



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON MONDAY, 18 JULY 2016**

Present: Councillors Aitken (Chairman), Peach, Rush, Bisby, Shearman, and Davidson

Cabinet Member: Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member Children's Services

Also present: Alistair Kingsley, Independent Co-opted Member

Officers in Attendance: Wendi Ogle Welbourn, Corporate Director People and Communities
Gary Perkins, Head of School Improvement
Nicola Curley, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care
Ian Easton, Head of Youth Offending
Lee Miller, Head of Transformation and Commissioning (Children & Maternity), Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health & Care System
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Iqbal and Fower, Councillor Davidson was in attendance as substitute on behalf of Councillor Fower. Apologies were also received from the Co-opted Member, Miranda Robinson.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of Interests or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 March 2016

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 March 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

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

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

5. Appointment Of a Co-Opted Member

The Chair introduced the report which proposed that the Committee consider retaining Alistair Kingsley as a Co-opted Member of the Committee with no voting rights for the municipal year 2016/2017.

The Committee unanimously agreed to the proposal and agreed to review the appointment at the end of the municipal year.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee agreed to retain Alistair Kingsley as a Co-opted Member of the Committee with no voting rights and that this arrangement be reviewed on an annual basis.

6. School Attendance Including Behaviour and Attendance Panels and Pressure on School Places

The Head of School Improvement introduced the report to the committee which summarised the current context, position regarding attendance rates at schools and the current context and position in regards to the planning of school places and admissions to schools.

The Head of School Improvement and Corporate Director People and Communities responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- The School Attendance case studies appended to the report had been written by the School Improvement team.
- When the LA received notification from schools in regards to pupil non-attendance a penalty notice and fine per parenting per pupil would be issued in accordance with the law. Exceptional circumstances would also be considered at the time of consideration.
- The role of Deputy Schools Commissioner for East Anglia was uncertain in regards to school non-attendance.
- The LA had no intervention powers over Academies performance, however they could monitor progress over attendance. The LA had maintained a relationship with Academies to keep up to date with what their pupil performance levels were and attendance levels. The figures would feed into an annual report, which the Regional Deputy School Commissioner monitored.
- The report should state individual intervention at paragraph 6.16 in regards to the poverty issues.
- The poverty issues identified in schools would be approached in an holistic way which would involve multi-agency intervention to tackle a number of issues families were experiencing, such as housing, child behaviour and family finance. The poverty issues being experienced were usually highlighted by families at initial assessment or home visits.
- The poverty issues included in the Poverty Strategy were the issues highlighted by schools and multi-agencies and tackled on a daily basis.
- The LA's pupil attendance rate figures had differed between Secondary and Primary schools due to the fact that 75% of Secondary schools were Academy operated.
- The LA was quick at noting where absence issues occurred and the reasons why.
- It had not been the governance arrangements that were less effective in Academy schools, however the LA would continue to build good relationships with schools to improve pupil attendance figures and raise awareness with Secondary school Head teachers.
- The joined up services in regards to the missing from school team and the attendance team would involve an initial referral being sent to the tracking officer who would then pass onto the LA's school attendance monitoring officer (MO) in order to conduct home visits. The MO's visit would identify the issues being

experienced and encourage children missing from education to return to school. Both roles had worked in different departments in the education team and the schools admission team, however, the arrangement had worked well.

- Transport issues had not been directly linked to poor pupil attendance rates.
- The change in service in 2010 for school attendance had been implemented due to the schools requiring the change. The role became the responsibility of the School Improvement team following a restructure in order to promote better leadership in this area.
- The statement made at paragraph 5.3 of the report in regards to deploying resources in a targeted fashion had related to determining where the team could make a difference in school attendance rates and had determined what improvements were required for state run schools. Academies would be charged by the LA for School Improvement Services and additional un-resources services provided would be allocated on the level of what improvement the school required and where the team could make an impact.
- The mean average of 2% outlined in paragraph 5.7.7 of the report related to school attendance figures and was regarded by the Authority as a sustained acceptable figure.
- The acceptable time limit for the offer of an allocated school place for a family, which had moved to a new location in Peterborough, had been outlined in law.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommend that the Head of School Improvement would write to the Department of Education to raise Members concerns over the application of a non-attendance fine to more than one parent for one child.

AGREED ACTION

The Committee noted the report and:

- Considered the context and position regarding attendance rates at schools, school place planning and admissions to schools;
- Scrutinised People and Communities actions to promote good school attendance, ensure the efficient and effective supply of school places and an efficient admissions system; and
- Supported People and Communities leaders in supporting, challenging and intervening in schools where necessary if provision was less than good.

The Committee also agreed that the Head of School Improvement would:

1. Explore the number of fines issued to parents for a single child's non-attendance at school and provide a report to the Committee detailing the options on how fair charges could be applied;
2. Confirm what the Legal requirements were over school places offered to families and the time limit applicable in accepting the place; and
3. Provide Members with a briefing note in regards to when Primary Schools would be in place for the Paston Reserve and Norwood Development.

7. Review of Progress Against Action Plan Following Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services, 2015

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care introduced the report to Members, which summarised an update on progress being made against the action plan developed following the OfSTED inspection in April and May 2015. Members were advised by the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care that although the Authority had been rated as 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted, the Adoption services were rated as 'Good' following a recent assessment. Members were also informed that as part of the improvement action plan, Council had recently approved the Corporate Parenting Panel to function as a formal Committee and the Neglect Strategy had been approved by the Safeguarding Board.

Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Corporate Director of People and Communities responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- Members commented that there had been improvements shown in tracking Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ratings.
- The improvement action plan had not been finalised and agreed until November 2015, which had not been year since the improvement action plan was implemented by the LA.
- Focus on greater improvement and quality would need to start with resolving staff issues in terms of retention, followed by the service mechanics and then quality of practice. The quality of practice would be the hardest action to achieve and sustain, however, the improvement plans to increase staff levels would make an impact in this area.
- Members commented that there had been transparent information provided to them over the last few years in regards to Children's Services and that the department did not need to wait until November 2015 for the action plan to be agreed in order to undertake the service improvements required.
- Staff resources had improved and there had been a significant change in terms of the number of Children in Need and Children in Care caseloads for Social Workers, which was an action implemented in November 2015. The Workforce Development Group had been formed to deal with the OfSTED actions.
- The issues with consistency raised in paragraph 4.19 of the report had been in relation to the formal audits, however discussions around changing staff mindset to prioritise the formal audits was currently being undertaken with Heads of Service and Managers.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services commented that there was a fiscal process to follow in order to improve the quality of performance reports, which would be a priority for the Cabinet Member through the LA's budget process.
- It was anticipated that Corporate Parenting Committee would not directly improve dental and health checks for Children in Care however, the Committee would scrutinise the services provided to CiC and hold services to account.
- The conduct of timely dental assessments for CiC had been a challenge for most LAs, as it was difficult to encourage older children to attend appointments. There had also been an issue with staff recording dental visits in a timely manner, however, improvements plans were in place.
- Directors, the Leader and all Members were Corporate Parents and would be held to account, which for services provided to CiC.
- In relation to paragraph 4.17 of the report in regards to permanently recruited Social Workers, there had been a number of improvements made to increase the numbers

recruited such as the offer of attractive retention and learning development packages, which encouraged staff to remain in permanent posts.

- Caseloads for SW staff had reduced considerably to under 20 per Social Worker compared to an average of 25.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services commented that following her discussions with Children's Services staff over the improvements made following the recent Ofsted inspection, that there had been positive comments made, however there were still improvements required in terms of recruitment and retention of SWs.
- Members commented that they had been reassured in the past that the management audits would improve, however, the report alluded to inconsistencies and to date the issues had not improved.
- Members felt that they could not conduct efficient scrutiny due to receipt of the action plan once a year and requested that consideration should also be given to improve the format of the action plan in order to focus Members attention on the real issues being experienced in Children's Services.
- There had been 18-20 newly recruited members of alternatively qualified staff, who had concentrated on CiN services. There had been 207 cases to date assessed by Alternatively Qualified Workers (AQW), which had been met with a positive outcome. The AQW programme would be evaluated in the future in regards to how the service could be funded going forward.
- Members commented that it had been disappointing that data surrounding CiN and CiC assessment referrals had not been provided to them on a regular basis, which caused them concern.
- A monthly performance exceptions report which highlighted the main service issues being experienced in Children's Services was provided to the Authority's Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
- The OfSTED action point in regards to the recruitment of a second participation officer had been a permanent role.

AGREED ACTIONS

Members noted the content of this report, and in particular:

- The positive progress that had been made in areas such as improving the stability of the workforce and the improvements in relation to compliance issues; and
- That while there had been improvements in a number of areas of practice, overall PCC were not yet delivering consistently good outcomes for children and young people, and not yet consistently recording and evidencing the quality of all the work that was undertaken to support vulnerable children and their families.

Members also requested that the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care :

1. A further report on progress made against the OfSTED action plan in 12 months' time; and
2. The Children's Services exceptions performance report on a monthly basis.

8. Child And Adolescent Mental Health Transformation Programme

The Head of Transformation and Commissioning (Children & Maternity), Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health & Care System introduced the report to the Committee, which outlined the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services for Children and Young People. Background, work completed in 15/16, and the work and priorities for 16/17.

The Head of Transformation and Commissioning (Children & Maternity), Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health & Care System and Corporate Director of People and Communities responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- The waiting list for disorders such as ADHD ASD and Autism had reopened in December 2015.
- The Thrive framework was a system to explore children's mental health difficulties in a more holistic way such as their provision of support with a housing situation.
- Specialist services was a resource for children with mental health conditions to access medication and therapy. Many young people may only require one appointment whereas some may require more and Specialists services aimed to expand the range of service available to young people with mental health conditions.
- Members commented that it was staggering that young people with conditions such as mental health and Autism conditions had been on a waiting list for two years to receive a diagnosis.
- The £600,000 funding had been allocated to Specialists services for the financial year 15-16. However, there had been a further £1.6m pound investment to be allocated for the following financial year, which was still felt not to be enough to provide the service.
- The target to provide young people with access to Specialists services had increased from one in four to one in three.
- There were many issue in terms of provision of Specialists services for conditions such as mental health and that improvements needed to be made for the service to work closer with families and schools to improve the Specialists services provision.
- Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had provided families with the support they need rather than waiting for a diagnosis through Specialists services for conditions such as Autism.
- The Specialist services being commissioned had been evidence based and the areas of focus included the number of people supported and the outcomes. The Specialists services approach was to increase early intervention.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services commented that the provision of funding for Specialists services had caused concern and that the issue would be raised with Cabinet at the Authority's budget setting stage.
- A reduction to the number of children being seen at the Peterborough City Hospital's Accident and Emergency would provide further funding to Specialists services.
- The transition of young people and adult age group which mental health issues had underperformed, however there was a bid currently underway to introduce an innovation programme to support mental health conditions and to place professionals into the Social Care team in order to promote a joined up approach.

- The THRIVE framework would comply with the Equalities and Human rights duties under the relevant Acts.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Committee noted and supported the plans outlined in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Transformation Programme.

The Committee also requested that the Head of Transformation and Commissioning (Children & Maternity), Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health & Care System provide the following:

1. Circulate to Members the website link for child and mental health services;
2. A briefing note outlining the number of clients waiting for Specialists services currently on the waiting lists; and
3. That the Cabinet Member arrange for the circulation of the service improvement plans for child and adult mental health care services outlined within the Health and Wellbeing strategy.

9. Prevent And The Work Of The Channel Panel

The Head of Youth Offending Services introduced the report to Members which provided an overview on the progress in implementing the Prevent Strategy and the work of the Channel Panel.

The Head of Youth Offending Services and Corporate Director of People and Communities responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- The Channel Panel title was a national title which had been formed as part of a preventing extremism statutory requirement in 2015.
- The Head of Youth Offending Services was the Chairman of the Channel Panel.
- The Home Office had issued advice on the release of terrorists/radicalisation referral figures and currently these could not be disclosed at a local level.
- Members commented that the terrorists/radicalisation referral rate out of the total received by the Channel Panel for Peterborough appeared to be low.
- The Channel Panel was not just about identifying terrorists/radicalisation risks it had been about how well organisations such as schools understood the process and how the system worked.
- Counter Terrorism on Local Profile (CTLP) was a restricted document and the Police were currently giving consideration to its release.
- The Prevent information and work of the Channel Panel would ordinarily feed into the Strong & Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee and further information could be found in previous reports and minutes.
- Members commented that the sentence in paragraph 5.22 in regards to low radicalisation risk status seemed complacent given the recent atrocities that had happened in Nice, France.
- The lorry driver that killed a number of people in Nice had not raised any previous suspicion to the Nice local police.
- The cohesion work throughout Cambridgeshire had been deemed adequate enough to monitor and identify any issues.

- The Communities Cohesion Manager had worked closely with the mosques and was a member of the Channel Panel Board.
- If a Member of the public wished to raise a terrorists/radicalisation concern about an individual they would need to refer their concerns through the usual routes such as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

ACTION AGREED

The Committee Scrutinised the Council's approach to preventing extremism and requested that the CTLP document would be circulated to all Members once the Police had approved its release.

10. Review Of 2015/2016 And Draft Work Programme For 2016/17

The Chairman introduced the Committee with a review of the work undertaken during 2015/16 by the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee to Members. Members were also requested to approve the draft work programme for 2016/17.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee:

1. Considered the 2015/2016 year review and requested that Officers highlight progress against the OfSTED action plan within their reports where relevant.
2. Approved the draft work programme for 2016/17.

11. 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:

1. Reviewed the Forward Plan and requested that the Permanency item would be included on the agenda for 12 September 2016; and
2. Requested information in relation to the approval requirements for contracts valued at £499,000 in terms of whether the sign off would need to be undertaken by a Senior Officer or Cabinet Member or both.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 12 September 2016.

7:00pm – 9.09pm

CHAIRMAN