

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE  
FORLI ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON 12 NOVEMBER 2012**

**Present:** Councillors S Day (Chairman), Harper, N Arculus, B Rush, B Saltmarsh, J Shearman, D Fower

<b>Also present</b>	Alastair Kingsley	Parent Governor Representative
	Niamh Kingsley	Youth Council Representative
	Irfan Damani	Youth Council Representative
	Councillor J Holdich	Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	Malcolm Newsam	Executive Director, Children's Services
	Wendi Ogle Welbourn	Assistant Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Prevention
	Sue Westcott	Assistant Director Safeguarding Families & Communities
	Jonathan Lewis	Assistant Director for Education and Resources
	Gary Perkins	Head of School Improvement
	Paulina Ford	Senior Governance Officer, Scrutiny
	Ruth Griffiths	Lawyer

**1. Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

Cllr Saltmarsh declared a personal interest in that she was on the Pupil Referral Unit Management Board and an LA Governor at Dogsthorpe Junior School.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2012**

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 September 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. Portfolio Progress Report from Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University**

The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University introduced the report which informed the Committee of the progress made on his portfolio since he last reported to the Committee on 12 September 2011. The report covered the following areas:

- Ofsted review of Children Educated other than at School
- School Place Planning and Early Years Provision
- English as an Additional Language within Peterborough
- Review of special education needs provision within the city
- Schools Funding Reform

- Skills Service
- City College
- Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training
- Recruitment and retention of teachers within schools
- Update on Pupil Referral Service
- A strategy on recruitment and selection of school governors as part of the improving attainment

The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University informed Members that the number of Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET's) in the city was down to 7.9% which had been the lowest number recorded for the city. Members were also informed that two new European states were due to have immigration restrictions lifted next April and this may have an impact on the city.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- What was the actual number of NEET's in relation to the 7.9% figure? *Members were advised that it equated to just under 400 young people.*
- Did all schools in the city play their part at reintegrating children that had been excluded? *Members were informed that there was a document in place called the 'Fair Access Protocol' where by all schools took a turn to take difficult to place children including those who have been excluded. All schools were obliged to take excluded pupils including Academies.*
- What support were schools being given to ensure those children who may be challenging were given a curriculum appropriate to their needs? *Members were informed that some support was provided to schools in particular regarding NEET's. Further support was being developed around the multi-agency support groups to make sure that where support was needed to keep children in school it was available. Exclusion numbers had reduced in the city due to the increased support.*
- The report mentioned that creative solutions were being looked at to find suitable accommodation to create school places, what did this mean. *Members were informed that various options were being looked at including the old hospital site and possibly the use of office blocks. When considering creative options consideration would also need to be given to the impact of an area being considered e.g. road infrastructure, increase in traffic, access etc.*
- The report stated that £2.6m had been received in 2012-13 to support basic needs around pupil numbers from the Department for Education. How did this compare to last year. *Members were advised that the amount received was double the amount received in previous years but it was still too low as more money was needed to spend in the PE1 area and the Hamptons.*
- Considering the population growth of Peterborough do you consider that the decision to close schools in 2002 was short sighted? *Members were advised that in 2002 when the decision was made the population forecast was not expected to be as high as it had been and the inward migration had not been expected.*
- Had there been much feedback from schools on the Schools Funding Reform. *Members were advised that all schools had been invited to comment and 70% had responded. The response was fed back to the Department for Education. There would be an impact and some schools would win and some schools would loose. The losers would be protected by capping the winners.*
- Members requested an update on the University Centre Peterborough (UCP). *Members were informed that 207 places had been taken up at UCP last year and Cranfield had offered 30 places this year. 43 courses were run through Middlesex last year. There had been a considerable increase in Health courses being run at Guild House. Work was being undertaken with Anglia Ruskin to change the name University Centre Peterborough to University of Peterborough but this would take approximately two years.*

- Members commented that having a University in Peterborough would attract better quality teachers.
- Were all Primary schools obliged to offer SEN places to pupils? *Members were informed that all schools had to provide SEN support if required. A child would be assessed against a criteria to determine if SEN support was required and if the child was statemented then support would be put in place.*
- The report stated that there was a need for around “£117m in the next 9 years to keep pace with demand creating in excess of 6,000 places”. Where would the additional funding come from. *Members were advised that a significant portion would need to come from the council and it would also come from section 106 monies from new developments in Peterborough. 35% of the Community Infrastructure Levy monies would go into education.*
- The report stated that in 2014 the government is proposing to extend free entitlement (15 hours) to 2 year olds. How does the council propose to deal with the shortfall in funding to accommodate this? *Members were informed that the Local Authority was not a statutory provider of Early Years provision. It was down to the private sector to support the needs of the Early Years cohort. It was anticipated that 50% of children would access this provision. The role of the LA was to identify where the gap in the market was across the city and identify the needs and encourage the private sector to fill that gap.*
- The report stated that the new funding formula would lead to significant turbulence across individual schools in 2013/14 when introduced. How many schools would lose some of their budget and how long would protection be in place for those schools. *Members were advised that all figures for the next financial year had been based on the October pupil count which had just happened and therefore data was not yet available to accurately say what would happen. Modelling had however been done on the 2011/ 2012 data based on the new funding formula and on that basis there would be significant turbulence. It would amount to a 5% difference in a schools budget either way. There would be two years minimum funding protection in place for schools that would loose. The schools forum would be monitoring the situation going forward.*
- Peterborough had been identified as a cold spot for the recruitment of teachers. Can you use the lessons learnt from the recent successful recruitment campaign for social workers to improve recruitment of teachers. *The Assistant Director for Education and Resources advised that this would be done. Lessons could be learnt and marketing could be improved. There was a need to stress the benefits that Peterborough offered. The key selling point for Peterborough was that it had every type of school and demography. The Local Authority had also considered setting up a SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) Centre. This would offer teacher training run by schools within Peterborough and would produce “home grown” Peterborough based ‘outstanding’ teachers.*

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Committee noted the progress made on the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University.

### **6. Presentation of 2012 Unvalidated Examination Results**

The Assistant Director for Education and Resources presented the report which provided the Committee with a summary of the provisional 2012 unvalidated assessment and examination results for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. The validated results would be published in January and presented to the Committee.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Floor standards for 2012. How many of the 12 schools that fell below the three floor standards in 2010 were still included in the figure of 7 schools which were below for 2012. *Members were advised that there were 4 schools from the original 12 that were included in the 7 for 2012.*

- Members felt that there was much greater opportunity to affect change in Primary Schools than secondary schools due to the fact that many secondary schools were now Academies. Could officers advise how the Local Authority could influence improvement at the Academies? *Members were informed that Academies were autonomous and were responsible for their own school improvement however the Local Authority retained a role in ensuring that standards across all schools were high. The Local Authority approached Academies in the same way that maintained schools were approached. They had to explain their results and show what they were going to do to improve them. If the Local Authority had concerns regarding Academy schools it would be reported to Ofsted and the Department for Education.*
- Members felt that progress between KS2 and KS4 was important. The report shows that Peterborough was the lowest in progress compared to national and statistical neighbours. What was the reason and what was being done about it? *Members were informed that one of the factors perceived by secondary schools to be an issue could be over inflation of national test assessment at KS2. The Head of School Improvement responded that this was not the case, since the test results are nationally standardised and moderated in the same way that GCSE exams are at age 16. There was a need to focus on senior leadership teams and set targets against progress through the levels of the national curriculum for all students. The flight path showing the rate of progress should be set from year 7. There needed to be more effort at KS3 and not all schools were doing this. The removal of KS3 SATs had caused problems.*
- How will you improve tracking of progress across schools? *Members were informed that the Head of Departments would be made aware of levels achieved by pupils in year 6 at primary school and this would be used to predict where they would be at GCSE. There would then be a set of milestones put in place to track along the journey. That information would then be shared with the rest of the school, Governing Body and parents and monitored.*
- Members wanted to know if the right calibre of governors were being recruited and could the quality of governors be improved. *The Assistant Director for Education and Resources agreed that a strong governing body was critical to driving up standards. The Local Authority had a strong Governor Services team in place which provided training, support and advice to governors and information on how their school was performing. Where schools had particular weaknesses the Governor Services team would assist in finding governors that would meet the needs of that school e.g. with legal, financial backgrounds.*
- Had payment to Governors ever been considered? *Members were advised that it was against legislation to pay governors.*
- Were the minutes of Governing Body meetings including those of Academies published and in the public domain. *Members were advised that it was not a requirement to publish governing body minutes but some schools did publish them.*

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the report and requested that the validated results be brought before the Committee when published.

## **7. The Changing Role of Local Authorities in Education**

The purpose of the report was to highlight to the Committee the changing role of Local Authorities in Education, both nationally and within Peterborough. One of the key changes had come from the Department of Education's White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' with the inference that schools would be freed from the constraints of Central Government direction and teachers would be placed firmly at the heart of school improvement. The report highlighted the key drivers for change to review the current education provision provided by the Local Authority. A review of the school improvement function had been undertaken and had identified many key themes which had been reflected in the key drivers for change. The Local Authority had now become a commissioner of education not a deliverer of education which had been their previous role. Members were advised that the Local Authority were

currently working on a new Strategy for Education which would be brought back to the Committee for comment.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members wanted to know who would be consulted on the new Education Strategy and requested that the Committee be involved with the development from the beginning. *Members were advised that the following would be consulted: Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee, schools and groups that worked with schools. The Committee would play a key role in developing the strategy and Members were invited to form a group and input into the strategy outside of the meeting.*
- Members were pleased to note that the SEN Strategy would be updated and felt that this was an urgent issue for Peterborough. *Members were advised that the SEN Strategy would be brought before the Committee when ready.*
- Members wanted to know if the revised SEN Strategy would address the issue of children with Special Educational Needs being sent out of the City to support their needs. *Members were advised that there were about 80 children who were in out of city placements and the aim was to reduce this number and be able to accommodate them in the city. The immediate task was to look at the progression route for children with Special Educational Needs. There had been a rise in behavioural difficulties and this would need to be addressed. A new 90 place autistic school was being opened in Peterborough which would enable the Local Authority to place children in the city which would be cheaper than placing them out of the city. It would also mean that they could remain in their own community.*
- Members wanted a commitment from the Cabinet Member that services would not be outsourced. *The Cabinet Member responded that it was not possible for the Local Authority to provide all specialist services in house. Some services would need to be commissioned on an individual basis to support the needs of the child.*
- As part of the commissioning role would you consider using the Assisted Places Scheme that Lincolnshire used to run? *Members were advised that it had not been something that Peterborough had considered but the Assistant Director for Education and Resources would look into the scheme and see what opportunities it could offer.*
- A member of the Youth Council questioned why the Authorities systems of intervention and support were not creating sustainable improvement at the rates seen in other authorities. *The Assistant Director for Education and Resources responded that it was difficult to compare one authority with another. Areas where Peterborough had particularly struggled with were children with EAL who performed significantly lower than the indigenous population and those with SEN. Improvement in these areas would have the biggest impact going forward. The authority was working with Islington Borough Council who had put interventions in place around their EAL population and had seen a significant improvement.*

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

- I. The Committee requested that the Assistant Director for Education and Resources bring before the Committee in the New Year the following:
  - The new Education Strategy
  - The revised SEN Strategy
- II. The Senior Governance Officer to collect names of those Members of the Committee interested in working with the Assistant Director of Education and Resources on the Education Strategy.
- III. The Assistant Director of Education and Resources to find out about the Assisted Places Scheme.

## 8. Children's Joint Commissioning Board

The Assistant Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Prevention presented the report which informed the Committee of the proposals to replace the Peterborough Children's Trust Board with a Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board. Members were advised that there was no longer a requirement for a Children's Trust Board or Children's Plan. There was however still a requirement for Local Authorities to develop highly effective partnership arrangements to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. The new Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board would consist of Senior Officers who were decision makers who had accountability within their organisation for understanding the needs of children and young people. There would also be stakeholder groups. The Board would meet a minimum of four times a year and there would be an option to call additional meetings to address specific issues that would require agreement, decision or action. Accountability for the Board would be through the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Cabinet Member, reporting through the Health and Well-being Board. The Board would also have a key relationship with the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members wanted to know who the existing members of the Peterborough Children's Trust Board were. *The Assistant Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Prevention advised that she would send Members a list. Some of those members would continue on the new Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board.*
- Were members paid to be on the Children's Trust? *No.*
- Some Members felt that the new title of Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board did not seem to reflect accurately its purpose. *Members were advised that all authorities were required to put into place a Children's Trust by the last government. There were many types of Trusts in place and the Children's Trust had been very weak with little statutory responsibility. The strength of resetting the Board means that it starts afresh with a new membership and the name reflected what it would do which was Joint Commissioning.*
- Was the model being proposed a Peterborough Model? *Members were informed that it was very much about Peterborough.*
- Was there a mechanism in place to ensure that the people who made the decisions were the people who always attended the meetings? *The Assistant Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Prevention advised Members that it was up to her to drive it forward and the people who had signed up to the Board had made a commitment but as with all groups it was the skill of the Chair and Lead Officer to keep people engaged.*

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee agreed to endorse the proposal to dissolve the Peterborough Children's Trust Board and replace it with a new Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board.

## 9. Children's Services Improvement Plan – Progress Report

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. The progress report had been a regular report to the committee and the last update to the committee had been in September 2012. Highlights of the report were:

- Strong performance continued on timeliness in the referral and assessment service. The year to date figures in September showed 97.6% of initial assessments had been completed within 10 days and 88.8% of core assessments within 35 days. There were few outstanding assessments and those completed out of timescale only missed the due date

by a few days.

- After a peak of referrals at the start of the new term, work volumes had appeared to have stabilised again. Referrals and initial assessments had continued to be generated at or around the statistical neighbour average; the volumes of core assessments continued to be higher than similar authorities.
- There were now 73 permanent social workers in the front-line teams – a remarkable shift from 49 only six months ago. The establishment continued to run slightly over-establishment with agency staff to provide an overlap for new staff to be appropriately inducted. The new arrivals were of a high calibre.
- Sue Westcott was appointed as Executive Director of Children's Services last month and would commence her new role in the New Year. There would be a robust hand-over plan to secure the transition.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- What security will the Local Authority have with regard to the sustainability of recruitment of social workers in 5 – 10 years time? *Members were informed that the recently appointed social workers had been attracted to work in Peterborough by putting a first class marketing campaign together to promote Peterborough as a good place to work and by putting in a very slick and efficient recruitment process in place. The recruitment time had been reduced from 18 weeks to 8 ½ weeks. Peterborough had a significant programme in place for putting own employees on training programmes. It would be difficult to say where recruitment would be in 5 – 10 years time but it was a healthy platform for the next few years because of the match of existing experienced staff and the ability to attract newly qualified staff.*
- Would you say the Ofsted report was preventing good quality middle managers coming to Peterborough? *The Director of Children's Services doubted that this was the reason. There was a national shortage of good team managers. Sue Westcott would be advertising for permanent Heads of Service shortly.*

The Chair noted that the interim Director of Children's Services would be leaving the authority at the end of the year. The Chair congratulated Malcolm Newsam on behalf of the Committee on the progress and achievements that had been made under his leadership. The Chair also welcomed the new Director of Children's Services, Sue Westcott and wished her success in continuing with the progress made.

#### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the Safeguarding Improvement Plan and the progress that had been made since the last report in September 2012.

#### **10. Revision to Corporate Parenting Group**

The report informed the Committee of the role of councillors as corporate parents and asked Members to consider a review of the current Corporate Parenting Group, new Terms and Conditions and make any recommendations on the proposed changes. All Councillors were invited to attend the Corporate Parenting Group but until recently the attendance had been variable. The proposed changes incorporated having a fixed membership to ensure there was consistency in attendance and a change of name to the Corporate Parenting Panel. All Councillors would still have a standing invitation to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel and raise any issues. The panel would meet bi-monthly and the Children in Care Council would continue to be invited to the meetings. The review would strengthen the roles and responsibilities of the Panel.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members were concerned that new Councillors were not made aware of their responsibility as a Corporate Parent and wanted this to be included in the induction process. *Assistant Director Safeguarding Families and Communities agreed that this was important. Members were also advised that training would be put in place for all councillors to attend which would be repeated on an annual basis.*
- Members were happy with the changes but wanted to ensure that the fixed membership of the Panel would be a cross party membership.

#### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee agreed to endorse:

- I. the proposed changes to the Corporate Parenting Group,
- II. the new name of Corporate Parenting Panel; and
- III. agreed the new Terms of Reference.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee recommends that:

- I. The Assistant Director Safeguarding Families & Communities include as part of the Councillor induction process a training element which covers the role and responsibilities of the Corporate Parent to ensure that all new Councillors are aware of their responsibilities.
- II. The Assistant Director Safeguarding Families & Communities to arrange for an All Party Policy meeting to be held once a year to cover Corporate Parenting.

#### **11. Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions, 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 Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions and requested further information on the review of the Clare Lodge Service once completed.

#### **12. Work Programme**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2012/13 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

#### **ACTION AGREED**

To confirm the work programme for 2012/13 and the Senior Governance Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

#### **13. Date of Next Meeting**

7 January 2013

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.45pm

CHAIRMAN