

## **Children & Young People Select Committee**

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 17th September, 2014.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark(Chairman), Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Ben Houchen, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Elliot Kennedy, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Phil Rigby.

**Officers:** Laurayne Featherstone(RES), Shaun McLurg, Simon Willson, Lynda Brown(CESC), Judith Trainer and Kirsty Wannop(LDS)

**Also in attendance:** Tony Beckwith(Healthwatch), Emily Sweetman(Independent Consultant).

**Apologies:** Cllr Ross Patterson,

### **1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

### **2 Draft Minutes - 11th June 2014, 19th June 2014 and 16th July 2014.**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 11th June 2014, 19th June 2014 and 16th July 2014.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

### **3 Independent Healthwatch Evaluation**

The Committee considered a report that provided summary results of the Independent Healthwatch Evaluation of the five Tees Valley Healthwatches including Stockton-on-Tees.

The main information on the summary of results for Stockton-on-Tees Healthwatch that it had:-

- Established a distinct and separate identity from the former LINK organisation
- Consulted widely as the basis for a work programme
- Demonstrated a rigorous and successful process to recruit Board Members and provide them with ongoing support
- Was developing effective relationships with CCGs and Trusts, at both strategic and operational levels
- Had achieved a moderate level of public awareness (according to survey results)
- Had extended the reach of Healthwatch into a wider constituency than had been achieved with LINKs
- Engaged individual members and training volunteers.

Survey results relating to public awareness and visibility of Healthwatch Stockton were similar to results from across the Tees Valley.

It was stated that due to staffing changes and training needs of volunteers there had been delays particularly around the 'enter and view' aspect of Healthwatch; this was identified in the independent evaluation. In addition there was general agreement about where efforts should be concentrated over the coming months that included:-

- Help local people to have a better understanding of what Healthwatch was and had achieved.
- Ensure a period of stability in terms of staffing
- Increase the pace of activity and output in terms of the work programme, particularly by using 'enter and view' where appropriate.
- Improve levels of dialogue and exchange with local authority officers as commissioners of Healthwatch and the Service Navigator project, commissioners of social care services and public health, as well as with Overview and Scrutiny.

The Committee was also provided with Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Annual Report. This was the first annual report of Healthwatch since operating the new arrangements from 2013/14.

The Chair of Healthwatch was in attendance and provided Members with an overview that included:-

- The role of Healthwatch, its remit, and its vision and objectives.
- The accountability structure of Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees, how it was funded, its resources and governance.
- The key achievements, activities so far, challenges and its volunteers.
- Priorities for 2014/15.

There was a recognised need to increase public engagement, and increase links with neighbouring local Healthwatches and Healthwatch England

It was noted that Healthwatch has a broad range of responsibilities, and a complex role particularly due to its seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

It was felt by Healthwatch that it needed to better demonstrate the work it had completed on behalf other organisations including the CCG, in addition to the priorities identified by Healthwatch itself, and associated work. Due its limited resources Healthwatch needed to be able to prioritise its work programme.

AGREED that the report be noted.

#### **4 Performance Update Quarter 1 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report on performance of Children's Services. The report provided an overview of performance at the Quarter 1 period of 2014-15. The main information provided included details of:-

- Free early education/childcare places for 2year olds.
- Primary and Secondary schools judged to be good or outstanding from Ofsted.
- Proportion of pupils attending good or outstanding schools.
- Proportion of referrals to Children's Social Care with an active CAF 2.
- Information regarding children becoming subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within two years and, child protection plans lasting two years or more.
- Long term placement stability for looked after children.
- Care leavers in employment, education or training.
- Adoption timescales both A1 and A2.
- Young people agenda 16-19 who were not in education, employment or training.
- Looked after children placement stability and permanence and short term

placement stability.

- Care leavers and their accommodation upon leaving.
- Ofsted inspections of children's home, childminders, childcare providers and children's centres.
- Customer perception and satisfaction.

Members asked the following questions in relation to the performance report:

- Was there an indication, at this stage that the expansion of the CAF team was having the desired impact on performance?

Officers advised that it was too early to be sure as officers had taken up post in August. However, there had been a lot of activity within the team and indications were positive.

Members agreed to keep this under review

- Regarding the proportion of children becoming subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within two years, Members asked for more information in relation to the case review of one of the sibling groups where with the benefit of hindsight, it was felt that the first child protection plan may have been removed prematurely. The Committee wanted to understand the reason for this and ensure that action had been taken to seek to avoid this happening again.

Officers advised that the decisions were based on professional judgements at the time and the review had concluded that the change in circumstances could not have been predicted. In response to the request for more information, officers suggested a meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to discuss the level of detail needed whilst protecting individual identities.

Members also discussed whether there should be a greater role for scrutiny members in serious case reviews in the light of the recent Rotherham case and highlighted their concerns in relation to the neglect case in Thornaby recently reported in the press.

- In relation to Adoption timescales, as well as recruiting adoptive parents, Members queried whether there was any other actions that could be taken to speeding up the process without jeopardising the quality placements. Discussion also took place around whether delays finding a racial/cultural "fit" might result in delays.

Officers advised that whilst it was better to reflect racial/ cultural backgrounds, this was only one of a range of considerations.

- Members highlighted that Stockton was below the national and North East average for Children's Homes judged good/outstanding.

Officers advised that two of the homes had not been inspected and this had impacted on the percentage.

- Members highlighted the pleasing performance in relation to the percentage of Childminders and Childcare settings judged good or outstanding.

- The Committee noted that the percentage of Children Centres judged good or outstanding by Ofsted was below the England and North East. Members asked whether there were any common themes associated with the performance and for feedback on the improvement plan.

Officers undertook to circulate the Cabinet Report which provided further details to the Committee.

AGREED that:

1. The performance be noted.
2. That the Chair and Vice-Chair meet with Officers to identify additional information requirements for future meetings.

## **5 Review of School Organisation and Admission Arrangements**

Members felt that due to the lack of time available the item be deferred to another meeting.

AGREED that the item be deferred to the next meeting.

## **6 Work Programme**

The Committee noted its work programme.