

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY, 31 MARCH 2015

Overview
& Scrutiny



PRESENT: Councillor Brennan (in the Chair)
Councillor Bradshaw (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Ball, Hands, Keith, Murphy, Preece,
Thompson and Webster.
Canon Roger Driver

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Moncur, Cabinet Member for Children,
Schools, Families and Leisure.
Mrs. S. Cain, Advisory Member.
Ms. Libby Kitt, Healthwatch Representative.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McKinley, Fr. D. Seddon, Mrs Carol-Anna Ryan-Palmer and Ms Jenny Southern.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

30. EDUCATION STRATEGY AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Committee considered a presentation by Mr. Mike McSorley, Head of Learning and Support in relation to the consultation on the Sefton Education Strategy.

Mr. McSorley reported that "the value of a good education cannot be underestimated. Giving children the best possible start in life helps them fulfil their true potential, living happier, healthier and more prosperous lives".

Mr. McSorley highlighted the Education Vision for Sefton as:

"Our Vision is to ensure all children and young people in Sefton are equipped with the knowledge, skills and desire needed to fulfil their potential. The best start in life through good early years provision is vitally

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important as is continuation of progress at good or outstanding primary and secondary schools and FE colleges.”

“Learning does not stop once a young person leaves school and we want them to have the desire to keep on learning, and developing to shape our future society.”

The presentation outlined the following objectives in delivering the Education Vision for Sefton:-

- Ensuring good leadership and governance across all educational settings in Sefton.
- Ensuring that the range of barriers to participation and progress are addressed.
- Ensuring children are ready for school and the transition to the next stage of their lives.
- Ensuring that all pupils make at least “good” progress in each year of their education.
- Ensuring young people leave formal education with the skills and opportunities to achieve.

Mr. McSorley explained that the Sefton Education Partnership Board would be the body with ultimate responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Strategy, but consultation and involvement from the Strategic Group and Operational Groups would also be necessary.

Mr. McSorley outlined the following membership of the Education Partnership Board:-

- Lead Member for Children’s Services.
- Director of Young People and Families.
- Chair of SASH.
- Chair of SAPH.
- Special Schools representative.
- Primary Schools representative.
- Early Years representative.
- Further Education representative.
- Chair of Sefton Governors Association.
- Representative from the Liverpool Archdiocese.
- Representative from the Diocese of Liverpool.
- Higher Education representative.
- Employers’ representative.
- Representative from Training providers.
- Local Safeguarding Children Board representative.

Mr. McSorley concluded his presentation by emphasising the importance of the Sefton Education Strategy and the importance that all Partnership Board Members should sign up to the Strategy.

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Members of the Committee welcomed the drafting of the Education Strategy and in particular the offer for young people (14 – 16 years) to opt for a vocational course, offering more choice suited to their learning. The Director of Young People and Families reassured Members that in a recent Ofsted inspection, Hugh Baird College had received an outstanding rating in relation to safeguarding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Head of Learning and Support, Mr. McSorley, be thanked for his informative presentation;
- (2) the Head of Learning and Support and all supporting officers be congratulated on the drafting of Sefton's Education Strategy;
- (3) the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools, Families and Leisure, in consultation with the Senior Democratic Services Officer, Mr. Mike Morris, be requested to arrange a site visit to Hugh Baird College for all Members of the Committee; and
- (4) the Director of Young People and Families be requested to submit a further report to a future meeting of the Committee to include the results of the consultation and the finalised Sefton Education Strategy.

31. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Young People and Families which provided an outline of the learning from Rotherham and other child sexual exploitation reviews which had taken place since the publication of the Professor Jay report. Information was provided as to the actions that had been and are taking place in Sefton to address the national lessons learned and to safeguard children and young people in Sefton from child sexual exploitation.

The report included the following appendices:

Appendix 1 – Pan- Merseyside Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy
2014-2017

Appendix 2 - Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) CSE Strategy on
a Page

Appendix 3 - LSCB Governance Structure

Appendix 4 - LSCB CSE Partnership Pathway.

It was reported that the common issues and reasons why young people can be vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be due to a number of factors including a young person's low self-esteem and a poor self-image.

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It was further reported that vulnerabilities are identified and targeted by the abuser, whether the young person is living with their family, looked after, away from home or they have run away.

It was also reported that there are no stereotypical victims of CSE and that males and females can be victims.

The following warning signs were reported as possible indications that a child could be being exploited:

- Regularly missing from home or school and staying out all night.
- Change in behaviour – becoming aggressive and disruptive or quiet and withdrawn.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions such as clothes, jewellery, mobile phones or money that can't be accounted for.
- Increase in mobile phone usage or secretive use.
- A significantly older “boyfriend” or “friend” or lots of new friends.
- Spending excessive amounts of time online or on their mobile becoming increasingly secretive or defensive about this activity.
- Sudden involvement in criminal behaviour or increased offending.
- Sexual health problems.

The Director of Young People and Families, Mr. Colin Pettigrew, referred to the “Listen to my Story” campaign which had been developed by Merseyside Police, Local Councils and third sector agencies throughout the Merseyside area. Mr. Pettigrew stated that the campaign had been developed to raise awareness of CSE in our communities and to educate young people, parents/carers, teachers, health professionals and service industry workers as to the signs and vulnerabilities of CSE.

Mr. Pettigrew confirmed the following organisations involved in the “Listen to my Story” campaign:

- Merseyside Police.
- Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Liverpool City Council.
- Knowsley Council.
- Sefton Council.
- St. Helens Council.
- Wirral Council.
- Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Merseyside.
- North West Ambulance Service.
- Pan-Merseyside NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
- Pan-Merseyside NHS Community Care Centres
- Pan-Merseyside NHS Trusts
- Local GP's.

Mr. Pettigrew referred to the “Listen to my Story” website as an excellent resource for everyone to access in the pledge to raise awareness of CSE.

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Mr. Pettigrew stated that CSE can affect young people and families from all kinds of backgrounds regardless of social class, ethnicity or location. He stated that it is not just something that happens in small communities or in Greater Manchester or Yorkshire. He further reported that CSE does not just affect young girls: boys can be the subject of abuse too. Mr. Pettigrew concluded by stating that CSE offenders are not from one particular ethnic group.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools, Families and Leisure, Councillor Moncur, referred to the report and stated that it clearly outlined what Sefton, Merseyside Police and other agencies were doing in response to the reports by Alexis Jay, Ann Coffey, Louise Casey and others. Councillor Moncur emphasised strongly that Child Sexual Exploitation was everybody's concern.

Councillor Moncur agreed that safeguarding training should be made available to all Members.

Mr. Pettigrew referred to a briefing session that had been arranged prior to the next meeting of the Council, which is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 23 April 2015, for all Members of the Council in relation to CSE.

Members raised the following questions and points of observation, responses to which were made by officers:

Safeguarding Training to be made available to all Members of the Committee, in the first instance to those Members who undertake Regulation 33 visits to the L.A. Children's Homes.

Response:
Noted.

What information do we know about the perpetrators in Sefton? Southport being a seaside resort, does this attract CSE behaviour? Where are the hotspots?

Response:
The Council work with the Police and other agencies to gather intelligence on hotspots in order that mapping can be undertaken. The intelligence is highly confidential.

What are Sefton doing to raise awareness in young children?

Response:
Sefton's Local Safeguarding Children Board has developed the Child Exploitation "Strategy on a Page". Strategic Action 3 is in relation to prevention which sets out the ways in which the Council undertakes awareness raising with children and families. Through the support of schools, the Council is engaging with children and young people to ensure that they have an understanding of the issues surrounding child sexual exploitation and understand about healthy relationships.

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The Council have developed key cards and posters which list the signs of CSE and they have been distributed to all schools, GP surgeries, Youth Centres, Libraries and other places which children and young people visit. There is also a website "Listen to my Story" that can be accessed.

A number of Independent Children's Homes in Sefton provide accommodation for children and young people who have been relocated from other local areas, and Sefton Council ensures that close liaison is maintained with them and Ofsted, which has resulted in the closure of 3 Homes following concerns raised by the Council about inadequate practices.

How do the Council know when a child is missing from a Children's Home or Hostel in Sefton?

Response:

The Council monitors those Children's Homes and Hostels that are failing to report children missing in the same way that they monitor those Children's Homes and Hostels that are reporting regular incidents.

A single point of contact on CSE issues is maintained with all agencies on the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) deals with all CSE referrals both for children and young people and young adults and Dr. David Sanders is the Chair of the Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Sefton Adult Safeguarding Board.

Is there liaison between Sefton Council and other local authorities who place children and young people from their area in Children's Homes in Sefton?

Response

The Director of Young People and Families had taken a lead nationally in changes made to procedures implemented by the Department for Education and Ofsted in 2014 to ensure local authorities placing 'looked after' children outside of their boundary notify the local authority within which they are placing the child. If a child is being placed in an area which is not geographically next to the responsible placing authority, the placing Director of Children's Services must discuss the placement with the Director of Children's Services for the area in which the child is being placed.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the work taking place in Sefton regarding Child Sexual Exploitation be noted; and

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- (2) the Director of Young People and Families be requested to instigate and provide training to all Members of the Council in relation to safeguarding.

32. TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME

Further to Minute No. 15 (3) of 18 November 2014, the Committee considered the report of the Director of Young People and Families on the nomination and assessment process undertaken in the identification of troubled families.

The report outlined details of phase 1 (the original programme) in the identification criteria of a Troubled Family.

The Troubled Families Coordinator, Mr. Michael Hanrahan, reported that H.M. Government had expanded the programme for a further five years (until 2020). He explained that phase 2 (the expanded programme) included a broader set of criteria to be used in identifying Troubled Families.

Mr. Hanrahan reported that Sefton had changed the title of "Troubled Families" to the "Turn around Programme".

Members raised the following questions and points of observation, responses to which were made by officers:

Is Training/Rehabilitation provided for young people who have offended?
Response Yes - this is provided by the Youth Offending Team and there is targeted Youth Support.
On occasions some families may be a cause for concern to schools and governors but not enough to instigate through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – How can schools intervene and support those families?
Response Pastoral care and support is offered by some schools. CAF will be triggered if it can be demonstrated that a child has additional needs in one or more of the following three areas:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their growth and development.• Additional educational requirements.• Family and environmental issues and any specific needs of the parent/carer.
Are police now informing the appropriate schools of any domestic violence?
Response Operation Encompass aims to help schools to provide support and help to

a child in the aftermath of an incident.
Through Operation Encompass, any incidents of domestic violence are reported to the identified school.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

33. OFSTED INSPECTION - EARLY YEARS PROVISION AND DAY NURSERY PROVISION

Further to Minute No. 17 (4) of 18 November 2014, the Committee considered the report of the Director of Young People and Families on early years inspection outcomes within Sefton, including national and North-West region comparisons.

Members raised concerns regarding the declining standards in childminder outcomes.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Director of Young People and Families be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of this Committee in relation to the declining standards in childminder outcomes.

34. CABINET MEMBER REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Corporate Services submitting the most recent report of the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools, Families and Leisure for the March 2015 period.

The Cabinet Member Update Report outlined information on the following:-

- Hillside and Litherland High Schools – Conversion to Sponsored Academies with effect from 1 March 2015.
- Children's Transport Consultation.
- Education and Skills Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

35. WORK PROGRAMME - KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Corporate Services in relation to the Committee's programme of work and submitting the latest Key Decision Forward Plan. There were three Key Decisions within the current Forward Plan which fell under the remit of the Committee on this occasion.

The report referred to a number of proposed Joint Working Protocols between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Health and Social Care) and other local health bodies and a request from that Committee for this Committee to indicate whether it wished Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Trust to be included in the proposed protocol with NHS organisations in Sefton.

The report also set out the current Work Programme for 2014/15 and indicated that a draft Work Programme for 2015/16 would be submitted to the next meeting for approval.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer, Mrs. Ruth Harrison, informed Members of a proposal to arrange an informal meeting of the Committee prior to the first meeting of the new Municipal Year 2015/16. The purpose of the informal meeting would be to identify appropriate areas of work to review which comply with the selection criteria and also to set the Committee's Work Programme for 2015/16.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Key Decision Forward Plan for the period 1 April to 31 July 2015 be noted;
- (2) the submitted work programme for this Committee for 2014/15 and the fact that a draft work programme for 2015/16 will be submitted to the next meeting for approval, be noted;
- (3) in relation to the possible inclusion of Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Trust in the proposed joint working protocol, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Health and Social Care) be informed that this Committee is in favour of such an approach; and
- (4) the Director of Young People and Families be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of this Committee in relation to the "Innovation Programme" Grant.

36. VOTE OF THANKS

As this was the last meeting of the Committee in the current Municipal Year, the Chair, Councillor Brennan, recorded his thanks and appreciation to the Members and officers of the Committee for their support during the year.