

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 26TH AUGUST, 2020

Present – Councillors Iqbal (Chairman), Connor, Dean, Donaghy, Fletcher, Gibbon, Heslop, Ismail, McGeown, Murray, Newall, Sanders (as deputy for Councillor Weatherby), Walsh and Weatherby.

Also in attendance

Councillor Galloway	-	Executive Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Ms. B. Brown	-	Director of People
Mr. I. Walker	-	Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help
Mr. P. Rankin	-	Assistant Director Performance, Planning and Resources
Mrs. V. Ridge	-	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Brady, Ibrahim and Weatherby and Canon Bracegirdle.

Councillor Iqbal in the Chair.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved – That the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held on 20th July, 2020 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

5. PROPOSED COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/2021

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which detailed the proposed work programme for 2020/2021.

A request was also made that Play and Youth Provision be included in the work programme.

Resolved – That the proposed Work Programme for 2020/2021 be approved.

6. STAYING SAFE DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Mr. I. Walker, Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help gave a presentation to members which outlined the work being undertaken in relation to the development of a Staying Safe Demand Management Strategy for 2020/2021.

Information was provided in relation to the following, viz:--

- The demand pressures;
- Launch of the Early Help Offer which included 4 high level measures to reduce demand;
- The underlying pressures;
- The demand management plan;
- The situation with Looked After Children as at July, 2020;
- Placement step-down process;
- Foster care recruitment;
- How people enquired;
- Google analytics;
- The digital marketing campaign;
- Recruitment tracker; and
- The next steps.

Members in their deliberations made the following comments/observations:-

- Timing of the foster care programme;
- Time scales for approving foster carers pre and post Covid-19;
- Timescales for training;

- The number of children placed with foster carers compared to other Greater Manchester Authorities;
- The average caseload for a social worker pre and post Covid-19;
- The current situation with Avondale and Chew Moor Homes;
- Was Supported Lodging provided in-house;
- Issues around semi-independent living;
- The recruitment tracker and the percentage of foster carers that commence the training and then leave before completion;
- There had previously been a successful campaign for the recruitment of foster carers which was advertised on council employee pay slips; and
- For future reports/presentations a glossary be produced for acronyms.

Resolved - That the presentation be noted.

7. COVID-19 UPDATE

Mr. P. Rankin, Assistant Director Performance, Planning and Resources gave a brief update on the latest position with regard to Covid-19 since the last meeting.

Members were advised that government had now issued guidance for parents whose children were returning back to school in September, 2020. Furthermore, the Authority was working with schools to update risk assessments and the current date for children returning to most schools was from 7th September, 2020.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

8. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) The Executive Cabinet Member Children's Services Portfolio held on 16th, 8th July and 17th August, 2020.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 7.00 p.m.)