

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	Wednesday, 27 September 2017
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors W. Johnson (Chair), P. Birkinshaw, G. Carr, Charlesworth, Clarke, Clements, K. Dyson, Ennis, Franklin, Gollick, Daniel Griffin, Hampson, Hand-Davis, Hayward, Lofts, Phillips, Pourali, Sheard, Tattersall, Unsworth, Williams and Wilson together with co-opted members Ms P. Gould and Mr J. Winter.

27 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Morrith in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

28 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

Councillors Tattersall, Charlesworth, G. Carr and Wilson declared non-pecuniary interests in relation to their membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel, in so far as discussion on minute 31 related to this.

Councillor Lofts declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to his membership of the Adoption Panel, in so far as discussion on minute 31 related to this.

29 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th September, 2017 were approved as a true and correct record.

30 Visitor Economy Strategy for Barnsley 2017-2020

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:-

- Councillor Roy Miller, Cabinet Spokesperson Place Directorate
- Phillip Spurr, Service Director, Culture, Housing and Regulation
- Sue Thiedeman, Head of Culture and Visitor Economy
- Lynn Dunning, Group Leader - Arts and Heritage
- Devinia Skirrow, Communications and Marketing Business Partner
- Matthew Mitchell, Arts and Events Manager
- Paul Clifford, Head of Economic Development

Councillor Miller introduced the item, referring to work undertaken as part of the Visitor Economy in Barnsley. This included attractions across the borough, and Barnsley was leading in its ownership and transformation of museums.

The transformation that had taken place over the past 10 years was praised, but it was noted that work is still required in order to ensure the borough was attractive to people coming to Barnsley. The need to promote Barnsley and be proud of the

borough was stressed, as was the need to generate more income to fund attractions in future.

As each day visitor spent an average of £21 per visit, the economic benefits of the improvement of the visitor economy were also noted.

Questions were asked in relation to the Strategy and the following matters were highlighted:-

- Growth in the Visitor Economy may put pressure on infrastructure, for example access/egress to Cannon Hall. It was noted that car parks at Cannon Hall are not yet at capacity, but people use Cawthorne Village to avoid charges. This is an issue which has been considered by highways, yet potential solutions could impact on village businesses. For larger events appropriate traffic management solutions were put in place. Members noted that plans were in place to improve car parking at Elsecar.
- Questions were raised around how Members could be involved in the development and management of sites, and witnesses welcomed the input of Members. Updates were given relating to the ambitions for both Worsbrough Mill and Barnsley Main sites, however it was noted that both would require significant investment to make these a reality.
- Branding was discussed in some depth, and this included Pennine Yorkshire, Welcome to Yorkshire and the Peak District. It was acknowledged that branding was a challenge, but was one way in which people's perceptions of Barnsley could be challenged. The Tour de Yorkshire was highlighted as an example of how perceptions could be challenged via the media, and through the first-hand experience of visitors. Members noted that a marketing post had been created 3 years ago, and this was essential for raising awareness of the offer within and outside Barnsley.
- The offer from Welcome To Yorkshire was discussed, which included training, and inclusion on their website and an option to purchase publicity. It was stressed that officers worked hard to maximise the benefits of membership and gain the best value for money possible. Members heard how significant numbers of those accessing webpages related to Barnsley's attractions were directed from Welcome to Yorkshire.
- Questions around the safety of visitors at attractions or events were posed. Members heard how robust procedures were in place, which included input from blue light services, in order to ensure safety. Challenges within the Town Centre were noted, and Members were assured that a number of measures were in place in order to address Anti-Social Behaviour, in order to help visitors receive a positive experience.
- The need to ensure gateways to the town were attractive in order to give the best visitor experience was noted. Those present heard how new teams had been engaged which would concentrate on cleaning and enhancing gateways.
- The meeting discussed the expected increases in jobs as the visitor economy expanded, noting that numbers employed directly by BMBC were relatively low, but expansion in associated hospitality and creative industries were acknowledged. It was noted that the Visitor Economy Strategy aligned with the Jobs and Business Plan, and officers had positive relationships with Barnsley College to ensure appropriate training was offered to support employment in any expanding areas. It was noted that a number of relief

contracts were in place to support events, and peaks and troughs at attractions as was normal in the sector, but these did offer regular work.

- Members noted that, where possible, external funds were maximised and a number of delivery staff were employed using this finance, as well as through income from attractions.
- With regards to consulting and responding to equality groups, it was noted that many had been engaged to date in drafting the strategy, and that an ongoing equalities action plan would be maintained. In addition a number of equality groups had engaged directly with attractions in order to ensure the visitor experience was positive for all.
- The ability for staff employed at attractions and organisations involved in hospitality to speak languages other than English was unknown and it was suggested that this may be an item for the Visitor Economy Forum to consider.
- Performance indicators within the document were discussed, and the use of footfall counters mentioned. It was noted that it was difficult to use these at in parks due to the complexity of access points, and also due to the availability of resources.
- The commitment of staff, and their ability to deliver within the current financial climate and pressures on resources was praised by both senior officers and Members.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That the witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution.

31 The Continuous Service Improvement of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:-

- Councillor Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson, People (Safeguarding)
- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director, People
- Keely Boud, Social Work Team Manager
- Andrew Veal, Social Work Team Manager
- Antonia Williams, Social Worker
- Steve Guirey, Social Worker
- Alice Darby, Social Worker

The Executive Director, People, gave a brief introduction and gave apologies from Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, who had been instrumental in realising the improvements seen.

A presentation was given and Members were reminded of the 2012 Ofsted inspection, which found that children were safe but judged the overall effectiveness of safeguarding services in Barnsley as being 'inadequate'.

In 2014 Ofsted judged the overall effectiveness of services for children needing help & protection and children looked after as 'requiring improvement' but good for care leavers.

The presentation went on to highlight the differences in experience from the viewpoint of a child experiencing the service in 2012 and 2016/17. Improvements had meant that children are now more likely to get the right service at the right time. A service review and additional staff as part of the Integrated Front Door meant children are now ready to be received and responded to without delay, with assessments completed in a timely manner.

There is additional management oversight and scrutiny, and cases are audited regularly. Senior management now meet with social workers and talk directly to children. An effective recording system is now in place, as are performance management and quality assurance systems. Constant oversight is provided through the Council, Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Board, and Barnsley Children and Young People's Trust.

Children in care in 2017 are now much more likely to have a health assessment and dental check, and Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are completed termly, rather than once a year. 96.8% of children in care also had their care plans reviewed on time, which had led to better outcomes for children.

For children in 2017, placements were much more likely to be stable, with stability much better than statistical neighbours and nationally, meaning children are less likely to move placements.

However it was noted that challenges remain; with only 42% of care leavers aged 18-21 years entering education, employment or training.

Questions were asked in response to the report and presentation and the following points were noted:-

- With regards to those leaving care not in education, employment or training, ensuring school placements were sustained and were stable was seen as paramount to ensure the best outcomes for young people.
- Members acknowledged that Academies within the borough had adopted their own approaches to discipline, however it was suggested that Ofsted was now looking at inclusion in a different way. Members noted that PEPs were reviewed termly, and attendance reviewed monthly. This allowed issues to be raised more immediately, in order to avoid situations such as exclusion.
- Members noted that all schools within the borough had signed up to the Fair Access Protocols, for those at risk of permanent exclusion. The Protocol had been subject to peer challenge, and, subject to approval by schools, it was expected that this would be amended to reflect suggested improvements. It was acknowledged that maintaining children in school placements was important, and moving schools and increasing travel time could put additional pressure on the child. Members noted the rise of children being educated at home, and it was acknowledged that this was not very well regulated.
- With regards to ensuring progress was maintained, Members heard how a culture of improvement had been embraced with everyone being more self-aware, and taking responsibility. The input of Members and a focus on performance had assisted this.
- Members discussed visits to school. It was noted that where and when visits were conducted was subject to appropriate consideration of risk and safety, acting in the best interests of the child. Occasionally this meant meeting within school time, but could also mean before 9.00am or after 5.00pm, this

could also include travelling to visit children placed out of the borough. The impact of this on workloads was acknowledged, as were the reasons behind this. Members noted that comparatively small numbers of children were placed outside the borough.

- With regards to workloads and how manageable they were for officers, it was noted that caseloads are bigger than was desirable, which can cause stress and challenges but this was under constant consideration in order to be managed most effectively. The ongoing recruitment process, together with the avoidance of using agency staff, and the permanent nature of the workforce including management had provided stability and more effective ways of working.
- With reference to the report circulated, it was suggested that phrases within could be more specific in order to aid scrutiny. It was noted that much of the additional specific detail was contained in background reports, which could be circulated to Members to assist.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) The content of the report and presentation be noted; and
- (ii) That the witnesses be thanked for their attendance.

32 Arrangements for Discharging the Statutory Role of Director of Children's Services: Local Test of Assurance

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:-

- Councillor Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson, People (Safeguarding)
- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director, People

The attention of Members was drawn to the report circulated, and Members were reminded of the restructuring which had combined the duties of the Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Social Services. Where Council's had added duties to the Director of Children's Services, a test of assurance should be undertaken.

An external assessment was undertaken by Peter Dwyer, then the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service for North Yorkshire County Council, an authority rated as 'good'.

The assessment considered various sources of information, including the self-assessment undertaken, a range of documents, information on the Council's internet pages, and interviews with officers.

The assessment presented two recommendations, the first relating directly to Overview and Scrutiny and the need to ensure the focus on Children's Services is not lost; the second relating to reliance on high quality officers and the need to ensure this is maintained through succession planning and strong recruitment processes.

Members asked a number of questions on the report and the following points were noted:-

- There is no requirement to repeat the assessment, however it may be wise to repeat the exercise should the duties assigned to the post acting as Director of Children's services significantly change.

- With regards to the focus of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the current arrangements, with a wider membership than previously, were considered beneficial to providing an appropriate level of oversight and challenge. It was suggested that this needed to be maintained.
- Whilst the need for focus on Children's Services was acknowledged, Members discussed whether current arrangements allowed appropriate time to focus on other issues. It was suggested that this would be considered in more detail in a review of the current arrangements.
- It was agreed that whatever structures were adopted, they needed to be carefully balanced to ensure that they added value, and took account of wider arrangements.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That thanks be given to the witnesses for their attendance.