

MINUTE of MEETING of the SOCIAL POLICY, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 16 MARCH 2017.

Present – Councillors Danny Logue (Chair), Tony Boyle, Diane Calder, Jim Dixon, and Sarah King

Absent – Frank Toner

Apologies – Maureen Finlay, Senior People's Forum Representative

In attendance

Isabella de Wit, Realigning Children's Services Programme Manager

Simon Anderson, Realigning Children's Services Data and Evidence Adviser

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 7 – Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority Minutes

Councillor Boyle declared a non-financial interest in that he was the council appointee to the Community Justice Authority Board.

Councillor Logue declared a non-financial interest in that he was an employee of NHS Lothian.

2. MINUTE

The panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 12 January 2017 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. REALIGNING CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROGRAMME

The Panel welcomed Isabella de Wit, Programme Manager, and Simon Anderson, Data and Evidence Adviser, from Realigning Children's Services (RCS) to the meeting. A presentation was then given on the Scottish Government funded programme, Realigning Children's Services, which aimed to drive prevention and early engagement through locally led changes, working collaboratively to use the total available resources to best meet the needs of and improve outcomes for children and families.

Key aspects of the programme included a shared understanding of tasks focusing on evidence obtained from children's wellbeing surveys, service mapping, data linkage and local data. The RCS survey programme gathered information relating to whole population data and aggregate analysis comparing data linkage to education services and post code information. Examples of RCS survey measures included the following:

- Self-reported general health in primary and secondary schools;

- Use of cigarettes/drugs/alcohol in secondary schools only;
- Engagement with schools in primary and secondary schools;
- Pressure of school work in primary and secondary schools;
- Level of physical activity in primary and secondary schools;
- Number of close friends in primary and secondary schools; and
- Bullying and harassment in primary and secondary schools.

The Panel was then provided with examples of analysis from the RCS survey programme, which was for illustrative purposes only.

The Head of Social Policy informed the members of the Panel that the RCS programme and West Lothian's engagement in the programme formed part of the range of activities being undertaken by the new Children's Services Plan.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, thanked Ms de Wit and Mr Anderson for attending the meeting and providing a very informative presentation.

#### Decision

Noted the presentation.

#### 4. WEST LOTHIAN CHAMPIONS BOARD

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing details of the funding received by West Lothian Council from the Life Changes Trust.

The report advised that the funding became available from the Life Changes Trust, an independent charity established with a Big Lottery Fund endowment of £50 million to improve the lives of two key groups in Scotland: care experienced young people and people affected by dementia. West Lothian was one of eight local authority areas to receive funding. The £209,043 funding received would be used throughout 2017 to 2019 to support West Lothian to establish a local 'Champions Board'.

The Senior Manager advised the Panel that the Champions Board in West Lothian would not replace the existing methods of engaging and involving care experienced young people but would help to build the capacity to develop confidence in their abilities and potential, giving them the platform to flourish and grow.

The award of the Life Changes Trust would fund both participation worker and development worker for the three year period. These posts would support the development of a Champions Board approach in West Lothian and facilitate a range of training and awareness activities to build the capacity of Corporate Parents and enhance their knowledge and

understanding of their duties and responsibilities.

The Champions Board was an exciting development which offered real opportunity to put the council's care experienced young people in the driving seat, where their views, opinions and aspirations were central to influence improvement in how services were delivered and developed.

It was recommended that the Panel note the funding received from the Life Changes Trust and the intended work which would be undertaken during the allocated period.

#### Decision

To note the contents of the report.

### 5. LOTHIAN AND BORDERS COMMUNITY JUSTICE AUTHORITY - MINUTES

A report was circulated by the Head of Social Policy to which was attached minutes of the meetings of the Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority (CJA) held on 18 August and 17 November 2016. The report ensured that members were kept updated on the activities of Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority as part of the council's Code of Corporate Governance.

The Panel was asked to note the terms of the minutes of the meetings of the Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority held on 18 August and 17 November 2016.

#### Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

### 6. REVIEW OF SOCIAL WORK SUPPORT SERVICES TO VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing details of the proposed improvements to social work support services for vulnerable children and young people.

The report recalled that a comprehensive service review was carried out of front line social work support for young people aged over fifteen years who were looked after and also for care leavers who were entitled to aftercare support with the purpose of recommending improvements in line with current policy and legislation. The review identified the potential for improving the service and making better use of the council's resources.

The service redesign was in line with corporate parenting legislation ensuring that social work services were better prepared to meet the needs of the council's looked after children and those at risk of being looked after away from home, improving their outcomes and those of care leavers.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the plan to redesign current service provision and notes the intention to improve services for young people and families.

#### Decision

To note the contents of the report.

### 7. REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing details of the intention to review the model of residential child care in West Lothian.

The report recalled that the current model of residential care in West Lothian had been in place for a long period of time. Significant changes have been made during this period in the level and complexity of need experienced by looked after young people. As a consequence of this, the service intended to commence a review of the council's arrangements for residentially caring for looked after children within West Lothian. The review process would include listening to the voices of children and young people and consulting with staff at all levels involved in the provision of residential care, in addition to other key stakeholders.

The Panel was advised that providing the highest quality care for the council's looked after children and young people was a key priority for the social policy service. Young people who were residentially cared for in West Lothian tended to have highly complex needs. To ensure the most appropriate model of care was available to meet the needs and support better outcomes for young people, the service planned to review the children's residential care service in consultation with key stakeholders. The review would consider what worked well within the residential houses and also what improvements could be made to how residential care was delivered and managed to improve outcomes for young people.

The Senior Manager then responded to questions from members of the panel. It was noted that it was important that the council's system of residential care had the capacity to meet need and reduce reliance on external provision to ensure the most effective use of council resources.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the intention to review the model of residential care with the purpose of improving the outcomes for young people requiring residential care.

#### Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. REPORT ON WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY PAYBACK ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing details of the development and content of the Annual Report submitted by West Lothian Council to the Scottish Government on the operation of the Community Payback by Offenders scheme. West Lothian Council's Community Payback Order Annual Report for 2015-16 was attached at appendix 2 to the report. Additional statistical information relating to the financial year 2015-16 was attached at appendix 1 to the report.

The report explained that consultation was an integral part of the process of Community Payback, which the council contributed to through its officers and input by councillors. The success of the Community Payback Unpaid Work scheme continues to depend on referrals of work for offenders to undertake. Councillors, through their engagement with community-based projects of all types, were important in promoting referrals.

The Senior Manager, Young People and Public Protection advised that during the year a total of 42,370 hours of Community Payback Unpaid Work were carried out in West Lothian. While this showed a 13% decrease from the previous year it was noted that the 2015-16 figure was 15% higher than the average for the preceding three financial years. Details of the bicycle re-use project was also provided which has proved to be a very successful project. During 2015-16, 3,256 bikes were acquired from Community Recycling Centres and by direct donation, with approximately 8% of these emerging for further use. Almost 43 tonnes of metal was recycled during the year and as a result the Unpaid Work Team made donations totalling £2,000 to local charities.

The report concluded that Community Payback legislation continued to provide some challenges for all justice services in West Lothian. The Criminal & Youth Justice Service had effective strategies in place to manage the volume of this work. Courts were benefitting from the range of opportunities offered by the use of additional requirements of Orders. CPOs remained both an important tool in West Lothian's inter-agency focus on Reducing Re-offending and a key component in developing the concept of Community Justice for which West Lothian CPP would formally take responsibility on 1 April 2017. The Criminal & Youth Justice Service would continue to report to appropriate committees on progress in respect of all of these factors following submission of the next CPO Annual report.

The Panel acknowledged the excellent work carried out by West Lothian's Community Payback Unpaid Work team and noted the range of activities and projects undertaken.

The Panel was invited to note the terms of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. JOINT INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing details of the joint inspection of services for children and young people which was being carried out in West Lothian.

The report explained that the Care Inspectorate was asked by Scottish Ministers to develop a new model for the scrutiny of and improvement of services for children and young people. The report then outlined the aims and the approach taken to ensure that all of the services in a local authority area were working together to make a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and their families. The Community Planning Partnership was responsible for providing effective services for children and young people and focused on how well services were working together to improve outcomes for children and young people.

West Lothian Council received formal notification of the inspection on 14 December 2016. The Panel was advised that the joint inspection would take place over a 35 week period from notification to the publication of the inspection report. The process would take account of the full range of work that was undertaken with children, young people and families locally and would ultimately report on the difference that services were collectively making to the lives of children, young people and families in West Lothian. Following the publication of the final inspection report the partnership would be required to prepare a plan detailing the actions that would be taken in response to the report. This action plan must be submitted to the Care Inspectorate within six weeks of publication of the inspection report.

The Senior Manager, Children & Early Intervention, then responded to questions from members of the Panel.

Members of the Panel then acknowledged the excellent support provided by staff during the inspection process and noted the number of focus groups set up.

It was recommended that the Panel notes that a joint inspection of services for children and young people was underway in West Lothian.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10. WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the contents of the workplan that would form the basis of the panel's work over the coming months.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.