

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON 12 MARCH 2012**

Present:	Councillors S Day (Chairman), Harper, Nadeem, Saltmarsh, Nash and J Shearman	
Also present	Cllr John Holdich Peter Godley Niamph Kingsley Alastair Kingsley Brian Opie Pat Carrington	Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University Youth Council Youth Council Parent Governor Representative Parent Governor Representative Principal / Head of Service at City College Peterborough
Officers in Attendance:	Malcolm Newsam Jonathan Lewis Gary Perkins Louise Tyers Paulina Ford Dania Castagliuolo Marie Southgate	Executive Director, Children's Services Assistant Director Education & Resources Head of School Improvement Compliance Manger Senior Governance Officer, Scrutiny Governance Officer Lawyer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Elsey. Apologies were also received from Councillor Scott, Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2012

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 January 2012 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. Blue Badge Reforms

The report provided the Committee with information about the reforms to the blue badge scheme for disabled parking. The Compliance Manager informed Members that a new blue badge design had been introduced and a £10 fee for blue badges. This had been the first major overhaul of the blue badge scheme since the 1970's. The Government had introduced the reforms to the scheme to bring about significant changes to:

- ensure fairer allocation of badges to those most in need
- allow improved and effective prevention of abuse and enforcement

- deliver efficiency savings and improved customer services
- enable the reforms by raising the badge fee

Prior to the reforms the charge for a blue badge had been £2 but the council had not previously passed this on to the customer as the fee to administer this had not been practical. Following the reforms the council had introduced a £10 fee for a new badge and a £5 fee for a replacement badge. The council were now being charged £4.60 for the production of the badge. The new style badge was made out of a durable PVC construction and included a comprehensive range of new security features. From the 1 April 2012 anyone who did not qualify automatically for a blue badge would need to undergo an independent mobility assessment which would have to be undertaken by an independent mobility assessor. This was currently being undertaken by the applicants General Practitioner. The change would help to make the assessments fairer but would incur a charge and discussions were being held with Occupational Therapy to see if they would undertake the role of assessor.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Will there be a cost for the independent assessment and will the council have to bear that cost. *Members were advised that there would be a cost which the council would have to bear. Currently General Practitioners charged £25.15 per assessment but it was felt that the cost through Occupational Therapy may cost less.*
- The Compliance Manager advised members that one of the problems of the current scheme had been an increasing demand for badges and pressures to extend eligibility to the scheme. The department of transport had indicated a forecast growth of 27% nationally over the next 10 years due to people living longer and an expanding population.
- Who enforced the scheme and were there many prosecutions? *Members were informed that the council's Civil Enforcement Officers enforced the scheme. Prosecutions had been low due to a lot of evidence being required to take a case to court. The last prosecution was at the end of 2011 and the person was fined £500.*
- Do the new laws make it clear where people can park? *Each badge owner would be sent a book stating where to park and it would be the owners' responsibility to make sure that the badge was used properly.*
- If there is an excess of income over expenditure what will this be used for. *It would be used to improve the enforcement process to carry out more dedicated blue badge enforcement. The £10 charge would not fully cover the costs of the badge so whilst there would be a small increase in income over expenditure it would not be a large amount.*
- Has there been any movement on the issue of temporary blue badges for people who are temporarily incapacitated from an accident or injury e.g. a broken leg. *The government had been looking at extending the scheme for temporary disabilities. Currently people can only be awarded a blue badge with a permanent or substantial disability. It was being considered that the council's parking services may be able to issue temporary badges for car parks or bays. This would be run past the disability forum to ensure they were happy with people obtaining temporary badges without having to go through the full assessment.*

The Chair thanked the Compliance Manager for an informative report.

ACTIONS AGREED

That the Committee note the report.

6. Presentation of 2011 Validated Examination Results

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with a summary of the 2011 validated examination results for Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4). The statistics provided compared Peterborough against statistical neighbours and nationally. Peterborough results against the national picture overall had continued to improve however the gap towards the national average for English had increased and this was of concern. The gap between the

national averages had continued to close for results in maths. Progress from KS1 to KS2 was now above the national average. Improvement overall needed to continue to further close the gap with the national average.

KS4 GCSE results 5 A*-C Grade (not including English and mathematics) had improved by 7% since 2010 and was now above the national average. The area of concern was around progress in secondary schools which compared how well children achieved when they had finished their KS2 exams and continue to KS4 outcomes. Head teachers were being encouraged to make improvements in this area and intervention strategies with senior schools had been put in place. Focus was being placed on individual continued improvement.

Alistair Kingsley and Councillor Shearman had worked with the Head of School Improvement to prepare more meaningful data for presentation to the Committee. Alistair Kingsley thanked the Head of School Improvement for his assistance with this. The Head of School Improvement had welcomed their input and looked forward to working with them going forward.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members noted that there had been quite a distinction between progress levels from KS2 to KS4. KS2 levels of achievement had been about 80 to 85% but dropped to 60 to 65% at KS4. Members wanted to know why. *Members were informed that one of the issues had been that secondary schools had focused on the target of obtaining 5 A*-C's including English and maths to the exclusion of progress. There needed to be a balance between the two because it was progress that lead to the attainment. Raising awareness of the importance of progress at secondary schools was in hand and there was an expectation of improvement in data with regard to student progress over the next two years.*
- Can you explain why there had been less progress between KS2 and KS4 than between KS1 and KS2? Members felt that the assumption in Peterborough was that the results were being held back by the presence of children speaking English as an additional language? There were however more children coming into KS1 and KS2 who had English as their second language but there had been better progress. *Members were advised that the difficulty was that progress was not being measured in the same way at Primary Schools as at Secondary Schools. KS1 and KS2 were being measured by teacher assessment and moderated standardised tests. KS2 and KS4 were measured by external moderated tests at both ends. The tracking of groups of pupils at secondary schools had not been as rigorous in the past as it currently was. Primary schools had been much more rigorous in tracking progress at different group levels.*
- Was there any evidence that KS1 results were being suppressed to inflate KS2 results? *Members were informed that there was some evidence that results had been inflated at KS2.*
- What was the role of the Local Authority going to be in the future? *The Assistant Director Education & Resources advised Members that the role would be similar to now which was to challenge and intervene where appropriate. The results of the Academies were consolidated within Peterborough and therefore it was still the responsibility of the Local Authority to monitor and intervene and ensure the best possible outcomes for young people in the city.*
- Members had noted that over the last three years Local authority Intervention on raising attainment in maths for boys at early years had shown as a positive improvement which proved that that kind of initiative did have an impact.
- Is the Local Authority intervening quickly enough in schools that were coasting? *The Local Authority had a good track record of intervening with schools. Every single school in the city were tracked on a half term basis. The school was assessed on how they were performing and any issues identified. Each school would then get graded. Appropriate intervention would be put in place where schools were not achieving as expected.*

- Would you say low attendance, behaviour and Special Educational Needs was part of Peterborough's response to poverty in the city. Members were informed that those *factors were constantly under review to ensure an effective response to them. Teams were now focussing more on behaviour and ensuring that all schools had effective strategies in place to tackle behaviour. The pupil referral unit was now much more focussed on outreach within main stream schools.*
- Members requested further details and data on interventions at individual schools. The Assistant Director Education & Resources to follow this up with Councillor Shearman and Alistair Kingsley.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested a further report to come back to the Committee at a future meeting.

7. City College

The report informed the Committee about the Peterborough City Councils Adult and Community Learning Provision at City College Peterborough (CCP) and what impact the service had on local residents and businesses. The report also included an update on a recent Ofsted Inspection where the College was graded Good with Outstanding features. A short PowerPoint presentation was given to show what sort of people used the college and the key areas of delivery which were:

- Family Learning
- 14-16 year olds vocational opportunities
- 16-18 year olds Foundation Learning
- Apprenticeships
- Adult Qualifications
- Non Qualification Adult Learning
- Employer Training

The Chair congratulated the Principal of City College Peterborough on receiving a good Ofsted report.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members felt that the college was an inspiring place of learning and provided an excellent and diverse range of courses but felt that not enough was being done to raise the profile of the college. *Members were informed that everything possible was being done to raise the profile of the college.*
- One Member reported that he had noticed an increased awareness city wide amongst employers with regard to apprenticeship courses at the City College.
- Are any of the courses subsidised. *Members were informed that some courses were 100% funded including Family Learning. Those courses were about supporting parents, grandparents, carers and other family members to be an active part of their children's learning, as well as becoming learners themselves. This also supported the child poverty agenda. Improving skills for employability like literacy, numeracy were 100% funded if the individual did not already hold a maths or English qualification at a higher level. The collage also supported 30% concessions for retired people. There was a bursary which young people could access and all 16 – 18 provisions were 100% funded.*
- Do you link up with the lead officer for the child poverty agenda? *The Principal advised that she had not but would organise a meeting with her.*
- Were the courses full time or part time. *The courses for young people averaged about 24 hours a week however there were tailored packages to support individual needs.*

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University for his continued support in the development of the College.

The Chair thanked the Principal of City College Peterborough for an informative report and congratulated her on the growing success of the college. The Principal gave an open invitation to all Members of the Committee to visit the college.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee requested that a report come back at a future meeting to update them on the progress of the City College Peterborough. The report to include details of success stories and more information on the courses.

8. Children's Services Improvement Programme

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced the report. The report informed the Committee on progress that had been made on the Children's Services Improvement Programme which had been put in place following an Ofsted Inspection in August 2011. There had been two meetings of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group where the Safeguarding Improvement Plan had been scrutinised in depth. Significant progress had been made in the last few weeks in putting down the building blocks for sustainable improvement. A permanent team of Assistant Directors were now in place with the appointment of Sue Westcott as Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wendi Ogle-Welbourn as Assistant Director of Strategic Commissioning. The establishment had been rebased from 54 social workers to 81 and recruitment had commenced to increase the establishment which would alleviate the pressures in the long term. A marketing strategy had been put in place to market the new Peterborough Children's Services to encourage applicants. The end to end process of advertising and recruiting social workers was currently 18 ½ weeks but this would be reduced.

The Safeguarding Children's Board had been rated as Adequate by Ofsted and an external review had been commissioned.

Two Members of the task and finish group had visited Children's Services to observe the existing ICT System – RAISE and look at the new ICT System - Liquid Logic which was being brought in to replace RAISE. Both Members reported to the committee on their findings and were satisfied that the new system being put in place would greatly improve case management. The two Members would revisit the new ICT System after it had gone live.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- How was the back log of assessments? *There was no longer a back log of unallocated cases for longer than a week. Initial assessments were now down to 9 from 239 in December.*
- Are you able to maintain normal business now? *The increase in the establishment should ensure that a sustainable service is provided in the future.*
- Have you been able to dispose of the percentage of cases that should not be referred as children in need? *Good progress had been made and there had been a reduction of 400 children in need cases. Some cases had been closed and some had been referred for on going monitoring. The early intervention service had been moved to the front door operation to take the pressure off the referral and assessment teams. There was now a much better response at the front door.*
- Are you confident that the quality work had been maintained or improved as well as the timescales? *Once the backlog had been cleared the quality assurance framework and the new ICT system would ensure quality of work.*
- Would you say that vulnerable children were less at risk today than when you first joined PCC? *Members were advised that this was a difficult question to answer. Members could*

be reassured that a lot of the dangerousness had been taken out of the system but the point had not yet been reached where the safeguarding service was secure.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the Safeguarding Improvement Plan and the progress that had been made.

9. 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 requested further information on the following key decision:

- Children's Centres Commissioning – KEY04/NOV/11

The Chair thanked the Committee and Officers for their support and contributions to the Committee over the municipal year.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.50pm

CHAIRMAN