

ITEM 4

Time commenced 1.00pm
Time finished 3.00pm

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE Tuesday 19 February 2019

Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors Harwood, Hudson Hussain and Russell

In attendance: Four representatives of the Children in Care Council
Patrick Aherne, Participation Officer
Pervez Akhtar, Corporate Parenting Lead
Annamarie Johannesson, Chair of Derby Foster Care Association
Heather Peet, Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Kate Burton, Head of Service Early Help
Joni Centro, Connexions Manager
Gareth Dakin, Deputy Head of Service- Children in Care
Graeme Ferguson, Virtual School Head
Suanne Lim, Director of Children's Integrated Services
Andy Smith, Strategic Director of People Services

25/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Maria Murphy, Chief Executive of, Derby Homes and Sarah Walker, Policy and Improvement Manager.

26/18 Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were none.

27/18 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

28/18 Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

29/18 Children in Care Council – Update, October 2018

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services providing an update on recent activity by the Children in Care Council (CICC). The report was presented to members by a representative of the CICC.

It was noted that since the last report there have been four meetings of the CICC.

At their October meeting, the CICC developed questions for the foster carer recruitment panel. Five CICC members attended the meeting and two Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Officers came to talk to the Group. The Looked After Children's Nurse also attended the meeting and the CICC gave their feedback on the annual report for Children in Care and an NHS website for CIC

The Looked After Children's Nurse asked the group about their experiences of annual health checks for children in care. The following feedback was given

- CICC members wanted the Nurse to have the children's health information beforehand.
- CICC explained they would like to keep talking about health
- CICC would like to see their nurse 2 times per year.
- CICC said they would prefer to answer questions alone with the nurse so they did not feel awkward in front of their foster carers.

Councillors noted that the information had been passed back to the Looked After Children's nurse.

At their November meeting the Children in Care Commissioning Manager attended the meeting and talked to the group about foster carers (recruitment and assessment). Discussion concentrated on what made a good foster carer and why it was important and on what makes a good foster home.

On 7 December 2018 seven young people attended the meeting and had a tour of the fire station where the meetings was held, following which the group had a Christmas Party. A further Christmas Event was held on 12 December.

January's meeting focussed on services that help children affected by Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The information from the session was fed into the review of Derby's current Child Sexual Exploitation Service.

Councillors noted that a Takeover Challenge takes place on a yearly basis in November. On 23rd November 2018 one member of CICC attended Whitehall to shadow James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. They enjoyed the experience and will be writing a column for the next "Focus on Us" newsletter.

The CICC previously reviewed the content of an NHS webpage for CICC: and they made a number of recommendations to the Looked After Children's Nurse regarding the content and age appropriateness of the information. Councillors noted that members of the CIC Council had recently spent a day with the NHS assisting with the re-design of the website. It was also noted that CICC members had re-designed the CICC logo which should be ready in April.

Councillors thanked the CICC members for all the work they had been doing which had made a huge impact on service provision. Councillors requested that the CICC members continue inputting their ideas.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- **To consider the content of the reports and the feedback from the Children in Care Council**

30/18 Care Leavers Report – Education, Employment and Training

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Integrated Services providing an overview of the Derby Leaving Care Service with a particular focus on Education/Employment and Training.

Councillors noted that Care leavers must be provided with access to high quality information, advice and guidance to inform their plans in order to progress into continuing education, training or employment. They should also be offered work experience and other opportunities to allow them to test their career aspirations and needs.

Councillors noted that the Leaving Care Service had statutory responsibility for 231 Care Leavers aged 16-24. In addition, the Leaving Care Service also supports a number of 16-17 year olds who are in care as part of the transitioning process as they prepare to leave care.

Councillors were informed that Education, employment and training levels of Care Leavers in Derby City continue to remain consistently between 60% and 65%. Although this does compare well both regionally and nationally, it does mean that at least a third of this cohort remain in NEET. Councillors noted that two thirds of Care Leavers are in Education Employment and Training, with some 62% of Care Leavers aged 16-20 and 48% of Care Leavers aged 21-25.

Officers advised that the service worked closely with Connexions and more young people had become engaged with community volunteering. However it was challenging for care leavers to access opportunities, and the service was continuing to expand the Corporate Parenting Strategy and works with public and stakeholders to promote opportunities for young people.

Councillors were concerned that evidence of the outcomes of the interventions by the service are not being tracked or monitored; without this information it was difficult for Derby to demonstrate that it is making a difference for Care Leavers. There was a need to quantify how many Care Leavers were moving into training or employment. Officers advised that it was difficult to pinpoint one action which had led to a specific outcome, but officers would investigate possible ways of determining this information. The possibility of providing specific case studies was suggested might be a solution but it was noted that the offer to Care Leavers had changed and that it was not always easily measurable.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. to note the content of the report and the progress made in respect to how the Leaving Care Service meets its statutory functions**
- 2. to note and respond to our actions and plans made for Derby City Care Leavers as their Corporate Parents**
- 3. That officers investigate a means of capturing or monitoring information about how officer input/interventions assist children leaving care to achieve an apprenticeship or gain employment.**

31/18 Annual Report of the head teacher of the Virtual School for Looked After Children 2017/18

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services which gave an update on the academic outcomes of pupils in the Virtual Schools for the school year 2017-18. The Committee noted:

- The Strengths and Difficulties scores for Derby LAC are above the national average
- Derby had a higher percentage of LAC with EHCPs; in 2017 62% of pupils in Derby had some SEN compared to 56% nationally. When the type of SEN need was broken down the percentage of LAC with SEN support was now in line with the national but the numbers with more complex needs (EHCP) was much higher than national. However, despite having more SEN pupils the outcomes for LAC was broadly in line with national figures.
- Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes have improved compared to 2017
- Phonics Check pass had dropped slightly
- KS1 attainment had improved since 2016 in reading writing and maths
- KS2 attainment had improved since 2016 in reading, writing, maths, grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- KS4 attainment and progress overall was slightly below average except for pupils with SEN
- National and regional comparisons for educational performance were now available. Councillors noted that in secondary schools there have been changes in the way headline performance measures were reported. The previous measures of 5 good GCSE passes at A*-C grades including English and maths have gone. The new measures include:
 - Progress 8 – the progress which students make in eight subjects

- Attainment 8 – the average points score a student gains in eight subjects.

Councillors noted that at the end of KS4 (16 year old pupils) the attainment of all 23 LAC pupils was broadly in line with national figures. When the LAC cohort was broken down pupils with no recorded SEN were attaining more than national levels with their progress being in line. However pupils with SEN Support and EHCPs were attaining and progressing below national levels. Councillors questioned how the new system compared with the previous system and after further discussion they requested that officers bring a report to a future meeting in order to better understand the new system and how Derby was enabling their cohorts to improve.

- Attendance has improved to 92% from 90% the previous year. Councillors discussed the attendance of LAC who miss school due to Health or LAC Reviews. Councillors noted that these appointments could be noted as non-attendance by schools, causing problems with 100% attendance awards for LAC pupils. Councillors queried if this issue could be addressed with schools.
- The number of days lost to exclusions was down; there were no permanent exclusions 2017/18 due to the Virtual School working with schools to ensure alternatives were implemented. Councillors noted that reducing exclusion has been a focus for the team this year and this was being achieved by:
 - Commissioning the Educational Psychology Service to provide additional emotional and behavioural support to schools
 - Additional Pupil Premium Plus resources had been allocated to support young people in school who are at risk of exclusion
 - The Virtual School has encouraged schools to use alternative provision placements/packages as opposed to excluding.
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) 95% were completed within timescales

Councillors recognised the achievements of young people and noted the good work on reducing exclusions.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- **To recognise the achievement of Derby's children who are looked after.**
- **To support the areas for development as highlighted within the report**
- **That a further report be brought to Corporate Parenting giving an explanation of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 figures, in order to better understand what the figures represent and how DCC are enabling Derby cohorts of children to improve.**

32/18 Children in Care and Leaving Care Apprenticeship Scheme

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services which gave an overview in relation to the Children in Care and Leaving Care Apprenticeship Scheme.

It was reported that managers from the Children in Care Service and Connexions Service have talked with different Departments in the Council and have asked them to make a pledge and offer apprenticeships to Derby City's Children in Care. Support was given to the young people by Connexions workers to prepare them for apprenticeship and work experience interviews. There are now young people in care who have been, or still are, an apprentice with Derby City Council.

Councillors noted that there are currently 9 Care Leavers in City Council apprenticeships and 1 care leaver in a traineeship. The departments involved were Adult Social Care, Participation, Business Admin, Home Care, Derby Homes and at the Arena. Three Care Leavers were currently undertaking Derby City Council Apprenticeships and progressing through the levels. Two Care Leavers have completed every part of the process and were moved from a Traineeship through an Apprenticeship and were now employed full time in the authority in the Data Quality Team, the other is within Business Support. Three care leavers have now been employed by the authority in DMC and with Derby Homes after completing an apprenticeship

Councillors noted that when a young person does not want a traineeship or apprenticeship and have chosen to attend Derby College, Derby City Council work with the College to ensure that Care Leavers who attended college were supported by the college's Vulnerable Learners Services and if there was a risk of dropping out support would be put in place to reduce this risk.

Councillors were informed that pledges had been received from Derby City Council teams including Catering, Communications and Street Pride amongst others. All have committed to give Care Leavers guaranteed interviews for apprenticeship opportunities.

Councillors noted that in order to ensure a wider offer in different vocational areas for young people officers have begun to engage with external providers and business as well as the Chamber of Commerce. Officers advised that the providers and businesses approached so far had been very receptive to providing apprenticeships for young people leaving care. Connections were being made with the Apprenticeship Levy Board so that businesses would be aware of what was available for them in terms of funding and training for young people.

Councillors asked if possible candidates for Apprenticeships and Traineeships would be given any interview training or guidance on how to complete application forms prior to applying for the scheme. Officers confirmed that Personal Assistants link in and provide preparatory work on a case by case basis for young people prior to entering into the Apprenticeship Scheme.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved to note the current position and progress made of the Apprenticeship scheme.

33/18 Annual Performance Benchmarking Report

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services. The purpose of this report was to provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with an update on Derby's children in care performance, compared to national intelligence.

Councillors noted that each year all authorities submit information on the children and young people that they look after to the Department for Education (DfE). This information was collated centrally and published annually, to inform local understanding on profile, demand and performance in relation to key children in care performance indicators.

It was reported that at the end of March 2018, Derby City reported a final position of 491 children in care, which was an increase of 43 children (10%) compared to March 2017. Nationally over the same period, the total number of children in care increased by 4% with a 5% rise within the East Midlands and a 2% average rise in our comparator group. This confirms that Derby has experienced a higher rate of demand than the average.

Councillors noted there was a significant increase in the number of children Derby City Council cares for. By the end of December 2018 the total number of children in care in Derby City had continued to rise, with an unprecedented position of 539 looked after children and young people. From the period April 2017 to March 2018, Derby looked after a total of 710 children and young people, 268 starting care in the year and 225 ceasing. Councillors noted that 225 leaving care is the highest number of children to have exited from the system.

Councillors were concerned that the thresholds for children entering care were correct. Officers advised that a lot of work was undertaken on checks and balances to ensure we are taking the right decision in taking children into care. The checks highlighted that the threshold was about right in terms of making a decision as to whether a child comes into care. The biggest challenge was the sufficiency of placements: currently the situation was one where Derby have the lowest number of fostering households with the highest number of Looked After Children (LAC).

Derby was struggling to meet the increased demand for placements from its own foster care provision. It was confirmed that Derby was looking strategically at how the unique offer to Derby City Foster Carers could be improved. A first meeting had taken place and further monthly meetings were planned to look at increasing foster carer numbers.

Councillors queried whether the actual numbers of Foster Carers were improving. Officers advised that although a concerted effort had been made it had not yielded an increased number of foster carers. There were only 8 approved foster carers last year and 5 the year before. Derby was now looking at a corporate approach rather than just a single service response. Councillors expressed concern regarding the retention of foster carers. Officers confirmed that some foster carers would be lost

through age, others were lost through the "Staying Put Programme" where youngsters stay with Foster Carers until they are 21 years old. However once we had Foster Carers they don't leave. There was however a need to recruit prospective Foster Carers before Agencies do.

A further budget pressure was that of the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) coming to Derby via Laverstock Court. Some 33 young people had entered care from Laverstock Court and this has had a significant effect on placement demand

Councillors noted that Derby City Council had been lobbying government directly, as well as alongside the LGA, asking them to recognise the effect that Laverstock Court has had on the care system in Derby. Also the Council was trying to ensure that funding is returned to Derby City Council for supporting UASC.

Councillors questioned whether any provision for English language training was put in place. It was confirmed that UASC are supported to attend ESOL courses and they are also linked with local community groups. In order to facilitate communications, translators or support workers who speak the same language were employed. Councillors noted that the UASC had travelled half way across the world to be in England and wanted to be a part of our society.

Councillors noted that the percentage of children looked after with a completed Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in Derby had increased to 94% which was now above the national average of 78%. However the average SDQ score still remained too high at 15.9 with Derby second highest in our comparator group and twelfth highest nationally. There was some discussion as to whether SDQs are a true reflection of children's needs but Councillors noted that they were a statutory requirement and were used as a part of a suite of information, including linking with schools to get a more rounded vision of pupils. SDQs now take place before Health Assessments.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. To note the increasing number of children in care in Derby City.**
- 2. To note the latest comparator information on performance, where, despite an increase in demand, Derby has maintained or improved results (please refer to the areas highlighted in "green" in paragraph 4.1 to 4.8 of the report).**
- 3. To request updates as required from lead officers; based on the national trends, where Derby has been identified as an outlier (please refer to areas highlighted in "red" in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.8)**
- 4. To request a report on the impact of UASC on support and placements in Derby for a future meeting.**

MINUTES END