

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON MONDAY 13 OCTOBER 2014**

Present:	Councillors S Day (Chairman), B Rush, B Saltmarsh, R Ferris, N Sandford	
Also present	Alastair Kingsley Stewart Francis Cllr Scott Michelle Nyani	Co-opted Member Education Co-opted Member Cabinet Member for Childrens Services Deputy Youth MP, Representing the Youth Council
Officers in Attendance:	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Sharon Hawkins Sue Westcott Claire George Dania Castagliuolo	Director for Communities Interim Assistant Director, Safeguarding & Communities Executive Director for Children's Services Head Teacher/Head of service for Pupil Referral Service Governance Officer, Scrutiny

Chairman's Announcements

At the start of the meeting the Chairman advised the Committee that the order of the agenda would be altered to the following:

Item:

5. Childrens Centres and Early Years Update
6. Portfolio Progress Report for Cabinet Member for Children's Services
7. Update on the Pupil Referral Service
8. Performance Report on NEET/Raising the Participation age
9. Report on the Work of the Corporate Parenting Panel

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nawaz, Councillor Jamil and Councillor Fower. Councillor Ferris attended as substitute for Councillor Jamil and Councillor Sandford attended as substitute for Councillor Fower.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

Item 7 Update on the Pupil Referral Service

Councillor Saltmarsh declared that she was on the Management Committee for the Pupil Referral Service.

Item 9 Report on the Work of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Councillor Saltmarsh declared that she was Vice Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 8 September 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2014 were approved as an accurate record.

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

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

5. Children's Centres and Early Years Update

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Director for Communities, which provided the Committee with an update on the activities taking place in the de-designated children's centres. The following areas were highlighted within the report:

- The progress made in securing tenants for the remaining de-designated centres
- The progress in delivering children and family centred support and activities from de-designated centres.

The Committee were asked to note the work and progress made in terms of the delivery of the proposals identified in the 'New Vision for Early Years', including Children's Centres in Peterborough.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members queried if any partner groups had been identified for Eye and Thorney Children's Centres. *The Director for Communities responded that recent opportunities regarding Eye were related to the developments at the Van Hague and the possible receipt of Section 106 money. The Local Authority would continue to be the lead tenant until there were further provisions in place.*
- Members queried what the current situation was with the Stanground Children's Centre. *Members were advised that the pre-school group at Stanground did look very positive and the Council was hoping to continue delivering this service. The Committee were reassured that until a lead tenant was in place the Local Authority would ensure that the centres remained open and services continued to be delivered.*
- Members asked if the Council monitored the services offered to families by the Children's Centres and if they were making sure these services were best for the families. *The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that it was very important to have involvement of families who used the centres and the plan was to have groups working together in all of the de-designated centres, including parents who would advise the Council of requirements.*
- Members queried how the Council ensured that high standards were delivered within these services. *The director for Communities advised the Committee that the Children's Centres were inspected by Ofsted. The majority of de-designated Centres provided childcare which was also inspected by Ofsted, this indicated that the ratings were improving with regards to child minding and early year's provision.*
- Members queried whether there was any provision in place for the recording of young people accessing these services. *The Director for Communities explained that with regards to the de-designated centres, there were five checks which health visitors were required to carry out on the 0-5's and these were monitored, therefore, results would be available on these checks through the Healthy Child Programme.*
- Members commented that there was a vast range of activities being delivered within the de-designated centres and queried whether there could be a matrix in place to discover if there were any gaps in provision. *Members were advised that the overall outcome expected to be achieved in all of these centres was to ensure that children were more prepared for learning when they reached school age. With regard to the matrix this could be developed although it would vary in terms of reaching the needs of the centre users.*

- Members queried whether Bretton was a de-designated centre and asked what the situation was with this centre at present. *Members were informed that Bretton was one of the outreach hubs linked to the main children's centres.*
- Members were concerned about the children outside of the designated centre area and asked what provisions were in place for them. *Members were advised that health visitors would refer children outside of the designated centre area, who required additional attention, to one of the de-designated children's centres.*
- Members queried how families in rural villages would come to find out about the centres or how the centres would find out about them. *The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that this would be discovered through the health visitors or health professionals in a variety of different ways.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report and agreed for the Director of Communities to:

1. Circulate a briefing note advising of what is delivered from the Bretton Hub and when.
2. Produce a report for January's meeting on the main children's centres delivery, to demonstrate their wider reach.

6. Portfolio Progress Report for Cabinet Member for Children's Services

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with a summary of the key successes and deliverables of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. The following key areas were covered within the report:

- CAFs (Early help and Referral)
- Referrals
- Single Assessments
- Section 47 (Child Protection) Enquires
- Children subject to a Child Protection Plan and initial Child Protection Conferences
- Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more
- Looked After Children
- Looked after Children Missing from Care
- Health of Looked After Children
- Child Protection Visits in Timescale
- Children in Need
- Update On Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Update on Child Sex Exploitation (CSE)
- Update on recruitment and Retention

The report also informed Members that Peterborough's early intervention activity, national Troubled Families programme, was called 'Connecting Families'.

The aims of this programme were to get children back in to school, reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour, put adults back in to employment and reduce the amount of money public services currently spent on them. The programme assigned a designated worker to engage with a whole family on all of its problems.

To date the programme had worked with over 300 families and around 200 families had been turned around.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members expressed concern regarding the retention of Social Workers. *The Executive Director for Children's Services responded that at present there were 24 full time equivalent permanent vacancies out of a work force of 83. More Social Workers were signing up with agencies and leaving the Council. There had been a movement set up from central Government to encourage private enterprise and provide agency Social Workers with a variety of benefits, although, this did not take in to account the long term benefits of working for the Local Authority, such as, Sickness, holiday and pension benefits. An enormous amount of work had been invested in the retention of Social Workers. Peterborough had featured on the Inside Out television programme, a YouTube video had been completed, work was in progress with Universities, practice teachers had been increased to help get quality students, a career progression scheme had been introduced for Social Workers and a Social Worker Academy was being developed.*
- Members asked what method of retention was being used with newly qualified Social Workers to ensure they were not attracted by the offers from agencies. *Members were advised that they had discreet training and a mentor in the service and continuous support and supervision from their team manager.*
- Members asked how interpreters were employed to go along with the Social Workers to make sure all of the facts of a case were received and understood. *Members were advised that this was not an easy task as over 200 languages were spoken in Peterborough. The Council did commission an interpreting service although, it was always dependent on the availability of the interpreters.*
- Members queried if the existing Social Workers had received an increase in their caseloads and how they were managing this increase. *The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that for a period of time the caseloads had been increasing. This was not the case at present, the average caseload was 19.5, taking on board that the more experienced Social Workers had up to 26 cases and newly qualified Social Workers had 8 to 10.*
- Members commented that they were pleased to see that the health of looked after children figures had risen and suggested that Peterborough made sure all looked after children had a health assessment. *The Executive Director of Children's Services responded that the Communities team had carried out work to ensure children were health assessed on time. This was constantly being monitored by a bimonthly report to the Achieving Outstanding Board.*

At this point Councillor Sandford joined the meeting and apologised for his late arrival.

- Members referred to page 58 of the report 'Section 47 (Child Protection) Enquiries' and asked what the national average was for the Child Protection enquiries. *Members were advised that other Local Authorities ran between 60 and 70 percent of their Section 47 enquiries. Peterborough had a high number of Section 47 Enquiries with a low number of these coming to conference.*
- Members requested feedback on Single Assessments. *Members were informed that Single Assessments were working very well. Not all of them were completed within the timescale, this was due to the Social Worker not receiving the adequate information form partner agencies on time.*
- Members queried what the interpretation service was costing the Council. *The Director for Communities advised the Committee that the company was used solely by the council and charged approximately £30.00 per hour. There had been some initial discussions across the National Health Service and the Police around jointly commissioning this service. The issue was around accessing the right interpreter for the language needed at the time. The Council and partner agencies were looking to make sure they were recruiting people who were able to communicate with different communities.*
- Members queried whether all interpreters were CRB checked. *The Director for Communities confirmed that all interpreters were CRB checked.*

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report and agreed for the Director for Communities to send the link to the Inside Out programme, which featured Peterborough's Social Workers, to all Committee Members.

7. Update on Pupil Referral Services

The report was introduced by the Head teacher/Head of Service for Pupil Referral which provided an overview of the Pupil Referral Service, the role it played in education in the city and how it was performing.

The Committee was asked to review the report and ask for areas of clarity or further information.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members referred to the table on page 15 of the report at 4.6 and queried what the meaning of guests was. *The Head Teacher/Head of Service for Pupil Referral responded that this referred to children who attended only one or two sessions per week. This allowed these children to remain in mainstream schools.*
- Members commented that the results gained by this service were outstanding and suggested that more of this type of service was required.
- Members asked how this service was funded. *Members were advised that the service was funded the same as a mainstream school. There was a delegated budget which was formulated by numbers of pupils and the level of need. There was some delegated funding within schools for supporting children with additional needs and there was also pupil premium funding of which around 80% of pupils qualified for.*
- Members queried if head teachers were now working together to save resources. *Members were informed that more of the school to school support was being noted, this was a model which the Local Authority was supporting schools in developing.*
- Members queried whether the Local Authority was interested in early reporting. *Members were informed that early intervention was now taking place at home with the child's family not just in school with the child.*
- Members queried whether children were able to attend the same school following exclusion. *Members were advised that if the child had been permanently excluded then they could not return to the same school and a replacement school would be made available.*
- Members queried how much income was received through the Pupil Premium funding. *Members were advised that £900 per child was received. The Pupil Referral Service would get the full £900 funding if the child was only on that school's role. If the child was on the role of a mainstream school then the funding would go to the mainstream school who would then decide whether they wanted to use some of the funding for some time with the Pupil Referral Service. To obtain Pupil Premium Funding there would need to be a clear Pupil Premium Plan in place. Ofsted would come to inspect and they would expect to see results, impacts and outcomes.*
- Members commented that the Pupil Referral Service Team were very supportive, strong and professional when working with challenging young people.
- Members queried whether the Fair Access Process had been successful and if there were any predicted challenges going forward. *Members were informed that all schools were participating in this process. The Fair Access protocol was reviewed in March 2012. Prior to that it was run on a rota basis which made situations for young people quite unrealistic. The consultation process agreed for matching to be done to place the young person in a school which would allow them to achieve greater success.*
- Members queried whether all young people excluded from schools got an automatic referral to the Pupil Referral Service. If this was the case and a new school was to be found for the pupil, were all schools willing to take on the pupil. *Members were advised*

that all schools did participate in Fair Access. The Head Teacher of the excluding school would make contact with the Pupil Referral Service to file the reporting form, this needed to be complete within 24 hours of the decision to permanently exclude. A meeting with the pupil's family would then be held within five days this report. From there on there would be fifteen school days before a governor hearing would take place to decide permanent exclusion. Not all young people would end up within Pupil Referral.

- *Members congratulated the Head of Service for Pupil Referral on the work the team was conducting and the great deal of expertise in child behaviour management.*
- *Members queried whether there was an opportunity, using expertise, to go in to schools to talk to teachers about how to manage problem children in classes. Members were advised that the Pupil Referral Service spent fifty percent of its time in schools working with teachers to build capacity, confidence and competence. The Head of Service for Pupil Referral Service was currently engaging with teachers on the Newly Qualified Teachers Support Programme and the new Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme. Low level classroom disruption was dealt with through the Secondary Behaviour Leads Group.*
- *Members queried whether it was felt that the service or schools were overstretched. Members were advised the service and schools did not feel under pressure due to the pattern of working which Pupil Referral Service had established that included short term focused interventions. This enabled places to be used as effectively as possible by dealing with children short term, using negotiated planning and reintegration in to school.*
- *Members queried whether it would be useful for children in Peterborough if there were more spaces available for them within the service. Members were advised that every child had access to the service when needed.*
- *The Youth Council Representative asked how permanent exclusions were prevented. The Head of Service for Pupil Referral responded that this was prevented as much as possible by working together with head teachers and partner services to ensure the young person's needs were met.*

ACTION AGREED

The committee noted the report and agreed for the Head teacher/Head of Service to contact Michelle Nyani, Deputy Youth MP to discuss how the Youth Council could link in with the Pupil Referral Service.

8. Performance on NEET/Raising Awareness the Participation Age

The report was introduced by the Director for Communities on behalf of the Head of Corporate Property and Children's Resources, which provided the latest data on young people aged 16 to 19 not in education, employment or training. The report also discussed raising the participation age criteria and the requirement for all young people to participate in education until the age of 17.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- *Members queried whether apprenticeships were being offered to young people. The Director for Communities replied that apprenticeships were being offered at present. The Council needed to ensure that they and their contractors also offered apprenticeships to young people.*
- *Members referred to page 65 of the report 5.4 and queried why youth workers were being pooled to respond to locality wide objectives and not just ward areas. Members were advised that all of the locality youth workers were part of the Councils wider Community and Safety Service and they had a more targeted approach with the direct work delivered. They worked with local communities to help them with universal youth provision.*
- *Members referred to page 66 of the report and queried whether Cross Keys had any success with the Moving in to Work Programme. Members were informed that there were currently four young people employed on six months paid work experience with Cross*

Keys and three young people had started college, five had full time jobs. Out of twelve young people on the programme only three remained without jobs.

- Members queried whether any other partners were taking part in any programme similar to Moving in to Work. *Members were advised that no other partners had a programme similar to this one in place.*
- Members queried how the 'Not Known' data was identified and how these young people were going to be helped in to employment, education or training. *Members were advised that the data was tracked through schools. The young people were helped through various programmes run by Cross keys and the Princes Trust.*
- The Youth Council Representative asked whether the Council worked with schools to identify young people who would become NEET. *The Director for Communities advised the Committee that Council worked closely with schools to identify young people who were likely to become NEET.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee agreed for the Director of Communities to:

1. Contact Michelle Nyani, Deputy Youth MP, to discuss holding an information day to identify what alternatives there were to attending sixth form.
2. Circulate information on whether Peterborough City Council or any of its partners offered work experience.
3. Circulate the answer to the following question, 'Is there any particular reason why some wards had a high level of NEET' as indicated on page 66 of the report.
4. Bring a report back to the Committee on how Peterborough City Council has encouraged partners and business to offer apprenticeships and what the outcomes are.

9. Report on the Work of the Corporate Parenting Panel

The Vice Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel over the last twelve months.

The report also informed the Committee that the topics discussed this year had been focused on the priorities that drove the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy, which were:

- Assertive prevention of care by supporting families
- Effective care planning
- Placement stability and range of high quality placement provision
- Health issues of children and young people in care
- Educational attainment and achievement
- Leisure and interests outside of school
- Working to their promises and pledge

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members commented that all Councillors should be reminded that they were all corporate parents.
- Members commented that the Corporate Parenting Panel was very useful and children who attended the meeting were very honest. They felt they could speak freely.
- Members queried why there were no adoptive parents on the panel and suggested that they received a standing invite to the Corporate Parenting meetings. *The Vice Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel responded that this was something that the Panel were planning to add in to their work programme.*

- *The Executive Director for Children's Services commented that the key question should be what difference and impact has the Corporate Parenting Panel had on the lives of children in care.*
- Members referred to page 54 (ix) of the report, and queried whether Members had been appointed as champions and how this was moving forward. *The Vice Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel responded that Members had been elected under the different strands, although this had not been moved forward. The Executive Director of Children's Services informed Members that these tasks became impossible to administer therefore, all Members became Champions.*
- Members asked for an example of where the Corporate Parenting Panel had made a difference in the lives of children in care. *The Interim Assistant Director for Safeguarding & Communities advised informed Members that children in care were now provided with proper suitcases for their belongings instead of bin liners. Children no longer have to wait for passports.*

ACTION AGREED

The committee agreed for the Interim Assistant Director for Safeguarding to provide evidence of what differences the Corporate Parenting Panel had made to the lives of Children in care.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommended to the Corporate Parenting Panel that the following subjects listed within the Panel's Terms of Reference were delivered as agenda items, presenting one of the following strands per meeting:

- Housing
- Employment and training opportunities within Council departments and with partner agencies
- Health
- Educational Attainment and access to Higher Education
- Recreation and Leisure activities
- Finance and benefits

10. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the 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 Key Decisions.

11. Work Programme 2014/2015

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

Members requested that:

- The City College item due to come a meeting in January, included information on apprenticeships offered.

- An item on apprenticeships/work experience within the Council and among partners to be brought to the Committee in March.

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 9.07pm

CHAIRMAN

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