
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2024

Present: Councillors Barnes-Andrews (Chair), Lambert (Vice-Chair), J Baillie, Cox, Mrs Mintoff and Webb
Appointed Members: Rob Sanders

Apologies: Councillor Chapman
Appointed Members: Catherine Hobbs

32. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The Panel noted the apologies of Councillor Champman.

33. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

34. **THE YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE IN SOUTHAMPTON**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director of Children and Learning providing an overview of the performance of the Youth Justice Service in Southampton.

Councillor Winning – Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, Steph Murray – Deputy Director, Children and Learning, Tim Nelson – Head of Young People’s Services, Anna Harbridge – Service Lead: Youth Justice Service and Chief Inspector Chris Douglas – Hampshire Constabulary were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel discussed a number of points including:

- A renewed emphasis on treating young offenders as children and a stronger emphasis on trying to deal with the child’s issues and avoid where possible custodial sentences;
- The numbers of children on programmes across the City and that where now in custody. The Panel learned that the custodial sentences were reducing and the approximate break down on children on programmes with the City;
- The efforts being made to improve the level of educational attainment for children at risk or on programmes. It was noted that a number of children had been helped to achieve qualification that enabled them to work within the construction industry; and
- The validity of the figures within the report. Members noted that the performance figures detailed in the report were at odds with comments in the report. It was explained that the official figures used were subject to a time delays and that the comments used were a reflection of the progress being made by the service;

RESOLVED that an update report is considered by the Panel at a future meeting, provisionally at the 28 November 2024, to consider performance in the following areas:

- The number of children sentenced or remanded to custody;

- Improvements in education outcomes; and
- Levels of serious youth violence.

35. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children’s Services and Learning in Southampton.

Councillor Winning – Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, Steph Murray – Deputy Director, Children and Learning and Laura Trevett – Strategic Performance Manager were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel discussed a number of points including:

- Figures relating to the high numbers of contacts and referrals in January;
- The increase in re-referrals and efforts being made to reduce this number;
- The increase in children in care returning to live with their birth families and the measures being put in place to ensure that this is safe;
- The fall in first time entrants and whether this reflected steps being introduced.

RESOLVED

1. That, reflecting the importance of the Family Safeguarding Model to the service transformation programme, the model is, subject to agreement with the Chair, included on the 6 June 2024 agenda for the Panel.
2. That, in recognition of the insight it may provide on the effectiveness of safeguarding practice, the Panel review the planned analysis by the service of children subject to 2 or more child protection plans when it has been completed.

36. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - EXEMPT PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

The Chair moved that if members did not have any specific matters for consideration in respect of the exempt Appendix 2 of the following agenda item could be considered without disclosing information that was subject to an obligation of confidentiality and therefore it would not be necessary to exclude the press and the public from the following agenda item.

RESOLVED that the Panel would consider the following agenda item without reference to the exempt appendix and therefore the press and the public would not be excluded from the following agenda item.

37. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received and noted the report of the Scrutiny Manager which enabled the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel to monitor and track progress on recommendations made at previous meetings.