under 1 year old, 55% of children were under 4 years old and 7% were 16+.

The Service Development Officer explained the reason behind setting up the Children Looked after Quality Assurance Panel and Members were informed of the work programme for 2018-2019 and its 5 objectives:

- Objective 1 – To develop a framework of quantitative and qualitative information that supports robust analysis of current placement provision in RCT
- Objective 2 – To monitor the children looked after budget , highlighting areas of financial pressure and identifying areas where improvements in use of resources can be made
- Objective 3 – To identify a commissioning mix and range of placements that support children looked after and care leavers to achieving positive outcomes
- Objective 4 – To promote engagement with children looked after and care leavers to achieving positive outcomes
- Objective 5 – To monitor and drive service change and improvement.

Members considered the Work Plan in great detail and put forward their questions the Officer. A Member asked why children are being looked after is there a direct link with poverty. In response to this the Officer explained that poverty is a contributory factor but is one of many.

Members raised concern in respect of the abbreviations used within the report and asked the officers if they could clarify the meaning of them. The officer apologised and confirmed that this would be addressed in future.

A Member asked if there was more information available on the types of families and children at risk of being taken into care and being taken into care. The Service Development officer explained that a great deal of data and information is available at the panel and that it might be useful to arrange a meeting to enable Scrutiny members to consider this with panel members. Member asked if parents are identified as needing help after birth what do we provide. It was explained that the resilient families programme will continue to work with the birth family and the extended family as much as possible. In respect of fostering, Members requested clarification on the figures provided, along with the cost of in County and out of County placements. It was explained that in house fostering placements are cheaper, however there will also be a requirement for specialist out of County placements which can be more costly but it depends on the need of the child.

Member discussed the Work plan and it's contented in further detail and

RESOLVED:

- To acknowledge the information contain within the report and the actions being taken to address areas of further improvement.
- That a small group of Member meet f the panel and report back to the Committee its findings.
- Receive updating reports at future meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19

In his report, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services informed Members of the proposed Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018-19 Municipal Year. It was explained to Member that there is a requirement to devise and publish a Work Programme for each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees as set out in part 4 of the Constitution.

Members considered the draft work programme and put their suggestions forward. It was **RESOLVED**;

- To amend the work programme to include ALN Bill at a future meeting.
- That if Members wish to add any topic to the work programme that they should e –mail the Chair or Democratic Service Officer with their suggestion so that they can be included on the final work programme.

Meeting Closed at 6:55pm

Cllr S. Rees Owen

(Chair)