



Minutes of a meeting of the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny
Committee held at the Bourges/Viersen Room - Town Hall

On
21 June 2010

Present: Councillors Thacker MBE (Chairman), Wilkinson, Lowndes, Harrington, Jamil

Also present Alastair Kingsley Parent Governor Representative
 Councillor Scott Cabinet Member for Children's Services
 Karen Roofe Head Teacher at Bishop Creighton Primary School
 3 Students Bishop Creighton Primary School / St Thomas More
 Catholic Primary School

 Caroline Thomas

Officers in John Richards Executive Director of Children's Services
Attendance: Mel Collins Assistant Director, Learning and Skills
 Denise Radley Executive Director of Adult Social Services
 Paulina Ford Performance Scrutiny and Research Officer
 Ruth Griffiths Lawyer

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Councillor Saltmarsh and Councillor Harrington was in attendance as substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2010 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

5. Excellence in Partnership (EIP)

The Head Teacher at Bishop Creighton Primary School, Karen Roofe and three students attended with the Assistant Director of Learning and Skills, Mel Collins, to present the report. One student was from Bishop Creighton Primary School and two were from St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. The report informed the Committee of a thriving Peterborough partnership that included 42 primary schools, 3 secondary and special schools. The purpose of the EIP network was to drive up educational and inclusion outcomes for children and young people across the city. The partnership added value to the day-to-day work of Children's Services, especially the Learning and Skills division. The partnership was led by schools but sponsored and supported by the Local Authority. The EIP model was unique in Peterborough and was receiving national recognition and had been highly regarded by Ofsted especially with regard to community cohesion. There were three strands of work led by EIP schools:

Strand 1 - Leadership for Learning focused on:

- Community Cohesion as part of a Best Practice Leadership programme.
- Increasing numbers of adult learners, using the EiP lead officer for Able, Gifted and Talented learners (A, G&T).
- Pupils As Leaders (PALs): enabling pupils to make a positive contribution to their own school community. Seven Pupil Leadership Forums existed in EiP primary schools after having followed a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme.
- Pupils as Facilitators of Learning (PAFLs): Pupils had access to quality CPD as facilitators for their school .i.e. with a responsibility to cascade this knowledge to the rest of the pupils in their school.

Strand 2 - Optimal Inclusion focused on the use of Learning Mentors (LMs) to remove Barriers to Learning.

Strand 3 - Learning and Innovation focused on:

- Able, gifted and talented learners.
- Booster provision which provided the sharing of good practice.
- Innovation which provided high quality CPD and research and development opportunities for all membership schools as well as other schools in Peterborough and beyond.
- A Menu of Opportunities which provided support from the Learning & Innovation Consultant in the form of 1-1 sessions in schools for Lead Teachers of A, G & T; networked group meetings; 'surgeries' in schools with provision for specific individualised context and EiP-wide/Peterborough-wide development sessions.

After the report had been presented the three students gave their own personal experiences about the impact of being part of the EiP programme. Each student felt that it had made a positive difference to their own learning and development, their confidence levels and to the way their school delivered its lessons. A short video was presented of children taking part in the EiP Programme at the Bishop Creighton Primary School.

The Committee thanked the students and Head Teacher for attending the meeting and the excellent presentation that they had given and invited them back to attend a future meeting.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Why was the breakdown of membership predominantly primary schools? Members were advised that EiP was formed as a follow on from the Excellence in Cluster (EiC) programme which had included schools that had been selected due to their education and inclusion outcomes. This was originally government funded, through grants, but when the funding ended the schools appreciated the benefits of the EiC programme and therefore continued the programme as EiP. EiC had been mainly for primary schools and when EiP started secondary schools had not realised the benefit of joining. Since EiP had been refreshed secondary schools had now started to understand the benefits and impact of the programme and were now starting to join up.
- The report mentioned 'buy in' of EiP expertise, what did this mean in terms of cost? Members were advised that schools had a choice and could pay a membership fee of £900 for primary schools and £2700 for secondary schools and for this they would get a high level of support through the programme. Schools who were not members could buy into an event that they wanted to take part in.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee requested:

- i. that the pupils return to a future meeting to inform them of the progress made with the EiP programme.
- ii. that a letter be sent to the pupils from the Mayor thanking them for attending the meeting and giving such an excellent presentation.

6. Personal Relationships Policy

The Director of Adult Social Services and Caroline Thomas, the officer responsible for writing the Personal Relationships Policy attended the meeting to present the report. The report informed the Committee that it was a new policy for Peterborough which covered an important and sensitive topic in relation to the personal and sexual relationships of vulnerable people and their rights. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) required that all councils providing Adult Social Care services had a Personal Relationships Policy in place in order to evidence compliance with their Valuing People Now Strategy.

The draft policy had been developed from Department of Health Guidance and other policies currently in use in the East of England and would be applied across independent social care providers and partners. The draft policy was still undergoing consultation and would take in to consideration all of the comments made before the final version was approved.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members felt that some of the statements had a level of assumption that all people reading the policy would understand the content. They felt that the policy needed to be more explicit to avoid misinterpretation, especially statements around taking risks. They felt the document was very loose and not every person with a disability would have a carer to support and interpret it for them. Consultation would need to be as broad as possible.
- The Director of Adult Social Services acknowledged members concerns and advised them that there had been a lot of discussion through the Learning Disability Partnership Board around getting the right balance between properly reflecting and upholding people's rights and the capacity to make decisions. The Learning Disability Network Team had also discussed the level of support that would be needed to ensure that people in different circumstances could understand the policy. There was a responsibility on officers to ensure the policy was right.
- How would the policy be circulated once finalised and how would we know everyone subscribed to the policy? How would the policy be monitored to ensure it was upheld? Members were advised that monitoring of the policy was critical and the Primary Care Trust Board would require an explanation of how it would be monitored and reviewed before it was implemented. This would be done through various forums both informally and formally like the Safeguarding and provider forums.
- Was there any statistical information on how the implementation of this policy had worked in other authorities? Members were advised that a number of different authorities had implemented policies of this kind. They had been looked at and we had learnt that it would take a long time to implement such a policy as it was very complicated. The policy would have a set of procedures which would sit behind the policy and there was a very clear legal basis that sat behind it. It was also a very individual policy and individual care and support planning would be fundamental to the policy.
- Had you consulted with any ethnic minority groups? Members were advised that the partnership had been consulted which included representatives of those groups.
- How were you going to train staff on this policy? Members were advised that it would become part of the induction process for new employees.
- How do we know it was going to safeguard the end user? Members were advised that it was not a stand alone document and it made reference to the new Mental Capacity Legislation. There was also the Safeguarding framework to support it.

Members requested that officers supplied the Committee with copies of all of the supporting documents.

- A Member of the audience who had worked with people with learning disabilities addressed the Committee. She advised that often staff who looked after vulnerable people put ideas into their minds with regard to relationships. This could cause problems as often the person with the disability did not understand personal and sexual relationships. The policy would need a lot of thought before it was implemented.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee requested that the Director of Adult Social Care bring the draft Personal Relationships Policy back to the Committee prior to its final approval and after full consultation. The policy should incorporate all of the relevant parts of the supporting documents which were used in developing the policy.

7. Children's Services Development Plan

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Executive Director of Children's Services attended the meeting to present the report. The development plan was written in response to the recommendations made by Ofsted at their recent inspection of Children's Services. A Safeguarding Project board had been put in place and included representatives from the Department for Education, Government Office East, the Lead Cabinet Members, the Executive Director of Children's Services and was chaired by the Chief Executive. The board met on a monthly basis to ensure that the development plan was being progressed. The Executive Director confirmed that he was responsible for all of the outcomes for children in Peterborough and the five outcomes of the Children's Trust. He also pointed out that whilst there were problems highlighted in the inspection it should be noted that 22 of the outcomes were deemed good. For the first time ever in Peterborough, the Children in Care Service had been rated as good.

Councillor Scott advised that she and the Executive Director were both committed that when Ofsted next visited Children's Services it would be a very different report and that they would ensure that the actions taken to improve performance would be sustainable so that the problems would not occur again.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members noted that improvement to the quality and timeliness of assessments had improved to a green status. How many additional staff had been brought in to deal with this and were we benchmarking against other authorities to ensure that we had enough staff? Members were advised that there was now one additional manager making 3 in the referral and assessment team. There were 13 workers in the team which was an additional 2 social workers. There were national standards for active case loads and that ranged from 17 to 22 cases per worker and the aim was to reach this standard. The Department of Education required that from 1 July 2010, 80% of initial assessments were to be completed on time and that would be the measurement going forward.
- What do you do to ensure that social workers received ongoing training and development and were kept up to date with the latest developments? Members were advised that ongoing training was done through the continuous professional development of social workers and was supported by the workforce development team in social care. More important was the emphasis on the training, development and support through the supervision that was provided by the Managers to Social workers. There was also a new audit tool in place which picked up if standards were not being met. Therefore continuous improvement happened through an understanding of how people performed at any given time. There would always be

the challenge of having enough experienced social workers and therefore the supervision of staff was important.

- With regard to the runaway's project, did we have many runaways? Members were advised that runaways were not just children in the care system and that it also covered people who ran away from home. Figures would be obtained and sent to the committee.
- What was the gender / racial balance of social workers to children in care? Members were advised that they were predominantly women and the children in care were approximately 50% male and 50% female.
- Members noted that the escalation policy was still outstanding and was this having an impact on the referrals. Members were advised that the escalations process was working and that there had been referrals.
- Why was the process and procedures for serious case reviews showing as red and outstanding? Members were informed that this referred to the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board and that the update in the report had been written in May. All agencies were now working towards development of a common process for serious case reviews.
- Were the project board meetings being held every month as planned? Members were advised that they were and that there was a very strict process in place where the indicators that were showing as red had to have a full written report and if progress was not being made on any of those items a full explanation had to be given.
- Members noted that Ofsted had highlighted a very low complaint rate. What steps had been put in place with regard to the Complaints Process and what checks and balances had we got in place to ensure we did not go from one extreme to the other by having lots of complaints? Members were advised that the recommendation from Ofsted referred to children in care who did or did not make complaints. A lot of work with children in care went into the advocacy service which worked with 78 children in the care system and any issues were being resolved at that stage and therefore complaints were very low. Further measures were being put in place so that children in care had direct access to a telephone line so that they could go outside of their care setting if necessary and they had instant and direct access to the Director if needed. This process would be monitored. Councillor Scott would also be establishing a forum for children in care where they would be able to raise any issues they had informally with her.
- A member of the public addressed the Committee and advised that a previous Ofsted inspection had stated that a third of children in care had not received their annual check ups. Had this situation improved? The Committee were advised that this had improved and that Ofsted reported that Children in Care services were all rated as good.
- A member of the public commented that Ofsted had sent out surveys to some children who were severely disabled in special residential units asking them if they had the opportunity to complain. These were individuals who were not able to respond themselves and some families had found this an extremely distressing situation to deal with. How could the situation be avoided in the future? The Executive Director advised that he was not responsible for what Ofsted did but he would feedback to Ofsted and would be happy to work at drafting a process that would help avoid these kinds of situations in the future.
- The Committee requested that the Executive Director provide a regular update report on the Development Plan so that they could continue to monitor its progress and impact. The Executive Director suggested that he would provide a shorter report covering exceptions only at the next meeting of the Committee.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee requested that:

- i. The Executive Director of Children's Services provides a regular update report on the Development Plan to enable Members to monitor the progress and impact. A short exceptions report to be provided at the next meeting of the Committee in July.
- ii. That Executive Director of Children's Services to provide the committee with number of runaways.

8. Cessation of the Comprehensive Area Assessment

The report provided the Committee with information regarding the Government's announcement to abolish the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). As a result of the announcement the Audit Commission had now advised that all work on updating the area assessment and organisational assessment would cease with immediate effect. Members were advised that the Corporate Management Team were considering the most appropriate method of continuing to manage performance reporting and would update Scrutiny when a decision had been made and therefore there would be no performance monitoring reports presented to the Committee in the interim.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

9. Review of Work Undertaken in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 Work Programme

The report provided the Committee with a review of the work undertaken during 2009/10 and the draft work programme for 2010/11. The Committee were asked to consider their work from last year and to decide on any items they wished to continue to monitor this year. The Committee were also asked to develop their work programme for the coming year.

Review of the Last Year

During the last year, the Committee considered the following issues:

- Performance of the Local Area Agreement
- Portfolio Progress from Cabinet Members relevant to the Committee
- 16 to 18 year olds not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET)
- Services for Adults and Children with disabilities
- Ofsted Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment Services
- The results on delivering through localities consultation
- Presentation of 2009 examination results EYFS – Key Stage 4
- Supporting carers in Peterborough
- Update on action plan to address Ofsted unannounced Inspection outcomes
- Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board
- Children's Trust developments
- Validated KS 2 and KS 4 Examination Data
- The Corporate Parenting Pledge to children in care
- Development of integrated services including transitions for children with disabilities.
- How the economic downturn has affected the way vulnerable adults and children are being supported
- Children's (Social Care) Services Statutory Complaints Process Annual Report 2009

Observations regarding the recommendations made during last year were:

16 to 18 year olds not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) (NI 117).

The Committee had recommended at its meeting on 21 July 2009 that the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University and the Lead Officer develop a policy which actively encouraged the City Council to consider any job or training opportunities to young people who fall into the category of 16 to 18 year olds not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET). In particular the policy needed to look at supporting the groups of young people most at risk of becoming NEET. Also as one of the main employers in Peterborough; Peterborough City Council should work to be recognised as leading the way in setting an example to other employers in employing young people who fall into the category of NEET. They also wanted an engagement strategy to be developed to actively work with other employers across Peterborough to encourage them to employ or train young people who fall into the category of NEET. This strategy was to include publicising those employers who already helped young people who fell in to this category.

The Committee requested that this recommendation continued to be monitored throughout 2010-2011 and requested a progress report at a future meeting.

Supporting Carers in Peterborough

The Committee had recommended at its meeting on 17 November 2009 that the Cabinet Members for Health & Adult Social Care and Children's Services and the Executive Directors for Children's Services and Adult Social Services acknowledge the issues raised by the Young Carers and investigate the feasibility of implementing the wishes submitted by the Young Carers and report back to the Committee at a future date. They also requested that officers investigate the improvement of services around the issues raised by the Adult Carers and report back to the Committee at a future date.

The Committee requested that this recommendation continued to be monitored throughout 2010-2011 and requested a progress report at a future meeting.

Work Programme for 2010/11

Suggestions for items for the 2010-2011 work programme were:

- Children's Trust - To take each of the five outcomes in turn and look at what progress had been made and the resulting impact on the children. This would enable the Committee to monitor over a municipal year to scrutinise the overall impact of the Children's Trust.
- Transforming Children's Services - This report would allow the Committee to scrutinise the changes that had been made and what impact they have had on delivery of services.
- An invitation to be sent to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University to attend a future meeting to report on the progress of their respective portfolios.
- Building Schools for the Future (BSF) progress report and the impact of the proposed financial cut backs.

It was agreed that all other items on the draft work programme would remain and along with any other suggestions would be discussed at the next meeting of the Group Representatives to decide on how to take them forward.

ACTION AGREED

- i. The Scrutiny Officer to invite the following Cabinet Members to a future meeting to give an update on their portfolios.
 - Cabinet Member for Children's Services
 - Cabinet Member for Educations, Skills and University
- ii. The Director of Children's Services to provide a progress report on the BSF programme and the impact of the proposed financial cut backs.

- iii. The recommendations made during the 2009/10 work programme under items for 16 to 18 year olds not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) and Supporting Carers in Peterborough to continue to be monitored and progress reports presented at a future meeting.

10. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan and agreed that there were no items to bring to the Committee.

CHAIRMAN
7.00 - 8.55 pm