

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
7 JANUARY 2013	Public Report

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Report Author – Cllr Sheila Scott

PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE

To provide Members with a progress report from the Children’s Services Portfolio Holder.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to scrutinise the progress made on the Cabinet Members’ Portfolio by providing challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support improvements in performance.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

One of the priorities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy is Creating Opportunities, Tackling Inequalities, which is within the remit of this Committee.

4. BACKGROUND

This report focuses on the progress we have made across my portfolio.

5. KEY ISSUES

This report provides the Committee with an overview summary of the service’s performance since my last report in July 2013.

5.1 Children’s Social Care

This Committee has received regular updates on progress against the improvement plan and I continue to be grateful to Members of the Task and Finish Working Group for the attention they have given to this issue. I will, however, summarise our main achievements over this period and highlight the key risks as we move forward.

- From the 22nd to the 25th of October we had an Ofsted inspection of our fostering service under the new framework. We received the draft report in November and I am pleased to report the service has continued to be judged as adequate. The inspectors were particularly complimentary about the progress that has been made this year and given the exacting nature of the new framework I am very pleased with this outcome. They identified many strengths in Peterborough:
 - Work now well planned and workers find it less stressful
 - Good engagement with children
 - Children were safe
 - Meeting health needs is “excellent”
 - Virtual school and up to date PEPs

- PASP - these were described as changing the culture of the service around impact and outcomes

The main areas for development are linked to the quality of the assessments, communication with foster carers, and the mixed satisfaction of foster carers.

The grades for each domain are as follows:

Overall effectiveness	Adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	Adequate
The quality of service provision	Adequate
Safeguarding children and young people	Adequate
Leadership and management	Adequate

- As Members are aware, the Eastern Region Safeguarding Health Check was undertaken from 29th to 31st October. This is a mini-inspection that follows the Ofsted framework. The team was led by Martin Pratt, DCS from Luton, Sue Williams, Assistant Director from Hertfordshire and Lesley Whitney, Assistant Director from Norfolk. This was a considerable investment of time by regional colleagues into supporting Peterborough's improvement and I would like to record my thanks to the team who delivered a very rigorous and challenging appraisal of our progress this year. The review team interviewed the Chair of this Committee and also the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel alongside the Leader and me. I am delighted that the review team recognised the considerable progress we have made as a Council this year and the strong leadership provided by Members and the senior managers. The report produced by the Peer Team is attached as an appendix.
- Following the appointment of Sue Westcott to the DCS role, Jean Imray has agreed to undertake the role of Assistant Director until the early summer. We are currently recruiting to the permanent third tier posts within the revised structure. The number of management posts covered by temporary staff continues to be a major risk and I am gratified that there has been considerable interest in the posts we have advertised.
- Flick Schofield, the chair of the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board resigned in December. I would like to express my thanks to Flick and wish her well for the future. Flick will continue to chair the Peterborough Adult Safeguarding Board so will continue to be heavily involved in the city. Mark Hopkins, Assistant Chief Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, has agreed to take on the role as vice-chair and we have commenced the recruitment process for Flick's replacement.
- On the 30th of November the winners of the social worker of the year awards were announced. Estelle Thain, an Advanced Practitioner, and Jodie Wallis, a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) both workers in the Family Support Service, had been shortlisted in their respective categories. Estelle Thain won the category of Children's Social Worker of the Year and also won the headline prize of Social Worker of the Year award. This is a tremendous achievement for Estelle and I am sure you will join me in congratulating her.

5.2 Duke of Edinburgh Award

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme presentation evening took place on 28th November. One hundred young people and their parents from eight schools attended to collect their awards on the evening. NEET young people from the Prince's Trust Team Programme gained experience

by acting as stewards and serving refreshments. Over the last 12 months 222 young people from local schools have gained the Bronze Award, 12 the Silver Award and 9 the Gold Award.

5.3 Connecting Families Programme

In response to the national Troubled Families Programme, we have developed with partners the Connecting Families project; this has resulted in eight agencies identifying workers for the project. The workers work directly with families who have complex needs resulting in issues such as school attendance problems and anti-social behaviour. We are working with 49 families and if we improve school attendance and prevent offending, this will result in the Government giving us some money back - 'payment by results'.

5.4 Residential and Respite Homes

Within the last three months all three of our residential and respite homes (Cherry Lodge, The Manor, Clare Lodge) have achieved good with outstanding features in Ofsted inspections.

5.5 Medium Term Financial Strategy

Members will be aware of the financial constraints facing all of local government across the country following the announcement of the local government settlement before Christmas. I am working closely with Cabinet colleagues and senior managers to identify the required savings in this very challenging environment. Once this work is completed the details will be reported to the budget scrutiny meeting later this month.

6 IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Committee will comment on and make recommendations relating to the updates provided in this report in order that delivery potential is maximised for the benefit of children and families.

7 CONSULTATION

No consultation has taken place with regard to this report.

8 EXPECTED OUTCOMES and NEXT STEPS

Comments and recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee members will be considered as part of the ongoing development and delivery of children's services.

9 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None

10. APPENDICES

Report of the Eastern Region Peer Safeguarding Health Check

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