

## **Minutes of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board**

**23 October 2023**

**-: Present :-**

Councillor Law (Chairwoman)

Councillors Fellows, Nicolaou, Tolchard and Twelves (Vice-Chair)

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Tanny Stobart, Play Torbay (virtually)

Dave Hammond, Devon and Cornwall Police

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, Chris Lewis, David Thomas and Virdee (virtually))

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### **9. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Cook (Non-voting Co-opted Member) and Laura Colman (Co-opted Member).

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, the membership of the Sub-Board had been amended to include Councillor Tolchard in place of Councillor Maddison.

### **10. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Board held on 31 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

### **11. Review of Membership of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board**

The Chairwoman, Councillor Law, outlined the submitted paper which proposed changes to the membership of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board following changes to the Torbay Youth Trust. It was proposed that the Youth Trust Representative be replaced by Play Torbay Representative and that Mike Cook's representation changed from Imagine This Partnership Board to Voluntary and Community Sector and Alternative Provider (Education) Representative.

Members formally welcomed Tanny Stobart from Play Torbay to the Sub-Board.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the revised Membership of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board as set out in the submitted document be approved.

## **12. Youth Provision in Torbay**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye, the Head of Learning Academy, Rachel Setter, and the Team Leader Education, TDA, Samantha Poston, provided an update on youth provision in Torbay and the improvements to the Acorn Centre funded through the Youth Improvement Fund and responded to the following questions:

- Were the Acorn Centre improvements likely to end up with an overspend on the approved budget as a result of increased costs.
- What was the youth provision in Brixham.
- When were the Council funded youth clubs going to start running.
- Does the Council work with the Police and Youth Justice Service to identify young people who were in need of youth support.
- Would schools be contributing towards the costs of the Youth Worker post.
- Does Sound Communities follow up work with the Boom Box etc.
- How many young carers were there in Torquay and does the Council help to get them over to Paignton.
- How many children were reached through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme and what was the reason for a decrease in numbers from last Summer. Action: it was agreed that a written response would be provided to this and that the Board would be kept updated on the HAF Programme.
- What was the 'no logos, no ego's' approach.
- Were all schools on board with the Youth Parliament.
- Where was the Youth Hub website.
- What had been scaled back for the Youth Improvement Fund.
- What consideration had been given to apprentices to offer suitable employment and training opportunities within the Council for young people.

Members supported the proposed increase of the Parkfield/Medical Tuition Service site from next year to help provide increase youth provision in Paignton.

Councillor Nicolaou outlined the work that he was doing with the Boom Box mobile DJ unit and the work of Sound Communities in engaging with young people and helping them to identify other activities to put their time to in order to reduce their involvement in crime and disorder.

Tanny Stobart provided a brief overview of work Play Torbay was engaged with in the Kings Ash Ward and agreed to provide a written update to all Members to keep them informed of this work.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Cabinet be recommended:

1. that priority be given to setting up a mentoring group or safe space for young men in Torbay;
2. that priority be given in the Kings Ash Ward to work with the community and voluntary sector and other agencies to help families and young people to reduce anti-social behaviour; and
3. that Ward Councillors be kept informed of the activities taking place within their Wards to support young people and to reduce anti-social behaviour so that they can help communicate this.

### **13. Adopt South West - Regional Adoption Agency Annual Report**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye, advised that the Cabinet had unanimously supported Cornwall and Isles of Scilly joining Adopt South West, Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and that there was a strong business case to support the proposal, at their meeting on 17 October 2023.

The Independent Chair of Adopt South West Operational Board, Alison Davis, and the Interim Head of Adopt South West, Amanda White, outlined the performance of Adopt South West for 2022/2023, as set out in their submitted annual report and responded to the following questions:

- How was the child's voice held when making links with adoptive parents and birth parents.
- What was the reason fewer people were coming forward to adopt.
- How does fewer adopters impact on siblings wanting to stay together.
- Will Cornwall and Isles of Scilly joining Adopt South West have an impact on the ability to place Torbay children with adoptive parents.
- What capacity would the new change bring.
- What were the gaps in sufficiency of adopters.
- How do you make people aware of how to become an adopter and how do you bust the myths and misinformation about the process and promote the benefits of adopting children.
- How many applicants were rejected through the process.
- What was done through the assessment phase to make potential adopters more prepared when thinking about adopting children with disabilities or additional needs.
- What proportion of adopters coming forward already have a family.
- Do foster parents move onto adoption.

Members noted the annual report of Adopt South West for 2022/2023 and acknowledged the improvement in timeliness of Placement to Adoption Orders which was down to 133 days from 247 in 2021/2022 and was the best performance of all four partners, with further work still to be done to meet the national target of 121 days.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board formally welcome Cornwall and Isles of Scilly to Adopt South West Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and that an update on the impact of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly joining the RAA be provided when the next annual report is presented in 2024.

**14. Torbay Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Joint Inspection Written Statement of Action Update**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye, Divisional Director Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Rachael Williams, and Head of Women and Children's Commissioning NHS Devon, Hannah Pugliese, outlined the submitted paper and responded to questions on the Torbay Local Area SEND Joint Inspection Written Statement of Action and the Safety Valve.

- How much do partners consider links between SEND issues and mental health issues.
- How do the roadshows work with secondary schools to ensure that as many parents and carers as possible engage with the process.
- What was being done to support children moving from primary school to secondary school to have a smoother transition.
- There had been a lack of funding from health over the last few years in respect of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) which has resulted in the Council picking up these costs, would this money be refunded by health and when could we expect this issue to be resolved.
- How were the wider implications for Torbay taken into account as well as Devon and Plymouth which were all part of the NHS Devon.
- What action was being taken to address long waiting lists for support and assessment.
- The Council had been successful in two SEND tribunals with 18 logged but not yet heard, what percentage of SEND plans does this represent and how does this compare to other years. Action: it was agreed that a written response would be provided to this question.
- How does preparing for tribunals impact on workforce capacity.

Members noted the complexities of regional partnership working as each agency covers its own area e.g. NHS Devon covers Torbay, Plymouth and Devon, and the Police covers Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and acknowledged the merit of a shared approach where possible to ensure consistency across the county.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that an update be provided to a future meeting of the Sub-Board from the new SEND Governance Executive on progress of SEND moving forward, including the progress made towards a shared approach across the county; and
2. to seek reassurance from NHS Devon (Integrated Care Board), via a written report to be submitted to the meeting of the Sub-Board on 18 December 2023, on the progress made in respect of the level of contributions from health

towards Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and issues with waiting lists.

**15. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker**

The Sub-Board noted the contents of the submitted action tracker. The Clerk provided the following update on behalf of the Director of Children's Services in respect of Minute 3/7/23 action 2:

The present Section 106 does not specifically reference allocation of properties to care experienced young people as part of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Capital and Growth Board has identified that a review of all Section 106 processes was required as there was a need to consider if they were working as effectively as required this would include the care experienced element and the ability to give priority consideration as part of our Corporate Parenting Duties. Any revision to the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document would need to be considered through the relevant governance processes. There was also a wider Directors' response to consider how we deliver housing to care experienced young people which would be considered not only within this review of the Section 106 processes but also incorporated within the wider housing options work.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Director of Children's Services be requested review the Work Programme and check that the responsible officer is correct and the Clerk has invited them to the relevant meeting; and
2. that a written update on housing for care experienced young people be provided to the Sub-Board once the work identified in Minute 15/10/23 has been completed.

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Chairwoman