

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2014**

Present: Councillors S Day (Chairman), C Harper, J Peach, B Saltmarsh, J Shearman, M Jamil, D Fower

Also present Alastair Kingsley Co-opted Member  
Andrew Brown Education Co-optee

Officers in Attendance: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Director of Communities  
Hayley Thornhill Intelligence Manager  
Sue Westcott Executive Director for Children's Services  
Johnathan Lewis Assistant Director for Education, Resources and Corporate Property

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rush and Councillor Nawaz. Councillor Peach attended as substitute for Councillor Rush and Councillor Harper attended as substitute for Councillor Nawaz. Apologies for absence were also received from the following Education Co-opted Members, Miranda Robinson and Stewart Francis. Andrew Brown was in attendance as substitute for Miranda Robinson.

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

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

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

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

**4. The Connection Families Programme**

The report was introduced by the Intelligence Manager who was responsible for coordinating some of the work for the connecting families programme within the city. The report provided the Committee with an update on the current phase of the Connecting Families Programme and proposals for the expanded programme planned for implementation in 2015.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Did the new broader criteria for the next phase make success more achievable? *The Intelligence Manager responded that mental health, which is one of the criteria in the new programme, had been a real issue with many of the families that the current programme had come into contact with. The next phase of the programme includes not only mental health but other physical health issues as well as domestic abuse and families who are at risk of financial exclusion, which would mean reaching a much wider cohort of people.*
- How many of the individual criteria do you need to achieve to be deemed to have had a successful turnaround? *Members were informed that three or four criteria needed to be demonstrated and satisfied to qualify for the programme. In order to claim a result for*

*'turning a family around', we must demonstrate that there has been significant and sustained progress against the issues that the family first presented with, this could be, for example, returning to work and/or improving school attendance.*

- *The report implied that there are savings of £2.84M. How has this figure been reached? Members were advised that a great deal of research had gone into the costs. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had also done a lot of work with the Treasury and had just released a cost savings calculator and this is how the figure had been reached. All families locally would be put through the cost savings calculator.*
- *Members sought assurance that the Local Authority would be able to continue to pay its contribution over the next five years. Members were informed that the Local Authority attracted payment by results and due to the number of families that had been turned around in the programme last year there was a budget that would be carried forward from the payment by results. This money will be put back into the programme and providing there are enough families in the programme this will provide money to run the programme for another five years.*
- *Members referred to the table at paragraph 5.5 of the report, "Improvements made by the family": The table showed that 54 adults in the family had returned to work. Members sought further clarification. Members were advised that in order to achieve the claim the Local Authority had to demonstrate that the adult had been in continuous work for 26 weeks.*
- *Members requested that future reports should show the cost of delivering the programme as well as the savings and also include the criteria. Members were informed that the Local Authority received a small grant up front to pay for the Local Authority costs.*
- *What happens if families do not want to engage with the programme? Members were advised that the Connecting Families Programme was part of the wider early intervention offer and may not suit all families in which case they would be removed from the programme and another family would replace them.*
- *Members noted that 270 families out of 450 families had been turned around. What had been the issues with the remaining 180 families? Members were informed that there was a stepped approach with the families in the programme and families were at different stages in the programme.*
- *Members were informed that a lot of the savings the government talked about were more about reducing the need to spend as opposed to save and it was more about the management of the programme.*

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Director of Communities provide a further report in six months' time which should include a more detailed analysis of costs and savings of the programme and a detailed example of a family going through the programme.

## **5. Pupil Premium Overview**

The Assistant Director for Education, Resources and Corporate Property introduced the report which provided the Committee with an oversight of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) both at national context and some information on the PPG in Peterborough. The report provided suggestions about how schools and the council were intending to continue to target improvements in outcomes for children who qualify for the PPG.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- *Members referred to the mention of an action plan within the report to further improve the outcomes for children who qualify for the PPG. The list of actions within the report did not appear to constitute a proper plan. Members sought clarification as to why the list of actions had not been done before. Members were informed that the list of actions in the*

*report were already being done and the list was intended to provide a snap shot of the work already being undertaken. There was a more detailed plan in place.*

- *Members referred to the mention of “Improving data analysis, tracking and predictions on pupil premium cohorts” and asked how this was going to be achieved. Members were informed that this related specifically to ‘adopted children’ who were a new part of the Pupil Premium Grant. Work was being targeted around tracking this new cohort.*
- *Members noted that Welbourne Primary School and Hampton Hargate Primary School were given specific mention in the report with regard to Pupil Premium effectiveness. Members wanted to know if these schools were a fair reflection of comments made by Ofsted concerning other schools across the city. The inclusion of examples of schools in need of improvement would have also been helpful. The Assistant Director responded that there had been a very positive outcome on Pupil Premium across the city. An analysis of recent Ofsted Inspections could be done to extract further detail.*
- *Following the reconfiguration of Childrens centres how long will it be before we begin to see the outcome of the work that is now being directed at disadvantaged children feeding through to the early screening results of year 1 reception children. Members were informed that the Pupil Premium for Early Years would not start until next year. The focus for Pupil Premium at Childrens Centres took a holistic view of the child and not phonics and literacy skills.*
- *Was there a system in place to track young people leaving secondary school who were in receipt of Pupil Premium to see if they were going into further education, employment or training? Members were informed that destination data for years 11 and 13 was collected from secondary schools showing where pupils go to on leaving school. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) were also recorded. Further analysis of both sets of data with regard to those in receipt of Pupil Premium could be done.*
- *Was Pupil Premium funding an addition to the schools overall block funding. Members were advised that it was new money coming into schools but there had historically been recycled grant money.*
- *What can be done to ensure other schools get access to best practice? Members were advised that there was a Pupil Premium Leads Group for secondary schools in place and they had already met twice to share best practice. A similar group was being set up for primary schools. The Pupil Premium Gold Medal award winning school from London had been invited to Peterborough to share best practice.*
- *Members were concerned about the Universal Infant Free School meal programme and the impact this may have on parents applying for free school meals. Members were informed that schools were continuing to encourage parents to apply for Free School Meals to ensure that Pupil Premium funding continued. Campaigns and initiatives were taking place between now and January 2015.*
- *Are the numbers of pupils currently claiming Pupil Premium robust? Members were advised that deprivation rates against the take up of free school meals had been analysed and compared with other authorities Peterborough appeared to be in line with other similar authorities for primary schools however secondary schools was slightly lower.*
- *Members commented that there did not seem to be a unified way of reporting Pupil Premium across schools. The Assistant Director agreed and felt that Ofsted should provide a set format for schools to follow. The Local Authority did send out a pro forma to all schools but it was at the discretion of the school how the Pupil Premium information was presented.*
- *Members referred to paragraph 5.6 and sought further clarification “Peterborough increased by 10.3% on % of FSM eligible students attaining GCSE benchmark – the third highest increase nationally. Whilst still in the lowest quartile, this is a significant increase from 2012, when we were in the bottom quartile”. Members were informed that Peterborough had been 151<sup>st</sup> out of 151 authorities in 2012 and were now 110 which was a significant improvement. However, there was still a gap to close in attainment to reach the national average and the plan which was in place was working towards this.*

- Members referred to the education focus group and asked if they had met. *Members were informed that they had not yet met.*
- Members asked how the stigma of claiming free school meals could be addressed. *Members were informed that all secondary schools and some primary schools had cashless catering and most schools had finger print recognition which helped to eliminate the identification of those who received free school meals.*
- Members sought clarification as to what families were being asked to apply for. Was it Free School Meals or Pupil Premium? *Members were advised that parents were asked to apply for both in that if they apply for Pupil Premium they would get a free school meal. Parents were being informed as to how Pupil Premium provided extra funding to the school to support their child.*

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the report and requested the following information be provided:

1. An analysis of recent Ofsted Inspections to be undertaken to extract further detail on the impact of Pupil Premium and;
2. Destination data and NEET data to be analysed to provide details of the outcomes of those young people in receipt of Pupil Premium.

## **6. Effectiveness of Education and Training Provision for 16-19 Year Olds in Peterborough – Ofsted Review**

The report was introduced by the Assistant Director for Education, Resources and Corporate Property and provided the Committee with details of the review of the effectiveness of education and training provision for 16 to 19 year olds in Peterborough undertaken by Ofsted in May. The report provided the findings of the review and the draft action plan which addressed the findings.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- The Chair congratulated the Assistant Director for providing the information in the report so soon after the Ofsted report had been published.
- Members were informed that the action plan was in draft and dates for delivering the action plan would be populated and a final version would be presented to the Committee when complete.
- Members referred to the recommendations from Ofsted and asked if the following recommendation was dealt with in the action plan - “continue to champion the needs of all young people but report publicly and more robustly on shortcomings in post – 16 provision across the city”. *Members were advised that it had been picked up in the action plan under the section 3 – Develop a post 16 Education/Skills plan that articulates the council’s aspirations and expectations for young people aged 16 – 25. There had been a Post 16 Strategy in place but it was old and needed refreshing.*
- Members referred to page 51 action point 1:4:3, Disseminate the model of apprenticeship support developed by Cross Keys Homes. Will this inform the piece of work involving Amey, Serco and Skanska? *Members were advised that it would inform that piece of work. The Cross Keys model was very positive and the intention was to try and role the model out more widely.*
- Members referred to action point 1:2:3 on page 47 – Support the introduction of a Common Application Process across Peterborough schools and learning providers. Why had this not been put in place before? *Members were informed that there had been a common application process in place but schools had not wanted to support this when the legislation changed and roles and responsibilities altered. The 14 – 19 Partnership ended when the legislation changed and funding from government stopped. This was now being looked at again and the local authority is working with schools on this.*

- Has there been consideration to joining up all of the Key Stage 5 providers so that students were not just looking at school provision but also apprenticeships and college provision in one grouping. A local authority directory may encourage local providers to come forward and register their provision. A link to the directory could then be provided on school websites. *Members were informed that there was an issue with information from the government and who was providing courses in the area. The Education Funding Agency could inform the Local Authority of which providers were in the area and Ofsted would be taking this up. There would be a big event next year on Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) inviting all providers to one place. This would help in collating a list of providers.*
- Members referred to page 47 action point 1:2:2, "Identify a lead secondary school improvement consultant with the responsibility to support and challenge schools in developing an appropriate KS5 curriculum offer". Is this an additional post? *Members were informed that there needed to be a focus on KS5 and existing resources within the authority would be reworked to allow for this.*

## **ACTIONS AGREED**

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Assistant Director for Education, Resources and Corporate Property bring the Effectiveness of education and training provision for 16-19 year olds in Peterborough Action Plan back to the Committee when completed.

### **7. Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers**

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the current position of the recruitment and retention of staff in Children's Social Care.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- How does Peterborough compare to other authorities with recruitment and retention of Social Workers? *Members were advised that benchmarking had shown that Peterborough was slightly better off than some authorities and much better placed than others. The Shire Counties had a much more stable workforce but the cities and Unitary Authorities had a bigger churn of staff.*
- Members commented that when the problem of recruiting social workers had occurred some years ago staff within the authority in other areas of work within Children's Services and other parts of the council were considered for social worker roles as a career development opportunity. This provided a higher retention rate. Had this been considered? *The Executive Director agreed that this was a good idea and this would be looked into. The DfE were offering a bursary scheme to staff with some professional qualifications who wanted to develop their career and this was being looked into.*
- Members were concerned about the rate of pay for agency staff being higher than permanent staff and asked if the pay for permanent staff could be higher. This may reduce the problem of social workers leaving and therefore reduce the need for agency staff. *Members were advised that this would provide a problem with other authorities competing and increasing their rates of pay. A Memorandum of Understanding had been put in place with other authorities regarding an agreement on the rates of pay for permanent social workers and agency staff. Peterborough provided a slightly better rate of pay than some authorities.*
- Members commented that one of the reasons for recruiting social workers might be because of the bad publicity which would put people off taking it up as a career. *The Executive Director responded that the adverse publicity had not helped and it had meant fewer trainee social workers had been recruited. A lot of work had been undertaken to enhance the reputation of social workers in Peterborough.*

- Has consideration been given to bringing in social workers from other countries? *Members were informed that the Executive Director had a meeting scheduled with someone who sourced qualified social workers from Eastern European countries. One of the difficulties was around the registration of social workers as social workers in Eastern European countries did not have the same registration process. Another issue was that they often did not speak very much English.*
- Members were interested in the Social Worker Academy but wanted to know if a time limit for staying with the authority could be put in place. *Members were advised that this was being looked at to see if after training social workers could be asked to sign a contract to stay with the authority for a minimum of two years.*

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the report.

### **8. Directors Report for Social Care Practice and Performance**

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the progress of performance and practice in Children's Social Care. The following highlights as of September 2014 were covered:

- Early help assessments at all-time high
- Thresholds applied appropriately in respect of referrals
- High number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan/Child Protection enquiries
- Agency rate increased – proposals for an Academy to CMT

The Chair thanked the Executive Director for the information being provided to Councillors on the ongoing child sex exploitation case.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members noted that the number of Child Protection enquiries had risen and was higher than the same time last year. Members felt that if children were in need of protection then the fact that the number had risen did not matter as it was the duty of the authority to protect them. *The Executive Director responded that there was a high number of Section 47 Child Protection Enquiries and there needed to be further interrogation to gather all the evidence when the referral was made. This would determine whether it was necessary for a police officer to visit the home with the Social Worker. Some of the work done needed to be done under the Children in Need procedures rather than Child Protection procedures.*
- Members sought clarification on the 90.6% of single assessments completed up to the end of September in timescale. There was no target figure to benchmark this against. Members were informed that the target was 100% and all single assessments should be within timescale.

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the report.

### **9. Scrutiny in a Day – One Year On**

The Senior Governance Officer introduced the report which informed the Committee on proposals for reviewing the Joint Scrutiny in a Day event which had been held on 17 January 2014 which looked at the impacts of welfare reform.

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the report and endorsed the proposal to hold a further Scrutiny in a Day – One Year On event.

### **10. 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.

### **11. Work Programme 2014/2015**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2014/15 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

The Senior Governance Officer advised the Committee that Scrutiny of the Budget would be held in two phases this year. The first meeting would be held on 3 December 2014.

## **ACTION AGREED**

To confirm the work programme for 2014/15 and the Senior Governance Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.53pm

CHAIRMAN