

Children's Services Executive Member Report to Council 24th July 2019

DECISIONS

- 1 Executive on the 11th of June ordered that the 10 year lease with Thirteen Group of Daniel Court in relation to the expansion of the approved Council's edge of care provision, which is designed to support the management and accommodation of the Council's LAC population.
- 2 Executive approval sought for the additional funding required to support the creation of additional year 7 school places (report has been presented to Exec).

STRATEGIC

- 3 There has been considerable activity to support the development of the Department for Education Trailblazer agenda with North Yorkshire County Council. This initiative would support a No Wrong Door initiative in Middlesbrough, which has evidentially supported NYCC edge of care offer which has reduced the number of children Looked After and placed in External Residential placements. This has in turn resulted in savings for the local authority. We have sought approval from the Minister on the 8th July and are hoping to progress with a plan thereafter. It is hoped the project will be initiated from November 2019 onwards.
- 4 Place planning, especially for year 7 in September 2020 is heavily dependent on the opening of the recently announced free school at Middlehaven. We anticipate that the school will be opened in temporary accommodation from September 2020.

PERFORMANCE

Ofsted Inspection

- 5 On the 25th and 26th April 2019, Ofsted undertook a focused visit inspection of Middlesbrough Children's Services to evaluate the Council's arrangements for children in need and children subject to a child protection plan. The inspectors considered a range of evidence, including discussions with partner agencies, social workers and senior managers. They also looked at performance management and quality assurance information and children's case records. The inspection team reported their findings in a letter to the Council, published on the Ofsted website on 21st May 2019

Ofsted identified no areas requiring priority action and no child was found by them to be at risk of inadequate protection or harm during the inspection. This has been the subject of a report to Executive on the 11th July 2019.

Work has already commenced to deliver the action plan for Children's Service's (including wider corporate input) to address the areas for improvement identified by the inspection.

SEND Inspection

- 6 In March 2017 the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Inspection took place in Middlesbrough. This was a five day inspection by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC). The outcome of this inspection was a Written Statement for Action for the Local Area (Local Authority, Health and partners). The Written Statement of Action explained how the local area would improve significant areas of concern:
 - Strategic leadership, governance and implementation of the disability and special educational needs reforms in the local area.
 - Involvement of children, young people and families around discussion and decision-making about the services and support they need
 - How the Local Offer will be further improved to ensure children, young people and families have a clear understanding of the resources and support available in Middlesbrough
 - Greater analysis and use information and data to drive improvement in provision and outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the local area
 - The improvement of strategic planning to support jointly commissioning services across Education, Health and Social Care.
- 7 The Local Area has been informed that Ofsted and CQC will revisit **week beginning 8th July** to evaluate how much progress has been made since the original inspection.
- 8 In September 2018 a letter was received by the Local Authority and South Tees CCG from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families (Nadhim Zahawi MP), with acknowledgement of the progress gained in addressing the actions in the Written Statement of Action over the previous 12 months. The Minister was encouraged to learn that accountability structures were stronger, better use of data and quality assurance processes were contributing to an improvement in the quality and timeliness of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and the profile of SEND had risen significantly in Middlesbrough following the work.
- 9 The letter stated that it was important that momentum was maintained and that further progress should be reported by 30th September 2019. We hope that the inspectors will find that sufficient progress has been made in all 4 areas of concern. We know that this is a high bar to reach as nationally only 3 other Local areas have had their improvements signed off in revisit inspections.

YOS Inspection

- 10 On 1st April 2019, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) conducted an inspection of South Tees Youth Offending Service (STYOS). The overall rating was 'Good', with seven out of twelve areas inspected deemed to be 'outstanding'.

The inspection report said staff 'demonstrated a clear understanding of each child or young person's life and how that affected their current behaviour and risks'. They thought staff were creative in their delivery of work and that there was good use of partnership agencies to meet the needs of the children and young people. Service user feedback was also included in the report, and young people supervised by the YOS rated the service they received highly. The full HMIP report was published on 20th June.

Progress against Strategic Plan and Directorate priorities

- 11 *Strengthen the department's performance management culture, to drive continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people and value for money within Children's Services:* The Department are delivering a series of monthly case file audits and specific audits looking at themes we would like to explore further, as informed by our self-assessment.
- 12 Demand Project: The Directorate is currently undertaking a project reviewing Demand on Children's Services. The project aims to explore the following:
- Are we working with the right children and families at the right time to support their needs and prevent the escalation of risk?
 - How can we forecast demand for our Services to support our strategic planning and commissioning arrangements?
- 13 The project includes a range of activity including scrutinising performance data, GIS mapping and audits. There will be a number of periodic reports to support the project over the summer.
- 14 *Embed strength based practice across Children's Services to enable families to care for children safely and support them to achieve:* The Jo Fox training programme was launched on June 27th. This will support the development of core skills within our social care service. The training programme is nationally recognised as being effective and supporting LA's with their development of the workforce.
- 15 *Deliver edge of care, increased residential and in-house fostering provision in Middlesbrough to meet the needs of children and families:* Expansion of in house provision continues, our first specialist provision for children with Autism opened in June, with further provision being developed over the summer for older children.
- 16 *Improve the quality of social work practice, to improve outcomes for children and families:* The participation lead has been working with the Social Care to support discussion in teams of the Bright Spots survey, complete by looked after children,

about how we can improve the services we provide to them. This has resulted in a number of new initiatives including the social worker card, which is a business card workers give to children with their key contact details.

- 17 *Create a Youth Parliament to give young people a greater say in the development of services and outcomes:* There has been agreement from democratic services to support an election process for the Member of the Youth Parliament.
- 18 *Continue work with our partners to deliver the adverse childhood experiences project, to prevent the damaging impact of such experiences on children's lives:* The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) project was commissioned by the Children's Trust Board. Following consultation with Children's Trust partner agencies and the voluntary sector, a multi-disciplinary team was established to work with children in two 'pilot' schools in Middlesbrough where two or more ACE's have been recognised. The team has subsequently been re-named the 'Family roots' team after consultation with children in the schools. The team is in its infancy and have recently begun direct work with families. This is a 3 year project, and will be externally evaluated by Teesside University.
- 19 *Develop and deliver a new South Tees Local Safeguarding Arrangement with statutory partners:* Following the Wood Review (2017) into the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), the Government has introduced legislation through the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to reshape the way in which local agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This sees LSCBs ceasing to be the mechanism for multi-agency safeguarding, and instead sets out 'safeguarding partner' arrangements, which will comprise three key agencies (local authorities, health and police).
- 20 Strategic leaders from across the three statutory partners reached an agreement that Middlesbrough and Redcar would join together to have 'south tees' safeguarding arrangements going forwards, with Middlesbrough being the host authority. A paper has been prepared and is being submitted to the Secretary of State outlining this proposal. A full implementation plan has been developed in relation to the transition arrangements. The South Tees Safeguarding Partnership arrangements will be reviewed after one year, and annually thereafter.

Progress against approved savings plans

- 21 Progress is being monitored against the departments approved savings plans and mitigations are being put in place to replace savings that are delayed.

Key activity states

- 22 MACH: We are excited to announce the launch of the South Tees Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH) on the 3rd of June. The MACH mean our Middlesbrough 'Front Door' to Social Care and Early Help will turn into a South Tees 'Front Door.' The MACH will be made up of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC), Middlesbrough Council (MC) and our partners.

Why have we are made this move?

- This will create a single point of contact across the whole of the South Tees for seeking advice, guidance, support and direct services. Bringing us together in one hub will help us share information and strengthen the role of our partners at the front door.
- Ensuring that children and families receive the right services, from the right agency, at the right level, at the right time.
- Bringing agencies together to think 'family' with the child at the centre supported by a better process for sharing information.
- Providing opportunities to support families quickly to avoid escalation of needs.
- Enabling appropriate pathways into services.

The MACH will be based at Daisy Lane, Ormesby, Middlesbrough, TS7 9JF. This location is already where the South of Tees Adult Single Point of Access (SPA) is located.

INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION

- 23 The SEND and Vulnerable Learners Service organised a SEND award celebration in June 2019.

Councillor Barrie Cooper
Executive Member for Children's Services