



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2014
10.00 - 11.20 am in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward
Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252739

Present

Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)
Councillors Peggy Mullock (Vice Chairman), Charlotte Barnes (Substitute) (substitute for Hannah Fraser), Andy Boddington, Peter Cherrington (Substitute) (substitute for Kevin Turley), Vince Hunt (substitute for Paul Wynn), Robert Macey, Kevin Pardy, Robert Tindall and David Turner

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

Austin Atkinson

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

Mark Hignett

15 **Apologies and Substitutions**

- 15.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fraser, Councillor Turley, Councillor Wynn and Mr Wilson
- 15.2 Councillor Barnes substituted for Councillor Fraser, Councillor Cherrington substituted for Councillor Turley and Councillor Hunt substituted for Councillor Wynn

16 **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

- 16.1 None were disclosed

17 **Minutes**

- 17.1 RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Young People's Scrutiny Committee held on the 18 June 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

18 **Public Question Time**

- 18.1 There were no questions from members of the public

19 Members' Question Time

19.1 There were no questions from Members

20 West Mercia Adoption Partnership

20.1 The meeting received the report of the Head of Children's Safeguarding which provided an update on the progress of the West Mercia Adoption Partnership and the performance of the Joint Adoption Service

20.2 The Head of Children's Safeguarding reminded the meeting that the business case for the partnership had been agreed at a Portfolio Holder decision session in April. She added that work had been ongoing to identify service areas that would be moved into the joint service for Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Telford & Wrekin in the current year and alongside this work, further work was being done to look at other service areas that could be the subject of joint working in the future.

20.3 The Head of Children's Safeguarding reported that the Joint Adoption Service currently run by Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council was currently rated as the second best performing adoption agency in England; and a letter of congratulations had received from the Minister of State, Edward Timpson, on the performance.

20.4 The Service Manager – Joint Adoption Service commented that this was an exciting project and she was keen to develop the services offered by the Joint Service especially in relation to harder to place children.

20.5 The Chair of the Adoption Panel gave an outline of its work. He went on to say that the Panel was keen to promote best practice in the new Partnership.

20.6 A Member asked whether there was an increase in the number of adoptions. The Head of Children's Safeguarding commented that having reviewed the current cohort of LAC children in her view there were too many children of a relatively young age in long term foster placements and there was a need to look at achieving permanency via Adoption for more children such as older children, sibling groups and children previously thought too hard to place because of their individual needs..

20.7 A Member commented that the Council needed to be more aspirational in the way it considered the harder to place children. He also commented that there was an issue around the fact that Pupil Premium did not always follow looked after children from other areas. The Head of Children's Safeguarding advised him that there was need to look at the barriers to finding a permanent solution and that this presented a challenge to her managers. She agreed to bring a report on Pupil Premium to a future meeting.

20.8 The Chair thanked the Head of Children's Safeguarding and the Adoptions panel Chair and Service managers for their reports and congratulated the Joint Adoption Service on its performance.

21 Havenbrook : Short Breaks for Children on the Edge of Care

- 21.1 The meeting received the report of the Head of Children's Safeguarding which updated them on a pilot project running at the Havenbrook Children's Home.
- 21.2 The Head of Children's Safeguarding informed the meeting that a pilot scheme had been introduced at Havenbrook which would run from June to December. This had introduced a short breaks provision for children who were in danger of coming into care, which would enable a child to participate in a number of activities and give parents a break from caring which could prevent full family breakdown.
- 21.3 The Head of Children's Safeguarding advised Members that a £10,000 grant had been received from the Department of Education's Innovation Programme which recognised the innovative nature of the work underway at Havenbrook.
- 21.4 The Head of Children's Safeguarding stated that the scheme was looking to recruit members of the Voluntary and Community Sector to increase the number of different activities on offer through the scheme and that a recruitment event would be held later in July.
- 21.5 A lengthy discussion took place between members and presenting officers where issues such as : assessments for LAC, best value use of the resource in the context of previous and pilot use were covered. Overall there was very positive recognition of the resource being used to prevent LAC where possible using the skills of the residential staff.
- 21.6 Resolved: -

That an update report be provided to a future meeting of the Committee on completion and evaluation of the Havenbrook Children's Home pilot project

22 Work Programme

- 22.1 The meeting received copies of the current Scrutiny Work Programme and the Cabinet Forward Plan.
- 22.2 The Chairman asked Members to let her know of any other topics they would like add to the Committee's Work Programme.

23 Date of Next Meeting

- 23.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 10 September 2014 at The Shirehall

Signed (Chairman)

Date: