

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON MONDAY 20 JULY 2015**

Present: Councillors B Saltmarsh (Chair), J Stokes, B Rush, J Peach, J Shearman, J Yonga and D Fower.

Also present	Stewart Francis	Parent Governor Representative
	Miranda Robinson	Education Co-optee
	Hani Mustafa	Youth Council Representative
	Afifa Zaman	Youth Council Representative
	Michael Peacock	Youth Council Representative

Officers in Attendance:	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn	Corporate Director, People and Communities
	Jonathan Lewis	Service Director for Education, People Resources and Corporate Property
	Lou Williams	Service Director, Children's Services and Safeguarding
	Louise Ravenscroft	Family Voice
	Paulina Ford	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Karen S Dunleavy	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Coles and Councillor Stokes was in attendance as substitute. Apologies for absence were also received from Alistair Kingsley, Independent Co-optee.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of meetings held on 15 June 2015

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 June 2015 were agreed 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. Service Director Report – Children and Safeguarding

The Service Director, Children and Safeguarding introduced the report which provided Members with an overview and summary of the key performance data for Children's Social Care services as at the end of May 2015. The Officer also advised the Committee that where possible the Authority's performance data had been compared with statistical neighbours. There were however a number of areas of performance where it had not been possible to provide a comparison due to differences in systems and practices between local authorities.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members referred to the number of referrals: 800-900 and asked whether these were repeat referrals? *Members were informed that some of the referrals were repeated each month and sometimes for more than one child. If a child was referred more than once this had been a time consuming operation in terms of sorting through the information and that the system had required improvement.*
- Members asked whether the department were able to consider social worker recruitment in terms of the Council 'growing their own' from internal resources already employed within the department. *Members were informed that one option was to encourage support workers to train to undertake a social worker role. This was something already being looked into.*
- Members commented that a more efficient approach should be considered in terms of social workers time spent on undertaking administrative tasks such as typing reports? *Members were informed that social workers actively used information technology in order to update records whilst supporting their cases on the go.*
- Members commented that the Authority's website could be improved to attract potential social worker candidates in order to improve recruitment opportunities. *Members were advised that the department was engaging with a number of recruitment agencies which had been expensive but valuable. Members were also advised that there had been a number of social workers employed on a permanent basis as a result of recent recruitment campaign.*
- Members asked whether social workers across the country were of the same calibre as it had come to light that one Council would not appoint social worker students that had become qualified through Anglian Ruskin. *Members were advised that there would be no preference as to where the social worker had received their qualification and encouraged Members to direct such candidates to the Authority.*
- Members felt that it was important to include the performance data in relation to the number of single assessment timescales in future reports as had been provided previously. *Members were informed that due to the timing of this Committee the data had been unavailable in the desired format however this would be included within future reports. Members were also informed that the number of single assessments which had been completed was 89%.*
- A Member of the Youth Council requested further information in regards to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding HUB (MASH) in Peterborough. *Members were advised that the MASH system recorded safeguarding contact referrals from various partnered services such as health and schools.*
- Members sought clarification regarding the MASH and made reference to referrals that remained open for a period of over 24 hours and whether this was an issue. *Members were informed that the information system used had experienced a technical glitch in that it could not cope with a referral being open for more than 24 hours which had caused the data to spike. However referrals that had progressed to an assessment had dipped in April and May 2015.*
- Members asked about the summary data on placements, which appeared to be missing from the report? *Members were informed that the information would be included in future reports.*
- Members asked whether the numbers had increased for in house foster carers following the recent recruitment exercise. *Members were advised that of the two year target to gain 50 foster carers 10 recruitments had been made in the previous year. Members were also informed that the reason for the low recruitment figure had been due to some foster carers adopting the children in their care. Members were also advised that a report was due to return to the Committee which would outline a strategy to improve foster carer recruitment.*
- Members requested further clarification over the holistic early help assessments and whether this approach had been neglected in the past. *Members were advised that children and young people had received an early help assessment in the past. The holistic approach was new and had been carried out typically by teaching staff or health visitors in*

order to identify initial health needs and seek to resolve them or make a referral to the Authority if appropriate.

- *Members sought further clarification over why the statistical neighbour comparators had been used in the report rather than a family group of local authorities. Members were informed that the statistical neighbour approach held the best statistical comparative data known to the Authority.*
- *Members asked about the levels of correlation between child protection plans and levels of deprivation. Members were informed that the correlation was high and that the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) which was used in 2010 was due to be updated to 2015.*
- *Members asked whether there could be a reduction of child protection plans through earlier intervention and support and whether the staffing levels were affected by the high number of referrals. Members were informed that the fact large numbers of assessments had been undertaken was an indication that lots of children were being supported at an early stage. Members were also advised that there would always be high risk families however figures in Peterborough were not as high as some other Authorities.*
- *A Member of the Youth Council sought further information on how the Authority planned to continue to buck the national trend in terms of adoption levels. Members were informed there was a new initiative being undertaken namely 'fostering for adoption scheme' which was intended to attempt to buck the national trend.*
- *Members sought clarification over why Essex had stopped utilising the early help assessments. Members were informed that the reference was made in the report to demonstrate how difficult it had been to make a comparison over the early help assessment figures.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Service Director for Children's Services and Safeguarding provide:

1. Further information in regard to the recruitment of foster parents.
2. Clearer headings in charts within future reports.

6. Service Director Report - Education

The quarterly report was introduced by the Service Director for Education, People Resources and Corporate Property which provided an overview of the key areas within the Education portfolio of the Committee. The Officer also advised the Committee that the report contained a number of key performance indicators that had been identified to measure progress within Education and the information reported against these.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- *A Member of the Youth Council asked whether Academies and Free Schools programme had experienced better exam and Ofsted results throughout the City. Members were advised that recent comparators had shown there had been some success for schools that received good sponsors and some had not.*
- *Members asked when a report would be presented to the Committee on the Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network and the use of funds. Members were informed that following an external review a report was due to be produced around September/October time.*
- *Members asked if schools had shown an improvement through the self-improving schools network initiative in areas such as spelling. Members were informed that there had been areas of improvement and this had varied from school to school which was closing the attainment gap.*
- *Members commented that schools were using a number of varied systems to monitor performance and felt that this could cause inconsistency in benchmarking. Members were*

informed that the Authority did recommend the use of 'Target Tracker' to all schools to measure performance but could not insist that they used it.

- *Members commented about the difficulty experienced in recruiting school governors in Peterborough. Members were informed that schools had been encouraged to reconstitute their board membership in order to fill the Parent Governor gap and consider the introduction of Community Governors. Several initiatives were being tried to attract governors.*
- *Members sought clarification over the reconstitution of Governing Body Board membership and whether Local Authority Governors were still included. Members were advised there had been one Local Authority Governing member position per school however schools could choose more if they deemed it appropriate.*
- *Members sought clarification over the lack of 'basic need' funding for school places. Members were informed that the current Government system to measure school places was felt to be unreflective of Peterborough schools demographic.*
- *Members congratulated the Service Director for Education, People Resources and Corporate Property on the 2013-2014 Ofsted results and asked how standards would be improved going forward. Members were informed that improvements were being initiated via a number of schemes such as the Self Improvement Schools Network, standards measures and child's progress tracking.*
- *A Member of the Youth Council asked how Education services were working with Ofsted and the Regional School Commissioners to support schools that had been placed in special measures by Ofsted. Members were informed that regular meetings and conferences were attended by the Authority in conjunction with Her Majesties Inspector for Ofsted and the Department for Education on how to deliver the support required.*
- *A Member of the Youth Council sought clarification over the Teach East scheme and what was being done to retain the skills of teachers within the area that were undertaking the training. Members were informed that the Authority was working towards offering training courses to provide a progression pathway such as the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and offering the city council benefit scheme in order to try and retain and attract teachers.*
- *Members asked whether the improvements made on school attendance figures had arisen as a result of the tightening up of Ofsted standards for a 'good' or 'outstanding status'. Members were informed that the bar had been lifted and Peterborough schools had scored 72.7% compared to 48% for Cambridgeshire and would continue to buck the trend.*
- *Members sought clarification over whether the Academy school which had been placed into special measures by Ofsted had been hampered by bureaucracy in terms of improvement implementation. Members were advised that the Academy was placed into special measures for a period of 18 months and that the Authority had actively supported the improvements.*
- *Members referred to pages 36 and 37 and the tables showing Key Stage 2 Level 4+ RWM and Key Stage 4 5+ A*- C GCSEs. Peterborough disadvantaged children gaining level 4+ at Key Stage 2 in 2014 was 63% but at Key Stage 4 it had reduced to 28.8%. Members sought clarification over the reasons for the reduction of approximately 40% in achievement. Members were advised that this was a national problem and this was why the Pupil Premium Policy was implemented by the Government.*
- *A Member of the Youth Council asked about the one stop shop web portal for teaching vacancies and whether it was new. Members were informed that the website had recently been implemented in April 2015 and the marketing of it was being increased. There were not many jobs on there at the moment but there would be a recruitment drive in 2016.*
- *Members requested that the national rating for Peterborough be included in future reports.*
- *Members asked about the plans to improve Peterborough's figure against the national target for young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). Members were informed that the low performance issue had arisen due to the transient NEET population in Peterborough and that processes were in place to act earlier in order to place these young people on the appropriate courses.*

- Members asked about plans to improve the number of young people progressing to higher education. *Members were informed that there were a number of initiatives being implemented such as ensuring that the young people accessing A Levels would not potentially drop out and that quality GCSE results continued to increase. There has also been a recent appointment of a Post 16 Advisor which would improve the figures.*
- Members asked about the system issues experienced to record and track NEETS progress. *Members were informed that the system issues experienced had been resolved and that the Authority were now in a position to start to track progress in school years 11 and 13 in respect of where they were moving through the NEET path.*
- A Member of the Youth Council asked if the Authority had plans to approach Anglian Ruskin University (ARU) to encourage them to increase the number of degrees they offered in order to attract more people from the City to attend further education. *Members were informed that there were challenges being experienced in respect of the Government not promoting university places enough and people moving away from the City. However, until a full university status was awarded for the City there had only been under graduate courses available through ARU.*
- Members asked what action the Authority had taken where schools had experienced an underachievement of disadvantaged pupils. *Members were informed that where these schools had failed to close the gap of underachievement each Ofsted report would contain a comment on what action the Authority had implemented to intervene. The intervention would vary from school to school.*
- Members wanted to know what parts of the Equalities Act 2010 had influenced the updates to the Fair Access Protocol. *Members were informed that the updates had brought about equalities for vulnerable groups such as young people that spoke English as their second language the right to access a school of their choice in order to meet their needs.*
- Members referred to paragraph 5.12, Permanent exclusions and asked what work had been done to reduce the percentage of White European pupils that were being excluded from school. *Members were advised that when the authority received a request for an exclusion each case would be evaluated and the appropriate support would be put in place. This approach had seen more students remain in mainstream settings which provided better outcomes. This also reflected the success of the Pupil Referral Unit. The EAL Strategy had proved successful in reducing the number of exclusions in pupils with English as their second language.*
- Member's referred to paragraph 5.41, Attendance and sought clarification over the "robust arrangements in place to support pupils at all stages". *Members were advised that there were robust policies, guidance and support available through the Authority in order for schools to manage school absences.*
- Members sought clarification over whether there had been regular offenders of school absence. *Members were advised that there had been no direct correlation between numbers. Members were also advised that there was a prosecution process in place for parents that had not complied with pupil non-attendance notices issued.*
- Members asked whether Ofsted had raised concerns over school places that had not met the 5% target of surplus places for each year group set by the DfE. *Members were advised that no major concerns had been highlighted.*
- Members asked for further clarification over whether the surplus school places could have been met if the demolition of some Peterborough schools had not taken place. *Members were advised that at the time of the school reorganisation primary school class numbers had reduced and there had been a greater need for secondary schools. Members were also advised that the Authority would not have been in a position to fund schools with low numbers which would ultimately end in closure.*
- Members asked about the 'Work Club' for NEET and why it was stopped previously to 2014. *Members were advised that the grant funding had ceased however a reorganisation had been undertaken to source further funding.*
- Members noted the Cross Keys Homes 'Moving into Work' scheme for NEET and asked if the Authority had a similar project *Members were advised that the Cross Keys project*

was a pilot to see if it worked and it was planned to source support to continue with the scheme and approach some of the other big employers in the City.

- A Member of the Youth Council felt that the recruitment plans for teachers did not seem adequate to meet the 31% loss in teachers. The Member of the Youth Council also felt that it would be beneficial to provide statistics relating to subject areas which were most difficult to recruit to. *Members were advised that there had been a teacher skills gap in schools and some specialist roles had been difficult to recruit to which had been a national issue. There was a shortage of Chemistry, Maths and English teachers. There was an issue with getting graduates to take course on these particular subjects.*
- A Member of the Youth Council asked whether consideration could be given to include information in reference to the use of agency teachers within future reports. *Members were informed that an opportunity for the Authority to develop a supply teacher agency was being explored.*
- Members asked what achievements the Authority could be proud of in terms of education provision. *Members were informed that improvement in the Ofsted grades had been the most significant area of improvement delivered.*
- Members asked whether recruitment for teachers had been sought from specialist industries that had experienced staff redundancy or the services. *Members were advised that there had been a number of ex-soldiers recently recruited as teachers. Members were also informed that there had been a campaign to offer teacher training to teaching assistants. Members were assured that unqualified teachers would not be employed as teachers.*

The Chair congratulated the Service Director on the improvement in the schools and the fact that 77.9% of pupils were now attending 'Outstanding' schools in Peterborough.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Service Director for Education, People Resources and Corporate Property would provide the national quintile for school Ofsted ratings within future reports.

7. Progress on SEND Reforms

The report was introduced by the Service Director for Education, People Resources and Corporate Property, which provided an overview of the progress made toward implementing the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms.

Louise Ravenscroft, Co-Chair for Family Voice also provided the Committee with an update in relation to participation and engagement of parents for support through Family Voice and the Authority.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members referred to paragraph 5.6.1 and the statement "*Ensuring all professionals are clear about the processes and their expectations at the various states of the EHC process*" and asked whether this would be part of an induction package. Had there been difficulty in the retention of SEND staff. *Members were advised that there had been a high turnover however good practice was being imbedded on how to support the needs of SEND children through other avenues such as provision from teacher assistants.*
- Members sought clarification over some schools that had experienced issues in terms of the time commitment required to deliver SEND needs and whether there were plans to tackle these through the reforms. *Members were informed that there had been some Government funding sought which was due to be distributed through the special schools offer. In addition Members were advised that under the SEND reform arrangements the transfer timescales in respect of the movement from statement to education and health*

plans had extended from 16 to 20 weeks. Members were informed that the SEND Reforms had been a big change and not an easy process for parents or teaching staff.

- Members were also advised that a considerable amount of support had been undertaken to engage with Hard to Reach Groups to understand the SEND needs of this cohort.
- A Member of the Youth Council asked for further information in regards to the advantages of the personal budgets policy and how it had supported SEND children and their families. *Members were advised that the Personal Budgets (PB) Policy provided the opportunity for parents to influence what type of provision was provided for their child. Members were also informed that where families had received the support from the PB scheme, there had been a quality of life improvement and higher outcomes achieved by SEND children.*
- Members suggested that consideration should be given to promote the services of Family Voice by use of infographics instead of videos and postcards to reach those families where English was not the first language. *Members were informed that the use of infographics was being explored.*
- Members sought clarification over why there had been long waiting times experienced by residents for speech therapy appointments. *Members were advised that due to diminished resources there had been delays experienced. However where appropriate the Authority would challenge Health Boards should the legal timescales for health checks become delayed. There was a legal requirement for partners to comply with timescales and the Authority does enforce this.*

The Chairman thanked the Officers for an informative report and update.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

8. Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Care Leavers

The Service Director, Children's Services and Safeguarding introduced the report which provided information to Members about the nature of mental health support for care leavers, including analysis of where there were gaps in the current provision. The Service Director also advised the Committee about the steps which were being taken to address any gaps identified in delivery of the service provision.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- A Member of the Youth Council asked how the Authority would improve transitional arrangements for children between children services and adult health services. *Members were informed that the Director responsible for adult services was leading a group on children's and adult mental health services to ascertain which service would take responsibility for support requirements.*
- Members asked how many young people were on the waiting list for mental health support and what timescale had been put in place to clear the backlog. *Members were advised that there had been a proposed pathway and plan developed in conjunction with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group in order to tackle the issues which would also include support for other conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Members were also informed that a report was due to be presented to the Scrutiny Commission for Health Issues on the commissioning of child health services which would provide a clear timeline of when the waiting list backlog would be resolved. It was envisaged that once the appropriate plans had been approved and implemented for the commissioning of child health services the backlog should be cleared by April 2016.*

The Committee recognised that the People and Communities Department had been working hard to resolve the issues highlighted and thanked the Officers for the report.

AGREED ACTION

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Corporate Director of People and Communities would provide a report and update on the proposals for the improvements for the commissioning of child health services to a future Committee meeting.

9. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive 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 Forward Plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions particularly in relation to school developments.

10. Work Programme 2015-2016

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2015/16 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

Members requested that:

- The report which was due to be presented to the Scrutiny Commission for Health Issues on mental health service improvements – commissioning of child health services, should be presented at a future Committee meeting; and
- Consideration should be given at the Committee's Group Representatives meeting to include on the work programme The Healthy Child Programme.

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2015/16 and the Senior Democratic Services Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.12pm

CHAIRMAN