
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2014

Present: Councillors Stevens (Chair), Claisse (Vice-Chair), Bogle and Cunio

Apologies: Councillors Parnell and Spicer

51. **DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Councillor Bogle declared an interest in that she was a Council appointed representative to Southampton University Hospital Trust and had held the position of Cabinet Member for Children's Services in the last 6 months and remained in the meeting and took part in the consideration and determination of the item on the agenda.

52. **STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

53. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED: that the minutes for the Panels meetings held on 20th March and 2nd April 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

54. **LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD - UPDATE**

The Panel considered the report of the Director, People detailing an update for the Panel on matters relating to the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the substantial transformation programme Children and Families were going through.

The Panel noted that Appendix 6 of the report should have been a confidential appendix in accordance with the Councils Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution and the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of this appendix. This was based on Categories 7 and 7A of paragraph 10.4 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules. The information contained therein was potentially exempt as it related to information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime and information which was subject to any obligation of confidentiality. Accordingly the appendix had been withdrawn from the website.

Keith Makin, Independent Chair, Southampton Local Safeguarding Children Board, Cllr Chaloner, Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Alison Elliott, Director, People and Statutory Director for Children's Services were in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Panel particularly noted the significant changes that were taking place within the Local Safeguarding Children Board since the appointment of the new Chair in October 2013; these included a review of membership and functions to ensure the Board was fully compliant with the new requirements of Working Together 2013. Guiding principles and areas for development had been established which would see the Board providing more strategic direction and delegating more responsibilities to the Executive and Sub Groups. Some of the emerging themes for development included children

sexually exploited, involvement in the Board of children and young people who used the services and the continuation of ongoing work with GP's. Partner agencies had acknowledged the difficult period the Board had gone through and were engaged and committed to the new way of working and had contributed to a multi agency comprehensive data set which would provide the rigour of challenge and ability to make decisions in accordance with an evidence base. A new Threshold document and Universal Help Tool had been approved by the Board. Thresholds were not considered to be an issue although stepping children and young people down had been previously but the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Early Intervention Teams which went live as of 31st March 2014 would provide a service to those being stepped down from threshold and would in the long term see a reduction of children and young people coming into care by 2017/18. Southampton's MASH was one of the largest in the country and had good multi-agency representation that would provide a single point of contact for delivery of safeguarding services. A single recording system had also been introduced as part of the MASH and the LSCB would be responsible for and monitor the progress of the MASH.

Reference was made to the new Family Justice Bill that came into force as of today and whilst the principle of permanency was welcomed would provide a challenge for all involved to meet the prescribed deadline of 26weeks for adoption. For Southampton it was noted that previously 52weeks had been the average but was now at 33weeks with some cases meeting the 26 weeks. Early Intervention would be a key target area to avoid children and young people coming into care and where they did to seek permanency much sooner. It was noted that outcomes for Looked after Children were known to be poor nationally and was not any different in Southampton, however there was good partnership working in the City and a lot of work had taken place with the virtual school and other schools in the City with particular influence around temporary exclusions. It was important for the implications of the virtual school and Looked after Children to be understood in order to meet Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

The Panel acknowledged that in relation to national and statistical neighbours the City had higher rates of teenage pregnancy and incidents of domestic violence, admission to hospital as a result of accidents and violence and there was evidence to support the sense of Southampton being a more violent City. Southampton was an urban area with high levels of deprivation which across the country was linked to domestic violence; however whilst these differences were recognised they were similar challenges to other Cities and there would be learning from these areas. It was noted that Hampshire Constabulary were very good at recording incidents of domestic violence which indicated a 11% higher incident than elsewhere, however it was referenced that these figures may be a result of more effective recording than others. Meetings had also recently taken place with Hampshire Police to look at how work with those involved in domestic violence was dealt with; traditionally it had been to undertake work with the victim but addressing the offender behaviour was a better way of working therefore work with perpetrators was to be undertaken.

The Panel also noted that there were a number of Serious Case Reviews currently taking place which would be published over the forthcoming months. The purpose of the Serious Case Reviews was to identify the learning and any changes that were needed. Lead Reviewers for each of the reviews had ensured a rigorous approach and challenge to agencies to ensure all of the learning was identified.

The Panel noted that Local Safeguarding Children Boards were now subject to Ofsted inspection in their own right and therefore would also be inspected as part of the expected imminent inspection of Children's Social Care in the next 3-4 months.

The Panel also noted the Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report for 2012/13 and that the 2013/14 Annual Report was in progress and would be presented in a more detailed format with particular reference to progress.

In conclusion the Panel noted that there had been a number of positive initiatives in the City including Family Nurse Partnership and an increase in Health Visitors which had resulted in a reduction of case loads.

It was also noted that in relation to Children's Social Care caseloads were not an issue; social workers were now nearly 100% permanent staff as opposed to previously being at 50% agency staff. A recruitment and retention policy was in place together with a focus on staff development to which supervision, appraisal and workforce strategy were key areas. The authority had also been recognised nationally for support to newly qualified social workers.

Joe Hannigan, member of the public was in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

RESOLVED

- i. That the Local Safeguarding Children Board report separately to HOSP from Children's Services in the future;
- ii. That the Panel receive a 6 month update on Children's Services with particular reference to the progress of MASH and the on-going transformation programme;
- iii. That the Panel receives information from Children's Services and the Local Safeguarding Children Board as to inspection outcomes and Serious Case Review/Partnership Review Recommendations in a timely manner as and when such information was available; and
- iv. That the Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report be presented to the Panel in a timely manner when it becomes available.