

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2019
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors J Goodwin (Chairman), G Casey, L Coles, N Day, A Dowson, T Haynes, S Lane, L Robinson, B Rush, S Warren
Co-opted Members: A Kingsley, P Cantley, and Parish Councillor S Lucas

Also Present: Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education, Skills and University

Officers Present: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities
Nicola Curley, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Jonathan Lewis, Service Director, Education

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jones, Councillor Over and Co-opted Members Parish Councillor Junaid Bhatti, Rizwan Rahemtulla and Flavio Vettese. Councillor Scott Warren was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Over.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

14. MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2019.

The minutes of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 July 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

15. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

16. BEST START IN LIFE (BSiL) STRATEGY

The Executive Director for People and Communities introduced the report accompanied by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education Skills and University. The purpose of the report was to seek the Committee's endorsement of the draft Joint Best Start in Life Strategy 2019 – 2024 as attached at Appendix 1 of the report prior to going to Cabinet for approval. The key purpose of the strategy was to ensure that there was a co-ordinated and integrated multi-agency agreement on the delivery of pre-birth to 5 services that was tailored appropriately to meet local need. Best Start in Life was a 5 year strategy which

aimed to improve life chances of children (pre-birth to 5 years) in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by addressing inequalities, narrowing the gap in attainment and improving outcomes for all children, including disadvantaged children and families.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The “placed based approach” would operate within the existing six Children’s Centres as these were generally situated where they were most needed, with the addition of pop up places in other community buildings.
- The consultation revealed that consideration needed to be given on how best to serve people and which care professional was best placed to provide help for a given family at a given time.
- Midwives and health visitors could be used to assist in the early identification of the most vulnerable families and those needing additional support and potentially identify those who would not always seek support for themselves.
- Not all families required the same approach and a variety of settings could be more appropriate. Some families felt comfortable in childcare and nurse settings and staff there could be upskilled to avoid these families being referred to another professional.
- Members recognised that the report had been very comprehensive with contributions from many stakeholders and contained a robust list of measureable outcomes which could have a great impact on local families.
- Members were informed that throughout the summer the stakeholder group had been working with the agencies Dartington and Collaborate to build and propose clear ideas on the models of delivery. On 30 September 2019 the stakeholder group would present their findings to the Executive Board of the Children’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Board. Early findings suggested that it would be helpful to have one lead agency who would oversee the day to day management and delivery of the strategy and deliver key performance indicators (KPIs) and that specific BSiL Teams were needed. Focus was needed on the various professions and to ascertain if people needed to be upskilled and this would include the voluntary sector. An update could be provided to the Committee in March 2020 when the model should have been agreed and it would be closer to the implementation phase.
- Members commented that within the new Ofsted Framework there was an emphasis on the curriculum and quality of education and an expectation that Head Teachers would reflect the local issues in curriculum design. Members asked what recommendations would be passed on to secondary schools to enable pupils to be more conversant with the needs of children in the 0 – 5 age group and if there had been any engagement with secondary schools. Members were informed that work on the strategy had not involved secondary schools to date but mainly primary schools. The feedback from primary schools included issues such as children starting school wearing nappies, unable to read or socialise and it would be the responsibility of the BSiL team to prepare children to be ready to start school with these skills. Engagement with secondary schools could be arranged if this was deemed to be useful to help prepare key stage 4 and 5 pupils for the challenges parenthood.
- Secondary schools currently faced challenges with the reading ability of pupils moving up from junior school and improvements in this area would give pupils access to a wider curriculum.
- The focus at this stage was not on where buildings were located but where the need was greater and consideration would follow on what buildings locally were best suited to that need.
- The statutory requirement for children to have regular health checks would continue and children would have access to health professionals in both the city and rural areas and it was hoped that these professionals would feedback on any early issues. As all expectant mothers were allocated a midwife, it was anticipated that they would play a more proactive role in signposting and identifying key areas where resources were required.

- Information needed to be available to families in several different places and in different formats and libraries were well placed to deliver this. Research had identified that the library was a place people felt safe and comfortable visiting. The use of Family Connectors was also being considered however library staff could possibly fulfil this role, which would free up more staff on the frontline. Library staff could assist in signposting and helping people access Internet Technology (IT). Consideration was also being given to a digital offer with a directory such as the one being used by Community Children's Services (CCS) in Norfolk. The local offer was being continually developed to suit the needs of the local people.
- Members asked if Vivacity would be included as a stakeholder as they represented a key role in family fitness and engaged with families in a variety of venues. Members were advised that community support would enhance the programme and that Vivacity had already been approached regarding their involvement.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Endorse the draft Joint Best Start in Life Strategy 2019 – 2024 attached at Appendix 1 of the report for approval by Cabinet, and
2. Requested that a further report on the implementation of the Best Start in Life Strategy be brought back to the Committee in March 2020.

17. ANNUAL CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

The Assistant Director, Children's Services introduced the report accompanied by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education Skills and University. The purpose of this report was to advise the committee of activity carried out by the Corporate Parenting Committee during the municipal year 2018-19.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee congratulated The Assistant Director, Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education Skills and University on the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of Peterborough's Children's Services which was found to be Good in all categories.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Unaccompanied asylum seekers who were in care were still eligible for support under the Care Leavers Act when they reached the age of 18. They were supported by a personal advisor who provided help with housing and education taking into account their status and the reasons they were in this country. Some young people could wait a long time for a decision on their status to be agreed which would impact their ability to make decisions for their future.
- Members received an explanation of the permanency service; the combination of the adopting and fostering provision which also included special guardian assessments, post adoption support services, kinship – connective persons work around families where children were not in care but in need of support or children who have come out of care and were being looked after by families.
- Significant investment was required in fostering services and TACT appeared to have the necessary experience in developing foster carers and was thought to be the most suitable agency. Positive outcomes of the TACT partnership included training and the level of support provided to foster carers. There had however been an increase in children in care numbers and a decrease in placement availability which resulted in a very challenging market. TACT experienced difficulties trying to develop the service within this environment and the mutual decision was taken to terminate the contract.

- Placing children outside the local area had a negative impact and was particularly relevant to children with an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCPs) who could take some months to be placed. Further delays occurred as a different school then had to be nominated by the Local Authority which took time to process. The Corporate Parenting Committee had written to the Secretary of State requesting a change in the procedures for moving children between areas. There were added complications for the two or three young people placed in Scotland where procedures were different. The virtual school would never leave a child in care without some form of education plan in place which could be in an education facility within a unit or by home tutoring.
- The number of children in care had increased by about 40 children over the past four years and the age of young people supported had increased from age 21 to 25 following changes in legislation. The case load for social workers was being managed quite successfully as additional funds had been received from Central Government to ensure the correct number of social workers and personal advisors were employed. Each social worker had a caseload of 17-19 young people and personal advisors had caseloads of about 22 and these levels were considered manageable.
- 100 young people aged over 21 were identified as being entitled to support when the age limit was increased and personal advisors had been successful in re-connecting with them all. Each person was then able to decide what level of support they required going forward.
- The Ofsted Inspectors felt that a child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) needed more input from children themselves. The Assistant Director, Children's Services explained that young people were encouraged to be involved with their PEP and the configuration of the meeting was aimed to suit the individual needs of the child and included the school, the virtual school, carer and sometimes parents with someone taking notes. Younger children were usually happy to sit in the head teacher's office and talk about school, which had often been a safe haven away from home, whilst others, particularly older children were less likely to relax in this environment. Files audited indicated that the children's voice was always heard very clearly however details were not always being recorded effectively in the written report. As a result, the Head of the Virtual School now quality assured all PEPs against specific new criteria. Emotional and mental health questionnaires were also now included in the PEP.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note that the report is an accurate reflection of the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee over the last year.

18. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION INCORPORATING PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION, SKILLS AND THE UNIVERSITY

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education Skills and University introduced the report accompanied by the Service Director for Education. The report provided the Committee with an update of the progress made on implementing the recommendations contained within the education review report which had been previously presented to the Committee.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Local schools had felt the impact of funding cuts in education and had needed to make adjustments and the focus had remained on teaching and learning rather than pastoral and family care. It was unknown how the additional £2.5million funding promised by Central Government would be allocated and which schools would receive it. The impact of the additional funding could only be assessed once funding had been received.

- The School Improvement Strategy had focused on key areas and issues. The impact of pupil mobility had improved whilst reading still remained an issue in the city and had prompted the introduction of the Year of Reading. Maths was the biggest challenge going forward in secondary school. Improvements had been made on recruitment and quality of leadership.
- The 2014 School Improvement Strategy was replicated in the action plan and the model could now be refined using data and information now available.
- The inspection had highlighted areas requiring attention across the SEND process however these had already been identified in the self-assessment conducted earlier and were included in the action plan presented at a previous meeting in the SEND Strategy. Discussions had taken place with parents and Family Voice as part of the ongoing quality assurance and the quality of the provision was felt to be strong although there were areas which could be improved.
- The Executive Director, People and Communities advised the committee that whilst she agreed with the content of the Statement of Action contained within the Ofsted Report, she felt that its inclusion was unnecessary as the self-assessment statement had identified the same findings as the Statement of Action which were already being addressed.. The Ofsted Inspectorate had included the Statement of Action as they felt improvements had not been made quickly enough.
- The Ofsted Inspector had commented that leadership and management were strong but they wanted to see an increase in pace. An action plan would be submitted to Ofsted in November addressing the areas highlighted in the report.
- The Pupil Referral Unit, now under local authority control, had made improvements and the service had worked closely with head teachers to ensure schools were better able to deal with challenging pupils.
- The Safeguarding issues within the Pupil Referral Unit had been resolved as a priority and an external review would be carried out at the end of September to confirm all areas of concern had been addressed.
- STEPS training which a therapeutic approach to behavioural management would be introduced in October to assist schools in supporting pupils with challenging behaviour. A different approach was needed in managing pupils with behavioural issues and the Fair Access Protocol had been updated in conjunction with head teachers to reflect this and assist with the allocation of school places.
- Discussions had taken place with the Regional School Commissioner representative to implement a local solution based in the city.
- The number of pupil referrals since the beginning of the current term were lower than last year.
- The challenges in recruiting the appropriate teachers had been targeted and positive results had been achieved with several additional science teachers being recruited against a background of national shortages of Mathematics and Physics teachers. By training and gaining experience in local schools more teachers remained in the area.
- Planning ahead for future teacher requirements had led to a four year view to address any foreseeable shortages although more work was required on the primary element.
- SEND sat independently of education and would be part of the Quality Assurance area. Whilst quality assurance had been carried out in the past, this new approach would bring together all partners and could be used to hold different partners to account.
- The membership for the new SEND Governance Board, were very similar to those of the Best Start in Life Board with a wide variety of stakeholders from across Peterborough and Cambridge with backgrounds in education, health, teaching and included parents and partnership groups. A list of members would be sent round. The first Executive Board meeting had been very positive and the minutes would be made public. The Board would drive delivery of the wider SEND Strategy Plan whilst the responsibility for the Statement of Action remained in house.
- There were clear government expectations about funding additional mental health support workers in schools although funding and details on how this could be achieved had not yet been received. In the SEND strategy there is reference to mental health

support. Mental health was recognised as a key barrier to child development and therefore more support would be provided to support mental health provision.

- The Executive Director, People and Communities explained that she was also Chair of the Child Health & Wellbeing Commissioning Board, comprising of members from the local authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) together with public health representatives. Mental health was a key focus of the NHS long term plan and the CCG were expecting to receive additional resources for children's mental health.
- At their meeting held 11 September 2019, the Child Health & Wellbeing Commissioning Board agreed that there would be a separate mental health strategy for children rather than children being included in the adult strategy and the CCG would be taking the lead on this. Part of the strategy was the sharing of "good practice" and this would include the progress made in this area at the Ken Stimpson School.
- Member referred to SATs testing and their use in preparing children for secondary school, and were interested to know if there had been a survey to assess what difficulties children were presenting at this stage. Members were informed that a survey had been carried out and the biggest challenges were detailed in Appendix 2 of the report. A Year 6 Convention which included both local authority schools and academies has been organised to share ideas and best practices.
- Ofsted was expected to return to the Pupil Referral Service this autumn to review improvements on their earlier findings and a full external review had been commissioned to ensure existing issues were being resolved. The issues over attendance figures was a result of the way attendance was recorded differently across the three sites and this had now been corrected.
- Development of Teaching Apprenticeships in Peterborough was being looking into and particularly in primary schools where there had been significant gaps in teacher training.
- The recent announcement that starting salaries for teachers would increase to £30,000 would provide a good basis for recruitment although salaries could absorb a large part of the additional funding. A proper approach would be implemented around the recruitment and retention of teachers.
- Following a restructure, a new Head of Governance had recently been appointed who would be able to focus on leadership and the preparation of a robust plan going forward. There was a shortage of school governors and it remained difficult to retain governors with a wide range of skills. The Local Authority would be taking the lead on governance within the academies at their request.
- The proposed Peterborough University will focus on subjects relevant to the needs of this area and local employers. Consultants MACE have been appointed and once their findings were received plans could proceed on buildings and the appointment of appropriate partners.
- Destination data on pupils moving forward from secondary schools would be circulated when available and would include the previous year's results.
- There could be up to 5% difference in raw and validated data due to adjustments made for children new to the country, medical reasons and illness who were then removed from the data. The adjusted figures were used in the final league tables and data was not formally validated until March. The Director for Education would provide a briefing note on the validated results in November and the Committee were asked to email the Senior Governance Officer with any information they would like to be included.
- Provisional results for rural schools were at the same level as the previous year and would be reported separately.
- Members requested that all reports include a section on implications to Children in Care.

AGREED ACTIONS:

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:
 - a) Note the contents of the report and the actions being taken.

- b) Support both elected members and officers in their efforts to support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for children and young people in Peterborough.
2. The Children and Education Committee requested that the Service Director for Education:
 - a) Provide a briefing note in November on the validated data and to include last year's results
 - b) Provide destination data for students leaving school and to include last year's data.
 - c) Provide a formal report on results for rural schools.
 - d) Include any implications for children in care in future reports.
 3. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee requested that the Executive Director, People and Communities
 - a) Provide a list of members who were on the SEND Governance Board.
 - b) Provide details and information on the projects and pilot schemes being undertaken by the CCG for the Child Health & Wellbeing Board relating to children's mental health.
 4. The Senior Democratic Service Officer agreed to ensure all report templates were updated
 - to include a further section under Implications to cover the impact on children in care.

19. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which enabled the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to monitor and track the progress of recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings.

AGREED ACTIONS:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the progress made on recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings and agreed to mark the outstanding recommendations as listed at Appendix One as completed.

20. 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.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education, Skills and University who was in attendance requested that item 13 - University Delivery Vehicle KEY/3SEP18/02 be checked to see if the correct Cabinet Member had been assigned. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education, Skills and University had been listed for this item but felt that it should have been listed under the Cabinet Member for Resources.

AGREED ACTIONS:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the latest version of the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested that the Senior Democratic Services Officer check which Cabinet Member should be assigned to the Key Decision University Delivery Vehicle KEY/3SEP18/02.

21. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019/2020

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the report which considered the 2018/19 year in review and looked at the work programme for the new municipal year 2019/20 to determine priorities and agree the proposed way forward for monitoring future recommendations.

AGREED ACTIONS:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the work programme for 2019 – 2020 and requested that the Regional Schools Advisor be invited to attend the January 2020 meeting of the Committee.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14 November 2019.

CHAIRMAN
7.00pm to 9.10pm