

## Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 19 July 2023.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice Chair), Cllr Ray Godwin Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Paul Rowling (sub for Cllr Nathan Gale), Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Katie Weston

**Officers:** Martin Gray, Adele Moore, David Willingham, Miriam Sigsworth (CS), Judy Trainer (DS)

**Apologies:** Cllr Nathan Gale

### 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 8 March 2023

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2023, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4 Action Plan – Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships

The Select Committee considered an action plan in respect of its previous scrutiny review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships. The action plan set out how the agreed recommendations would be implemented and target dates for completion.

AGREED that the action plan be approved a progress update be presented to the Select Committee in due course.

### 5 Children's Services Overview Report 2023

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 highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- The most recent Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services had resulted in an overall judgement of "Required Improvement". The key areas for improvement identified by Ofsted were:
  - The quality and effectiveness of plans for children and care leavers, including safety plans agreed with parents
  - Sufficiency of suitable foster homes for children
  - Frontline management oversight across the service, in relation to the

- quality of assessment and plans and the impact of interventions
- Opportunities for more children and care leavers to have a voice and to influence the development of services
- The Good and Beyond Board provided oversight and drive for continuous improvement planning and the Inspection recognised the considerable amount of progress since the 2019 inspection and the September 2022 focused visit
- Work was underway for the forthcoming SEND and AP Inspection which would take place in the next three years. In 2023 a Local Inclusion Partnership would be established in line with the SEND Green Paper and a strategic action plan would be agreed in advance of a new Local Inclusion Strategy to be developed in 2024. The vast majority of SEND children were educated in mainstream schools and funding was available to support this
- There continued to be significant demand across children's social care. The number of children in care had stabilised since April 2020. A more recent development had been the significant increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- The number of children placed out of Borough was broadly the same as four years ago and the Council was the highest performing Authority in the country around keeping children and young people as close to home as possible
- Stockton schools performed well overall, being the best performing in the region although there was an attainment gap between those children from poorer backgrounds, SEND and children in care
- A new Attendance Strategy for the Borough was to be presented to Cabinet in October
- A performance and improvement framework had been launched across the Directorate which increased the breadth and range of quality assurance activity taking place and supported service improvement
- The alternative provision free school would provide places for children at risk of exclusion whilst retaining them on the school roll as well as "turnaround" type of provision for children excluded based on an effective model operating in Doncaster
- The Doncaster based provision by Delta Academy was highly regarded by DfE and Ofsted. It positively impacted on children who attend and also promoted inclusive mainstream education
- The recruitment and retention of skilled, experienced staff was highlighted as a key factor in driving improvement
- New children's homes were being developed, supported by DfE capital funding. Members highlighted the importance of early consultation with Members regarding the location of children's homes

AGREED that the report be noted.

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

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.