

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING
INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM - TOWN HALL
ON
21 MARCH 2011**

Present: Councillors P Thacker (Chair), J Wilkinson (Vice-Chairman), S Day, Y Lowndes, B Saltmarsh and M Jamil

Also present Alastair Kingsley Parent Governor Representative
Councillor Seaton Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Walsh Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, Safety and Women's Enterprise

Officers in Attendance: John Richards Executive Director - Children's Services
Jonathan Lewis Assistant Director Resources, Commissioning & Performance
Melanie Collins Assistant Director, Learning and Skills
Jane Dullaghan Assistant Director, Children's Community Health
Andrew Brunt Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Families and Communities
Gheeta Pankhania Public Health Specialist (Commissioning Lead Obesity & BME Health)
Helen Edwards Solicitor to the Council
Paulina Ford Performance Scrutiny and Research Officer
Elaine Lewis Lawyer

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 24 January 2011.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2011 were approved as a correct record.

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

5. Children's Trust Update – Be Healthy

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced the report and informed members that the report covered information on the Be Healthy outcome of the Children's Trust. Included in the report was an update on the Targeted Mental Health in Schools Programme, the Healthy Weight - Cashless Catering Systems and the Healthy Weight - Carnegie Weight Management Programme. A key witness also attended and spoke to the committee about her experience of using the Carnegie Weight Programme to enable her children to lose weight and how successful this had been.

Members were informed that the Carnegie Weight Programme would continue for another year or more. Engagement work had been undertaken with different stakeholders and marketing of the programmes which had increased the number of referrals. There was more work to be done in schools and training GP's on raising the subject of obesity as it was a sensitive subject. The Carnegie Weight Programme ran for 12 weeks and a programme of Movers and Shakers had been designed to follow on from this.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Is there a charge for attending the Carnegie weight programme? *No.*
- How many children have you got on the programme? *Approximately 25 children.*
- Can you provide information on how many children have access to the Carnegie Weight programme? *There were roughly 50 and 60 reception children who were classed as obese and their families would have been advised of the programme.*
- Of the 50 to 60 children have the families been contacted advising them of the help they can receive. *All families received a report on whether their child was obese or not and details of the Carnegie Clubs. There was also a dedicated support phone line they could contact and one to one support was available from a health trainer.*
- Who runs the clubs? *They were commissioned by NHS Peterborough and worked in partnership with Vivacity.*
- Do you get much resistance from parents? *Very few parents were negative about the programme.*

ACTION AGREED

That the Committee receive a further progress report in one years time.

6. Poverty Needs Assessment and Strategy

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced the report and advised Members that the published report was missing a key document which was the Mapping Route: from Poverty to Possibility. The document was tabled at the meeting. This Mapping Route incorporated a Poverty Needs Assessment and Strategy in response to the Child Poverty Bill and central governments' commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020. The purpose of the document was to identify the needs of children, young people and their families in relation to the reduction of poverty within Peterborough and inform Peterborough's Poverty Strategy. Child poverty could not be dealt with by one department and the Greater Peterborough Partnership had taken this on as part of the Single Delivery Plan and one of the priorities was to reduce poverty across the City. Embedded within the Needs Assessment was a responsibility to identify those families who sometimes found coping difficult and to understand the tipping points, also supporting families where there had been a legacy of worklessness and restricted aspirations. The poverty agenda supported transformation in the way front line services were delivered; it would establish relationships with families and ensure that each child in Peterborough had ambition and expectations for their future.

Members were informed that 25.35% of children living in Peterborough experienced poverty through childhood experiences in families suffering from:

- high levels of worklessness,
- in work poverty or reliance on benefits therefore restricting choices or imposing severe hardships;
- living in deprived neighbourhoods where opportunities to participate in society through social interaction, leisure, or support networks were undermined,
- low levels of attainment

There would be a new Matrix in place that would be a template for all agencies to use to measure whether a child was falling into poverty. The matrix covered four key contributors to poverty:

- Vulnerable Groups
- Vulnerable Lifestyles
- Vulnerable Moments
- Vulnerable Settings

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- The number of households in temporary accommodation and the percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low or high energy rating did not rate well for Peterborough. This must have an impact on childhood poverty. Does this information link into plans for housing and the growth strategy for Peterborough? *The Greater Peterborough Partnership would take this information into account.*
- Mary Cook from the Peterborough Pensioners Association was permitted to address the Committee by the Chairman and she made a statement regarding a report she had heard on the Child Line Service. It had reported an increase in calls from Children in Care and how often they were being moved from home to home. *The Executive Director of Children's Services responded that in Peterborough the stability of placements for children in care was critical to their improved outcomes. In Peterborough only 6% of Children in Care had 3 or more moves in the previous year. This was extremely good compared to the rest of the Country. The other measure was the number of children who had been in care for more than two years who had been in the same placement for the previous 2 ½ years. In Peterborough 78% of children in care were in this category which was extremely good. Placement support meetings were regularly held and reported on monthly.*

ACTION AGREED

That the committee approves the draft Poverty Needs Assessment and Strategy – Mapping the Route: From Poverty to Possibility and that it is brought back to the Committee after consultation had been completed.

7. Translation and Interpretation Requirements & Expenditure

The report presented information and detail on how much was being spent in individual departments on translation and interpretation services. The information provided covered the reporting period from 1 April 2010 to 31 December 2010. Members were informed that there was no statutory legislation to provide a translation and interpretation service. Translation and interpretation was a tool that professional officers employed to do a particular job and was used in certain circumstances to fulfil their statutory duties. The Translation and Interpretation Policy was compliant with the DCLG Guidelines and good practice nationally. The Commission of Integration and Cohesion had quoted Peterborough as examples of good practice for:

- Road Safety Team – its pictorial approach to road safety messages
- Primary Care Trust and Peterborough City Council (PCC) having a translation and interpretation partnership which was committed to ensuring that all users were communicated with effectively.

Under the recent Ofsted inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment arrangements the PCC translation and interpretation services were seen as a key strength

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- The Cabinet Member for Resources addressed the Committee stating that there was no desire to spend money in an ineffective way and asked the Committee for their views on whether there were any areas of expenditure that should not be incurred. An example of this might be in the registrar's office where two weddings had incurred a cost of £84 for translation services.
- The Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, Safety and Women's Enterprise proposed that the Committee looked in the future at the ESOL provision in Peterborough.
- What checks were in place to ensure that the suppliers being used were the best suppliers for these services? *An EU competitive procurement process had been gone through to get the CINTRA and Language Line Contracts. NHS Peterborough, Peterborough & Stamford Foundation Health Trust and Cambridge & Peterborough Mental Health FT were working together to get a better and more effective service at a better price.*
- Is there a list of the categories that would be considered for translation services? *The summary of invoices included in the report for November 2010 was a typical month and gave a good indication of service areas using the translation and interpretation services. Appendix F and G in the report also gave a list of services using interpreting services and translation services from April to December 2010.*
- The report states that the authority has recently invested in the EMAS translation software and it was being used in Children's services, specifically within the classroom. Can this be used across other service areas? *The software would become more widely used in other areas where appropriate. It would be rolled out across other areas of Children's services first. There would still be a need for a formal translation service when dealing with legal and court proceedings.*
- In other countries it is usual to have to pay for translation services. Can we charge for the translation services? *People were not asked to pay for translation services. Other authorities have advised that they do not charge. In terms of equal access to services it would be discriminating against people who could not speak English to ask them to pay. There were circumstances when there was a need to communicate with people to get a message across and use translation services to do this. An example of this would be when communicating to someone who could not speak English about fly tipping. The report had highlighted that there was no charge for translation of marriage ceremonies. This was a service that the committee may wish to recommend introducing a charge.*
- How quickly will the software be rolled out across Children's Services and impact on the costs currently incurred? *The Executive Director of Children's Services would report back to the Committee in the next municipal year on the roll out of the EMAS translation software and its impact. The Assistant Director for Learning and Skills advised that it might be possible to provide a demonstration of the software to the Committee.*
- Can you advise if the total amount of spend as highlighted in the report from 1 April 2010 to 31 December 2010 of £79,630.22 will increase or was this a set budget. *It was not a set budget as the service had to be provided when required and the total amount of spend would therefore change accordingly.*
- Is the amount of spend growing with the changing demographics of Peterborough. *There were now 99 languages being spoken in the schools as apposed to 80 a year ago. Costs incurred related directly to what was happening in Children's services.*

ACTION AGREED

- I. That the Committee incorporate into their future work programme a report on the ESOL provision in Peterborough.
- II. The Executive Director of Children's Services to report back to the Committee in the next municipal year on the progress of the use of the EMAS Translation Software and look into providing a demonstration of its use.
- III. That a summary analysis of expenditure on translation and interpretation services by Directorate by month be provided to the Committee by email on a monthly basis.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to the Cabinet Member for Resources that a policy of charging for the use of translation and interpretation services for marriage ceremonies be introduced.

8. Progress Report on Children's Service Development Plan

The report updated the Committee on the progress being made in addressing the recommendations made by Ofsted in their inspection of Safeguarding and Children in Care services. Members were also informed of two recent inspections. There had been an unannounced inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment and the priority actions that were put in place previously were now no longer required and there were no further actions put in place. There had also been a recent Inspection of the Adoption Agency and this came out as satisfactory and had highlighted areas of good practice and the improvements that had been made. During both of the inspections the services were commended for the services given in relation to equality and diversity. There were no Social Workers with more than 30 cases and only four social workers with over 25 cases but this was being managed. There were currently 11 social work vacancies and there had been a positive response at a recent careers fair. All the posts were to be interviewed for over the next two months. The current vacancy rate was 2%. The Common Assessment Framework had been reported to the Safeguarding Project Team and this had showed that the quality assurance was good.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members commended the Executive Director of Children's Services on the noticeable improvements that had been made. *Members were advised that the Chief Executive was being provided with a regular report on where the pressure points were within the Social Care system to ensure transparency.*
- Is there a problem in recruiting social workers? *No.*
- Have you considered recruiting social workers who speak different languages? *There had been some initial discussions with specialist recruitment agencies to look at the feasibility and costs of recruiting people who could speak different languages.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee to receive a further progress report on the Children's Service Development Plan in the new municipal year.

9. Portfolio Progress report from Cabinet member for Education, Skills and University

The Cabinet member for Education, Skills and University introduced the report which provided members with an update on progress made over the past year on the portfolio of Education, Skills and University. Members were advised that the Voyager and Orton Longueville Schools had now been approved as Academies and that the Hereward School would be opened up as a Free School. Confirmation had been received that one of the Universities that would come to Peterborough would be Cranfield University complimenting the university provision within the City.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- In the Key Stage 4 results there seems to be a clear split with secondary schools that have shown improvement and those that have not. Was there a reason for this? *The Cabinet member for Education, Skills and University paid tribute to the schools and their results and that consideration should be taken to the amount of languages that were being spoken in the schools. There were nine schools that were occupied with over 50% of new arrivals to the city. 25% of the population that took the exams were only in the education system for two years.*

Last year the Voyager school results remained static and Orton Longueville had not met their targets. Three other schools had remained static. St John Fischer had improved over the past three years. There were seven schools that were very high performing. There had been sustainable improvement over the year and those schools that were not performing had received massive intervention. The recent Ofsted inspection at Orton Longueville School had judged them as satisfactory overall recognising the capacity to improve.

- *Do you think that Academy status is the way forward? There was no option. The office of the schools commissioner visited recently and wanted to ensure that the Local Authority continued to go down the route of Academy status for schools. However there would be no change in the statutory functions that the Executive Director of Children's services held. A close leadership relationship would remain between the Local Authority and the schools.*
- *Do you get the results of the inspections of the Thomas Deacon Academy? There was a good working relationship with the Local Authority and Thomas Deacon Academy and there was an LEA presence on the Governing Board.*
- *Do the Thomas Deacon Exam results count in our figures? Yes.*
- *Are people going for one particular school as a preference on their admissions form and then being left with a school they don't want? There had been a change from choice to preference for admission to schools. Preference had led to more people opting for King's School and the Thomas Deacon Academy. The Academy had a fair banding approach which ensured that there was a spread of children with different abilities. King's School catchment was regional and was a specialist school and had limited intake. It was hopeful that more young people in 2012 would get their first preference.*
- *How many students do we currently have at the University and are they local? There were approximately 1000 students and they were all local apart from 75 places which came from outside of Peterborough. The business plan over the next five years was to bring 5640 students to the University.*
- *Has there been a problem with accommodation and are we planning to build a Halls of Residence. There had been a problem but accommodation had been found. A block of flats had been secured for next year and the Housing Strategy Manager would be putting proposals forward for student accommodation within the city centre.*
- *What provision had been made for school nurses going into the Academies? The Local Authority were commissioned to provide a service of School nurses and would provide the same service to Academies as they would to other schools.*
- *Councillor Holdich informed the Committee that Melanie Collins, Assistant Director for Learning and Skills would be leaving the Authority and that this would be a great loss to the Local Authority. He thanked her for Championing Education in Peterborough and the progress that she had made during her time with the Authority.*

ACTION AGREED

The committee noted the report.

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 for further consideration.

The meeting began at 7.00 and ended at 9.05pm

CHAIRMAN

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