

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON
9 NOVEMBER 2017
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors J Goodwin (Chairman), D Over (Vice Chairman), R Bisby, G Casey, A Dowson, A Ellis, B Rush, N Sandford, B Saltmarsh
Liz Youngman, Education Co-opted Member
Susie Lucas, Co-opted Member

Officers Present: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Executive Director, People and Communities
Terry Reynolds Service Director, Education
Lou Williams Service Director for Children’s Services and Safeguarding
Belinda Evans Customer Services Manager
Sheelagh Sullivan Head of SEN and Inclusion Services
Paulina Ford Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Councillor Smith Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
Dr.Russell Wate,QPM Chair of the Cambridge & Peterborough Adult & Children’s Safeguarding Boards
Kobie Botha Principal Education Psychologist
Councillor L. Ayres Cabinet Member for Education Skills and University

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Johnson, Councillor Mahabadi and Councillor Barkham. Councillor Sandford attended as a substitute for Councillor Barkham and Councillor Ellis attended as a substitute for Councillor Mahabadi. Independent Co-opted Members Alistair Kingsley and Rizwan Rehmatullah and Education Co-opted Member Flavio Vettese also submitted their apologies.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of Interest or whipping declarations.

27. MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 were approved subject to the addition of Councillor Sam Smith’s name to the list of attendees.

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

29. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PETERBOROUGH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD 2016-2017

The Chairman of the Cambridge and Peterborough Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards introduced the report which was brought before the Committee to ensure that Members were made fully aware of the work and progress of the Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board. The report covered the period from April 2016 – March 2017 and was published in July 2017.

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

- Members sought clarification as to whether it had been noticed if some parents had fabricated a child's illness to get them statemented and if this had been seen as a safeguarding issue. Members were advised that this had not been identified as a safeguarding issue.
- The key work of the Board was to prevent future and current children coming to harm.
- School nurses worked very closely with the Board and would report any safeguarding issues to the Board.
- There was a statutory membership for the Board which included the Director of Children's Services and the Councils Lead Member for Children Services. Full details of the membership and names of individuals could be found on the Safeguarding Boards website.
- The Quality Effectiveness Group would be able to provide a breakdown of the statistics by ward and would therefore be able to show statistics in the rural areas.
- The Safeguarding Board welcomed engagement with Parish Councils regarding any safeguarding issues.
- The Peterborough Safeguarding Board held its meetings in private due to personal data being discussed on individual cases that could not be shared with the public. The minutes of the meetings were provided on the website in a sanitised version.
- Members were concerned that the report had indicated that child poverty had increased. The Committee were informed that the figures within the report were three years old and that child poverty had stabilised. The element with regard to children in poverty tackled by the Board was mainly concerned with neglect and this was one of the priorities for the Board. The Executive Director, People and Communities advised Members that child poverty was picked up by the Communities Board and there was an action plan in place to try and reduce the number of children in poverty.
- The Safeguarding Board met with children and young people directly on a regular basis to obtain feedback.
- The Board had recently undertaken a survey via survey monkey to examine the issues of e safety, sexting and on line bullying. A low number of young people admitted to sharing intimate or inappropriate images and young people needed to be made aware of the possible dangers to themselves when sending these images.
- There were very few secure facilities for young female people in the country, Clare Lodge was a secure facility which provided a safe environment from such things as sexual exploitation. It was an expensive facility to run and therefore all accommodation had to be filled.
- The national Troubled Families Programme known locally as the Connecting Families had made good progress and the unsatisfactory school attendance had surpassed worklessness, this did not however mean that unsatisfactory school attendance had gone up but that more people were being found work.
- The Safeguarding Board held an annual conference the theme of which was different every year. The conference outcomes were monitored quarterly to check that the training given

had been useful.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report and requested that the Chairman of the Cambridge and Peterborough Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards provide the following information in future reports:

- A breakdown of the performance statistics by ward and in particular rural wards.

30. SERVICE DIRECTOR AND PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW REPORT: CHILDREN AND SAFEGUARDING

The Service Director for Children and Safeguarding accompanied by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services introduced the report which provided a summary of key performance information in respect of Children's Social Care Services. The performance measures provided an indication of the effectiveness of services at safeguarding the children and young people of Peterborough who were most vulnerable.

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

- MASH was a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub which was a multi-disciplinary team made up of various agencies (police, health, probation etc.) who supported and shared information with regard to a small number of children who may be at risk of significant harm. There had always been a MASH in Peterborough. Most of the partners supporting MASH worked across all of Cambridgeshire. The co-location of the Peterborough MASH staff to Cambridgeshire was about sharing resources in a more effective way. The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care in Peterborough would be leading the team all of whom were Peterborough staff. Members sought assurance that Peterborough would not be subsidising Cambridgeshire's services by the staff moving to a Cambridge location. Members were informed that there had been very clear guidelines put in place to ensure that Peterborough were not subsidising Cambridgeshire.
- TACT were a partner organisation who were responsible for the placement of children. The contract identified where numbers were higher than 365 and in these instances it would be unreasonable to expect TACT to cover all additional associated costs. The overall placement budget was approximately £12M, at the end of September it looked as though there would be approximately a £500K pressure. The current number of placements was 357.
- Members referred to the charts on pages 61, 63 and 66 of the report which referred to single assessment timescales (within 45 working days), this related to the number of assessments which were completed within 45 working days, number of children with a child protection plan per 10,000 and number of children in care per 10,000.
- There were no new referrals that were out of the timeframe for assessment.
- The number of children with a child protection plan was very small (262 at the end of September) and the expected number would be approximately 255.
- The number of children in care had gone up over the current financial year and was currently at 357, compared to similar authorities this was still a low number.
- The Council had been successful in obtaining £2.8M from government to set up a programme called Family Safeguarding which would bring adult mental health workers, substance misuse workers and domestic abuse workers into children's services teams. The impact of these teams working together had been proven to greatly reduce the number of children on child protection plans.
- The fostering for adoption scheme had been very successful. There had been a national focus on adoption and this was becoming more favourable.

- Members sought clarification on how the rates of children going to the dentist could be improved and suggested a buddy system where a child who did not mind going to the dentist could buddy a child who did not like going to the dentist. Members were informed that children in care and getting them to dental check-ups had been a constant challenge and noted the suggestion which would be passed on to the Head of Service.
- There was no legal reason to discriminate against applicants for adoption and fostering with regard to same sex couples. Everyone was welcome to register to adopt and there were some very successful same sex couples already adopting in the area.

AGREED ACTIONS

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to agree to note the contents of the report including those areas where progress across Children's Services in Peterborough had been maintained and the few remaining areas where further work was required.
2. The Committee also requested that the Service Director for Children and Safeguarding look into the suggestion of a buddy system where a child who did not mind going to the dentist could buddy a child who did not like going to the dentist.

31. PETERBOROUGH READING STRATEGY 2017 - 2020

The Service Director, Education accompanied by the Cabinet Member for Education Skills and University introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the joint development of the Reading Strategy by Vivacity, the National Literacy Trust and Peterborough City Council. Members were informed that the points raised at the meeting in September with regard to the development of the Reading Strategy had been considered by the working group drafting the strategy and a number of these points had been taken on board.

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

- Members questioned whether the population of Peterborough were interested in improving their reading skills. Members were informed that there was an aspiration in Peterborough to develop more high skilled demanding jobs rather than just a pick and pack economy. The University would transfer the skill base in Peterborough and provide a higher skilled work force which would then attract the high skilled jobs. Literacy was core to higher status jobs. The Reading Strategy was about making the connection with what young children did at school to the enjoyable things in life which included enjoyment, engagement and achievement. Parents of young children were also being targeted and there had been a massive interest from parents with the school readiness programme which was held during the summer.
- The Cabinet Member advised that Peterborough had done extremely well in keeping its libraries open.
- Members queried the sustainability of the strategy as it only covered two years and questioned what would happen after the two years. Members were informed that the strategy had been carefully drafted to ensure that it was not just about a pot of money for a few years but was about bringing together a number of initiatives already in place in an ordered way. This would provide a bigger picture and foster the habit of reading for pleasure. Schools had already put in place initiatives around reading.
- There were 150 Local Authorities who were ranked in order of attainment and Peterborough was ranked between 145 to 150 for reading. Pitching the target of being first was not realistic so the aim was to improve on the national rate of improvement which was more realistic.
- Members referred to the Peterborough Reading Pledge and sought clarification as to which organisations it was aimed at. Members were informed that the Pledge would be used to

engage with commercial, private and public sector organisations. All organisations would be welcome to sign up to the Pledge.

- Members suggested that it be made clear on the Pledge that all and any organisations could sign up to the Pledge.
- There was a variety of ways that officers within Education supported schools with reading. Members suggested publishing how many officers were involved in supporting reading. It was also suggested that older people in care homes could also become reading buddies.
- Members commended officers on the strategy and said it should be actively promoted through events and publicity.
- Concern was raised regarding the restricted opening times of libraries and Members were informed that one of the key metrics of the Reading Strategy was the increased use of libraries. The library service would be introducing a Book Bus which would tour rural Peterborough to encourage library use.
- There was no additional funding for the implementation of the strategy but there was access to existing operating budgets.
- Councillor Sandford, seconded by Councillor Ellis recommended that Cabinet use existing communications resources within the council services to actively promote the Reading Strategy. The Committee unanimously agreed to this recommendation. The Service Director, Education advised that he would take the recommendation to the working group and consider some kind of launch event in January.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and requested the following:

1. That regular impact monitoring reports on the progress of the Reading Strategy be presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis.
2. That it is made clear within the Pledge that all and any organisations could sign up to the Pledge.

RECOMMENDATION

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet use existing communications resources within the council services to actively promote the Reading Strategy.

32. SEND REFORMS AND PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The Head of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Services accompanied by the Principal Education Psychologist introduced the report which evaluated the progress made towards implementing the reforms that had been set out in the 2014 revised Code of Practice. The new Code set out revised ways of assessing and providing for the special education needs of children aged 0-25 and encouraged a graduated approach to the identification of SEND as part of a holistic and, multi-agency approach. Members were referred to Appendix 5, Analysis of available information and evidence against issues raised in SEND inspections where a statement of action was required. The officer provided context behind each key area listed.

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

- Members sought clarification as to how much training teachers received on autism to enable them to recognise if a child had autism and where on the autism spectrum they were. Members were informed that there was an advisory service for children with social communication disorders including children with autistic spectrum disorders who provided a lot of training. Schools were being encouraged through the SENCO network to contact

the Autism Education Trust (AET) to take up the training that they offered for all teachers, it also offered information on good practice.

- The opening of St Georges School was due to numbers until the new school was built.
- Academies had exactly the same responsibility as other schools with regard to special educational needs and were treated exactly the same.
- Peterborough children with SEND did not perform well against statistical neighbours with a similar cohort and this could be improved.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report detailing the evaluation of progress towards implementation of SEND reforms.

33. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with a record of recommendations made at the previous meeting and the outcome of those recommendations to consider if further monitoring was required.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the response from Cabinet Members and Officers to the recommendations made at the previous meeting, as attached in Appendix 1 of the report and agreed that further monitoring of the Education Review was required and that a further report would be provided to the Committee in due course.

34. 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.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested further information on the following decisions:

Clarification was sought as to when the consultation with Ward Councillors would begin with regard to the following decisions:

- Construction of new school building – Heltwate School – KEY/24JULY17/08
- Academy Conversion (Jack Hunt Group) of Jack Hunt School – KEY/07AUG17/02
- Academy Conversion (Jack Hunt Group) of Middleton Primary School – KEY/07AUG17/03
- Academy Conversion (Jack Hunt Group) of Longthorpe Primary School – KEY/07AUG17/04
- Academy Conversion (Jack Hunt Group) of Thorpe Primary School – KEY/07AUG17/05
- Academy Conversion (Jack Hunt Group) of Ravensthorpe Primary School – KEY/07AUG17/06

It was noted that some decisions were assigned to the incorrect ward. The Senior Democratic Services Officer noted the issue and would advise the relevant Democratic Services officer to change them to the correct ward.

35. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2016/17 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the work programme for 2017/2018.

Councillor Casey requested that consideration be given to a report on provision of Arts and Music in schools.

36. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday, 29 November 2017 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget
- Thursday, 29 January 2018 – Children and Education Scrutiny Committee

The meeting began at 7.00pm and finished at 9.12pm.

CHAIRMAN

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