

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2015**

Present: Councillors B Saltmarsh (Chair), K Aitken, B Rush, J Peach, J Shearman, J Yonga.

Also present Stewart Francis Education Co-optee
Alistair Kingsley Independent Co-opted Member

Officers in Attendance: Jonathan Lewis Former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property.
Safeguarding
Lou Williams Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding
Karen Moody Head of Prevention and Early Help Services
Karen S Dunleavy Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harper, Councillor Aitken was in attendance as a nominated substitute. Apologies for absence were also received from Andrew Read, Education Co-optee.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of meetings held on 14 September 2015

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 September 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.

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

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

5. Review of Outcomes of Peterborough Self Improvement School Network

Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property introduced the report which provided Members with an overview of the progress on the Review on Outcomes of Peterborough Self Improvement School Network, which had also been reported to Committee on 11 November 2013 and 17 March 2014. The report provided an update on the first full year of operation and the action areas where refinements would be taken to ensure outcomes were impacted.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members congratulated the former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property on his recent appointment to Northamptonshire County Council and commented that they hoped his replacement would apply the same enthusiastic

approach on education delivery and school improvements for Peterborough City Council (PCC). The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property commented that there were lots of very enthusiastic staff that were employed at PCC that would push through the education initiatives and improvement ideas.

- Members asked how the Bedford Borough schools performance clinic model had benefited PCC school improvement clinics? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that the first school improvement clinic for Peterborough proved to be a success, which had highlighted a number of issues in schools where urgent improvement was needed. It was hoped that future school improvement clinic meetings would work on developing the most appropriate format for future meetings.
- Members asked what plans were in place to ensure that the professional development and support projects, which head teachers had voluntarily contributed to in their specific areas of expertise, and why this initiative had not continued going forward? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that there had been a directory of services available through Peterborough Learning Partnership and a website that offered support for schools such as a course on phonics a catch up for boys.
- Members asked how the Authority intended to pursue the recommendation made by OfSTED on page 35 of the report, where 'Peterborough must relentlessly focus on supporting and challenging schools to improve outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those supported through pupil premium funding? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that the head teachers improvement meetings and progress reports had been rigorous and robust and that there would be an action plan to focus on the School Improvement Team, which OfSTED were due to provide in January 2016. There would also be a scoring scheme for schools to follow in order for them to properly grade themselves and head teachers should expect to be questioned and challenged on their self-grading.
- Some members commented that they were disappointed over some aspects of the report and that there were a lot of suggestions made under improved outcomes and value for money which were not included in SIP, but many other soft targets such as development of primary head teachers had been. The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property, advised that the school improvement plan, which had been developed would take a long time to imbed and impact and would not change things for schools immediately hence the outcomes had been to meet soft measures for the outcome to be achieved initially.
- Members also commented that there had only been one governor involved in the school improvement recommendations in respect of strong governance and that there had been passing reference made in a vague representation, which seemed to lack a purpose. The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property commented that there had been a school governors leadership programme which had engaged with 18 to 19 governing bodies that had worked together. Alistair Kingsley also advised that he had engaged in the process and that the governance leadership group had through the governor improvement network set up triads on the same topics that mirrored the school improvement network.
- Members commented that on page 24 at paragraph 4.5 and a statement in regards of collaborative working, which had caused some head teachers to worry about when the funding issues would be resolved. The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate confirmed that a meeting had been held recently and that the funding was to be distributed more fairly for collaborative working.
- Members commented that there needed to be a longer term focus for the Governors Board to work more closely with schools to meet better outcomes for the school improvement board.
- Members asked what the Authority's perceived status of the school improvement plan (SIP) progress would be for the next few years? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that the funding for SIP was in

place and that lead head teachers would be the drivers behind the improvements system in terms of providing peer support to around 80 – 90% of Peterborough schools.

- *Members asked whether the Authority felt that there had been schools that were not engaged in SIP that should be? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that there were a handful of schools facing challenges, however, they had received support from the School Improvement Team. There were also some schools that the Authority would like to engage with over SIP, but some had chosen not to.*
- *Members asked what challenging circumstances had been experienced by the schools that had chosen not to engage in SIP? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate advised that the non-engaging schools had suffered issues such as low attainment, governance and leadership issues. The schools that were experiencing difficulties would receive direct support from the School Improvement Team.*
- *Members asked where the £500k funding for SIP been facilitated? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate advised that the funding was being met from the dedicated schools grant which was not funded through the Authority but had been from top slicing school budgets. The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate also confirmed that each collaborative group would be allocated £40k, with a pot of £20k to fund city-wide school projects.*
- *Members also sought clarification over SLE associates and why the Authority had commissioned the company's services including how much was being paid? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate advised that the company was commissioned to initially set up the SIP system. The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate also confirmed that SLE associates costs had been met from the schools improvement funds, which was completely independent from the Authority.*
- *Members commented that the school improvement programme demonstrated a positive step forward.*

ACTIONS AGREED

Members of the Committee reviewed the progress to date and also noted the new arrangements for the Schools Performance Clinic which commenced in October 2015.

6. Vulnerable Children In Education including Closing the Gap Strategy / EAL Strategy and Virtual School

The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property introduced the report to Members on two strategies, closing the Gap, English as an Additional Language EAL strategy. The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property also provided Members with an update on the Virtual School for Children in Care improvement plan.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- *Members commented that the issues with Closing the Gap and EAL had seen a marked improvement, and had captured the national concerns of children not speaking English as an additional language.*
- *Members asked whether the Authority was losing focus on the disadvantaged white pupil achievements? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that the aim of the strategies was about closing the gap for the vulnerable including disadvantaged white pupils. There had been a project on 'Achievements for All' for the city to drive up standards.*
- *Members commented about maintaining momentum on closing the gap which had seen good progress for the Authority and also asked about paragraph 5.4.2 of the*

report in regards to governors holding their schools to account in respect of closing the gap achievements and how the message would be reiterated considering current Governor training sessions had experienced poor attendance? *The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property responded that a balance would need to be found by holding a Governors' conference and the use of a Governor dashboard from FFT Aspire, which would provide data to Governors in relation to their school's closing the gap performance, which in turn should prompt the right sort of questions from School Governors. In addition the way data was presented to governor bodies should be more robust and that a strong Special Educational Needs lead should be implemented.*

- Members commented that new ways to communicate the closing the gap message to School Governors should be considered. *The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that options were being explored such as an up to date School Governor email address list as well as different avenues of communication such as social media.*
- Members asked whether it was intended to promote EAL engagement across the City? *The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that a range of schools that had engaged in EAL ranged from anywhere to 2 – 100% of their pupils and that it had been made clear to schools that things needed to improved in terms of closing the gap. There had been EAL leaders in some schools and this was set to increase in others. The main difficulty experienced in engagement was in secondary schools.*
- Members asked about how the Authority intended to make schools self-sufficient in terms of EAL? *The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that the resource amount was £250k out of £150m for schools in the EAL area and that the preferred approach had been for individual teachers to undertake the Career Performance Development training approach. There had also been an MA course in EAL, which 11 learners had recently signed up to through the Greenwich University. The Authority aimed to create a number of EAL specialists across the City that could share good practice for standards.*
- Members asked what sort of work was involved in the recruitment of School Governors (SG) in terms of communicating the workload and what the SG role entailed? *The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that a SG one stop shop was available on-line which had promoted the ability to apply on line. However, the system did not seem to reach potential parent governors. Schools would usually send a letter to parents and some were very good in the provision of an explanation about the SG role and some schools were not realistic. In addition, Members were advised that governor vacancies were at 11% and in an attempt to drive recruitment, the Authority had sent letters to accountants and lawyers in the City to encourage them to apply for the vacant positions.*
- Members asked what measures were in place for closing the gap and whether School Governors had been identified to champion the area as suggested in the report? *The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that the Authority had been exploring the development of a policy for closing the gap and the comment in the report was a suggestion on how to explore all options in order to introduce best practice.*
- Members asked whether there had been any statistical information available in relation to the EAL pupils increase as stated in 4.11 of the report and whether the increase was across the board or if it had related to new school pupil intake? *The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that there had been more migration in terms of early years and that there had been huge amount of migrants also arriving in the year 11 age group across different areas of the City. This issue had impacted on school place planning and had made it difficult to place non English speaking pupils. There were also circumstances where EAL pupils had lived in England for three years, however their language was that of their mother tongue.*
- Members asked about the 52% of looked after children placements outside of the City and whether there were plans in reduce the figure? *The Service Director Children's*

Services and Safeguarding advised that looked after children were placed close to the City and the figure was slightly below the national average. It was also confirmed that the data set could be included in future reports in terms of their location.

- *Members commented that in 5.13.2 of the report, there were six weaknesses identified by OfSTED inspectors and asked why managers had not highlighted the weaknesses before the inspection. The Former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property that measures had been put into place prior to the Ofsted visit such as the pupil premium monitor to measure the outcome of improvements, however, the system had not put in place at the time of the OfSTED visit. The role of virtual school had sustained a bit of a delay in respect of post 16 students Children in Care (CiC) progress, however, plans were due to be put in place to meet any of the service weaknesses. Additional resource for the team was also due to be implemented with the introduction of an Electronic Personal Education Plan (PEP).*
- *Members commented on the action plan at 5.15 of the report and asked whether it would be possible to include reference to the resource issues for virtual schools? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that although there had been resource improvements introduced for virtual schools, that there had been a bid submitted within the budget setting process to make further improvements. There had also been a role responsibility identified for schools and social workers to assist in improvement implementation.*
- *Members commented that ideas about the uptake of free school meals seemed to be vacant within the report. The Former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that page 57 and 58 of the report had demonstrated that there had already been a drop in those claiming for free school meals and that there had been a difficulty in identifying priority families and that the data sourced from other bodies had lacked and that there needed some further intervention from the Government to combat the issue, which could be easily rectified by way of searching tax codes, however the Government had advised that this approach held too many legal implications.*
- *Members asked whether some schools were better at identifying those that had qualified for free school meals than others? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property advised that new arrivals had presented a challenge and that there had been endless communications in regards to the qualifying criteria for free school meals.*
- *Members asked for clarification over the targets set for closing the gap on page 61 of the report for key stage two and four and why this data had not been captured. Members also asked how this information would be calculated in the future and whether it would be rigorous enough? The former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property responded that the targets were not included as the data had not been available at the time of report production. The future aim was to implement targets that would be rigorous and that would conform to national standards. The Ofsted readiness had driven the performance on targets and would look for a close in any gaps, which would include the Authority's aspirations. This would also include liaising closely with School Governors and head teachers. Members also held a role to rigorously scrutinise the progress in closing the gap and holding the Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property to account if the targets were not met. This would also include an expectation that Academies would meet the same standards for closing the gap.*

The Committee thanked the former Service Director Education, Resources and Corporate Property for his work with the authority and wished him well in his future career.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommended that the Leader of the Council - Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University considered and carefully monitored the underfunding position for the Virtual Schools team.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee endorsed both strategies for publication and action, and requested to be provided with statistical data in relation to the new arrivals of EAL pupils to be organised by ethnic groups and age groups.

The Committee also requested information to be included within the report due on 14 March 2016, with regards to the uptake of free school meal claims and the improvement plans developed to demonstrate the use of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) data.

20:15 at this point the Committee took a comfort break.

7. Impact of Early Help (including Connecting Families)

The Head of Prevention and Early Help Services introduced the Impact of Early Help which outlined the approach taken to Early Help in Peterborough and the way in which phase 2 of the Troubled Families agenda (known locally as Connecting Families) was being driven through this arena, which was part of a five year programme.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members commented on page 69 of the report which had referenced the visit from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and asked whether there were any further suggestions made for Peterborough or whether DCLG had made any recommendation to Westminster? *The Head of Prevention and Early Help Services advised that the feedback received from DCLG was very positive and that Peterborough were asked by DCLG if they could share some of the good practice they observed in Peterborough with other Local Authorities. Each Local Authority is required to produce an Outcomes Framework against which success is measured and DCLG had reported that they were satisfied with the framework for Peterborough.*
- Members commented that the extension of phase 2 for Connecting Families was welcomed and asked that to achieve the outcome required how resources to support families would be used across the City? *The Head of Prevention and Early Help Services advised that a large proportion of resources had been put into mainstreaming support across the city which could be accessed by partners in the community through completion of Early Help Assessments. Additional support had been available for more complex families through one of three multi agencies support group panels.*
- Members asked what challenges were anticipated to meet the criteria for phase 2 in order to make the process viable? *The Head of Prevention and Early Help Services responded that there were six categories of need such as attendance at school and, children in need of help. Some of these needs were identified through the narrative in an Early Help Assessment, whilst some were identified through data sets that the Local Authority maintained and had access to. It was anticipated that the local Authority would meet the criteria fully for the attachment grant which was based on the family having one lead professional, one assessment and one family plan. Achievement of significant and sustained progress on every element of the programme identified as a need for a particular family would be a challenge and the challenge had not been underestimated. The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding also advised that there had been a strength in phase 1 of the Connecting Families programme whereby additional funding was utilised with Children's Centres for family support work with parents of children aged 5 to 11 which had been complemented on by Ofsted in the recent inspection.*
- Members asked what the vision and objective had been for the direct impact of phase 2 to integrate across communities in Peterborough? *The Head of Prevention and Early Help Services advised that The Head of Prevention and Early Help Services*

advised that the ultimate aim is to improve outcomes for children and families in Peterborough and to achieve this through engagement and buy in from partner agencies and a real commitment to making a difference as early as possible that the problem is identified. Information sharing was crucial in meeting the success of phase 2 with partner agencies, in order to work in a more holistic way.

- Members commented about the case study provided within the report and asked how the Authority intended to stop the recurrence of a family falling back to a status before support was provided to them? *The Head of Prevention and Early Help Services responded that the need for maintaining a level of support had been identified and together with a partner agency, were in the process of planning a pilot to recruit to a part time coordinator to recruit volunteers who would then support families that had received high and medium level family support. The support would not be stopped at the end of the intervention, but would be passed to a volunteer for longer term support. The family would then be weaned off CF support over a period of time until it was evident that they had become stronger and could cope without support.*

The Committee thanked the Head of Prevention and Early Help Services for her work on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the contents of the report and requested that the education attainment and exclusion data in relation to key stage one and key stage two school children, who were supported by the troubled families programme, be included within future reports.

8. SERVICE DIRECTOR AND PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW REPORT: CHILDREN & SAFEGUARDING

The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding introduced the report to Members, which provided an overview of the key activities within the portfolio of the Service Director for Children and Safeguarding, as well as providing a summary of key performance information in respect of Children's Social Care.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members commented on the narrative included within the report and thanked the Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding for the format.
- Members asked about the number and quality of candidates received for the Alternatively Qualified Worker (AQW) roles? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding confirmed that there had been 20 good quality applications received. Members were also advised that the reliance on the number of Social Workers required had reduced, and that newly appointed AQWs had recently undertaken training and were keen to start work in the community. There had also been a good number of bilingual staff appointed. The background of recently recruited AQW had included professionals such as assistant psychologists and nursery nurses.*
- Members asked whether there would be a generic job description for AQW roles and whether there would be any flexibility to specialise in specific areas of expertise? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that flexibility would be encouraged for AQW job descriptions and would be broad in terms of capturing a number of various skill sets.*
- Members asked whether they would continue to receive the extra level of consistent data and commentary in relation to the performance indicators included within the report? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding confirmed that it was part of his role to ensure that the Committee continued to receive the performance data in relation to Safeguarding in a format required.*

- Members asked about the improvement strategy in relation to the IT system used for the production of live safeguarding data? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that the system had changed historically from a software package called Raise to Liquid Logic, however, at the time of purchase the Authority had not obtained the live data element of the software, due to the fact that the Authority was uncertain at the time of the value of data over the cost implications?. The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding had been exploring the option of using a software page named QlickView, which could also draw data from liquid logic and Aggresso the Authority's financial system. It had also been expected that the QlickView reports would alert team managers over the status of a CIC or CIN visits and whether they had taken place on time. The QlickView reports provided a 30 second refresh and would highlight any incomplete tasks.*
- Members asked about the cost implications of the 25% agency social worker posts and how these had compared to the costs of permanent staff? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that the commissioning of agency SW had amounted to twice the cost in terms of pay to permanent SW staff. Members were also advised that the Authority aimed to drive down the reliance on agency SW staff with a salary package incentive for permanent SW staff in order encourage them to remain at the Authority, which was due to be proposed to Cabinet.*
- Members asked about the statement made in 4.69 of the report in respect of the £900k and where the funding had been met from? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that the funding had been met by the Department of Health and was aimed to reduce the child and adolescent mental health waiting lists. Further funding would also be received from the Government.*
- Members asked how the Authority intended to ensure that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) funding would be received within the right service areas? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that the Corporate Director People and Communities, as chairman of the joint commissioning services for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire held responsibility to ensure that mental health waiting list reduction funding would be distributed to the correct service areas.*
- Members asked how organisations such as Mind could access the mental health waiting list reduction funding? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that there had been further work to be conducted in the prevention levels for mental health. Members were also advised in the case of conditions such as Autism Syndrome and the provision for parental support, the support had been slow whilst they waited for a diagnosis.*
- Members commented that they hoped that the various Adult and Children's boards would not suffer as a consequence of any cost saving initiatives. *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding confirmed that the cost savings for these boards would entail support functions such as administration tasks to be pooled rather than combining the boards' functions.*

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services commented that if there were any other areas that Members of Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee would like to see included within the Service Director and Portfolio Overview Report for Children & Safeguarding to inform him accordingly.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the contents of the report and requested a breakdown of social worker and alternatively qualified workers caseloads by service area.

The Committee also requested that the report continued to be presented at regular intervals and that the children looked after dental assessment statistic data be included within future reports.

9. PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A PERMANENCY SERVICE IN PETERBOROUGH

The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding introduced a report which provided details of proposals to develop a 'Permanency Service' in Peterborough, which would be delivered under contract by a partner provider. The concept behind the permanency service was intended to improve outcomes for children and young people and in particular those who were in care, while enabling the Council to reduce the cost of providing services to this group of children and young people.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members asked whether assurances could be provided that the level of staff expertise would not be lost when skilled staff such as social workers were transferred via TUPE to a service provider for Permanency Services? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that it was not intended to reduce the service or numbers of staff to support CiC and that the Permanency initiative aimed to save money in respect of reducing the number of children in care placed outside the Authority. Members were also advised that the current infrastructure cost amounted to £4m for the placement of 98 CiC with outside fostering agencies and to bring the service in house with an expert provider was expected to save the Authority circa £2m. Members were also advised that a clause would be included within the transfer of service provision, where staff would be brought back to the Authority's management if the Permanency Service was found not fit for purpose.*
- Members asked whether there had been a risk of staff leaving prior to the transfer to Permanency Services and whether there would be an uplift in fees paid to foster and adoption staff? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that the project plan for Permanency Services had explored varied trajectories, which had shown that the savings would be realised later on in the initiative. Members were also advised that fostering and adoption staff moved around less than social workers.*
- Members asked why the Authority had not explored the option of providing a Permanency service in house? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that there had been an element of a risk with in house as opposed to an outside not for profit organisation, as they held the best expertise in terms of training provision for staff and support to CiC. Members were also advised that the Permanency Service would also ensure that the right number of CiC figures were maintained and that to achieve the objectives, the Authority needed to provide services in a different way.*
- Members asked about where the balance would lie in regards to the information provided in 1.2 of the report in relation to improving outcomes for CiC whilst saving money? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that if a tender process was undertaken it was envisaged that the specification would be weighted at 70% quality. Members were also advised that Corporate Management Team had stated that there must be a split in terms of half of the savings investment back into services. Members were also advised that those with special guardianship orders did not currently receive the same package as adopters and the Permanency Service arrangements would explore ways in which to improve this position. There would also be initiatives for foster carers to provide parenting skills to a CiC birth parents in order to encourage a permanent placement back to home life.*
- Members asked whether other Authorities were adopting the same Permanency Services approach? *The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding advised that there had been a small number of Authorities such as Cambridge and Kent that had outsourced their adoption services, however, Peterborough City Council were the first Authority to outsource fostering services.*

ACTIONS AGREED

Committee noted the contents of the report, and considered whether there were other areas of performance on which regular reports would assist the work of the Committee.

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 2015-2016

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

ACTION AGREED

The Committee confirmed the work programme for 2015/16.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9:28pm.

CHAIRMAN