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SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillors Winning (Chair), D Galton and Windle
Appointed Member Mr Rob Sanders

Apologies: Councillors J Baillie, A Bunday and Vaughan

1. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED: that this item be postponed until the following meeting.

2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021, 4 November 2021 and 31 March 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

3. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

It was noted that following receipt of the temporary resignation of Councillor J Baillie from the Panel, the Director of Legal and Business Services, acting under delegated powers, had appointed Councillor Galton to replace him for the purposes of this meeting. In addition, the Committee noted apologies from Councillors A Bunday and Vaughan.

4. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING SERVICE - PEER REVIEWS AND OFSTED ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT MEETING**

The Panel received the report of the Director, Legal and Business Services, which recommended that the Panel considered and challenged the latest version of the self-evaluation.

The Cabinet Member for Children & Learning – Councillor Paffey; Robert Henderson, Executive Director - Children and Learning; and, Steph Murray, Deputy Director – Children and Learning with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and officers, the Panel noted the following:

- The challenging financial climate whilst demand for services was rising.
- The comments contained within the LGA Peer Review relating to the confidence that the financial savings could be delivered in the timescales identified. It was recognised, following a review of statistical neighbours, that considerable savings could be achieved but Children's Services would meet with Executive Directors and the Cabinet to assess the viability of budget adjustments moving forward.
- The progress noted by Ofsted following their Annual Engagement meeting.

- The expected improvement in outcomes from November 2022, following the recruitment and induction of additional Social Workers.
- The reduction in the use of agency Social Workers.
- The request by Children's Services and Learning to Ofsted for a focused visit or joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) this year to enable improvements to bed in.

RESOLVED that the Panel be provided with a copy of the final Ofsted Engagement Letter.

5. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received the report of the Director, Legal and Business Services, which recommended that the Panel considered and challenged the performance of Children and Learning Services in Southampton.

The Cabinet Member for Children & Learning – Councillor Paffey; Robert Henderson, Executive Director - Children and Learning; Steph Murray, Deputy Director – Children and Learning; and, Jo Feeney, Performance Manager with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- The implementation of Care Director was presenting some challenges, but this would not affect the monitoring of any child.
- The number of contacts had increased by 25% in 21/22 compared with 20/21 activity.
- A high number of cases progressing to statutory case work rather than targeted early help.
- A high volume of contacts from the police, who have a statutory obligation to report all contact they have with a child, resulting in 2-300 reports per week. Those contacts need to be screened and where applicable, referred to the voluntary sector or to Early Help referrals.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Performance Manager circulates the May 2022 performance data to the Panel when it has been verified.
- 2) That, reflecting the importance of early intervention and diverting children away from statutory safeguarding services, the Panel consider the developing Early Help Service at a future meeting of the Panel.