

## Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 9 February 2022.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice Chair), Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Maurice Perry (sub for Cllr Andrew Sherris), Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

**Officers:** Martin Gray (Director of Children's Services), Judy Trainer (DS)

**Also in attendance:** Liam Twizell (Healthwatch)

**Apologies:** Cllr Andrew Sherris

### 1 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

### 2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4 Children's Services Overview Report 2022

Martin Gray presented the overview report for Children's Services. The report also included a summary of current performance data and a link to performance across the Council Plan reported on a six-monthly basis to Executive Scrutiny Committee.

The key issues discussed were as follows:

- Fixed term exclusions had reduced although it was recognised that some children had struggled adjusting to a structured environment returning to school after lock- down; there was still scope for the Council and schools to do more to reduce the need for exclusion
- In line with national trends, there had been a small increase in parents deciding to home school their children, but this had not been as significant an increase as had been expected. Local Authority powers were largely confined to safeguarding matters
- Support was given to care leavers with babies and young children where there was a recognised need
- The Healthy Schools Programme had been co-designed with schools and had been well received. 23 schools had signed up to date. Recognising that there were other pressures currently on schools, it was anticipated that participation would increase over time
- There had been significant discussions with staff over a long period of time

in order to inform the review of Children's Services and there had been positive feedback from staff about the changes as part of the recent Ofsted inspection. A new case management system had also been rolled out; the old system being no longer fit for purpose

- Delays in adoption timescales were often a result of ensuring that the best match was achieved, and the Council was performing well against national averages. The Director was confident that the Council had the right service model going forward
- The main funding pressure on the service related to placements in private residential homes; fees were also increasing. External placements had stabilised however as had the numbers of children in care
- Members commended the service on their ambition and vision and acknowledged the breadth of the changes and improvements planned
- Members supported the proposed scrutiny topics for 2022/23 which included Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Violence and a task and finish review of School Governor Support

AGREED that the report be noted and the proposed scrutiny topics for 2022/23 be endorsed.

## **5 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme**

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.