

Agenda Item 3

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 7 OCTOBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.30 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Sally Kenny (in the Chair),
Councillor Hayley Ormrod, Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
Councillor Omar Bush, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Jenifer Gould, Councillor Joan Henry,
Councillor James Holmes, Councillor Russell Makin,
Councillor Dennis Pearce and Councillor Brenda Fraser

Jane McSherry (Assistant Director of Education), Karl Mittelstadt
(Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships), Tom Procter
(Head of Contracts & School Organisation) and Rachael Wardell
(Director, Children, Schools & Families Department)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Marsie Skeete (with Councillor Brenda Fraser as substitute), Councillor Dave Ward and co-opted representatives Colin Powell and Emma Lemon.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

4 CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES (VERBAL UPDATE) (Agenda Item 4)

Councillor Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, summarised her priorities for the year ahead, including;

- Early Help
- Think Family
- Contextual Safeguarding
- Recruiting a young scrutineer
- Promote and encourage more Councillor engagement in corporate parenting as well as the cross Council understanding of our commitment to children and young people.

In response to Panel member's questions about the fostering target, the Director of CSF clarified that last year's revamped marketing materials haven't created the same amount of success this year but there are a number of families currently being recruited.

The department is also considering the benefits of the Mockingbird Model (a core family unit that provides support to other foster families) as a way to relieve pressure and provide support.

Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education, summarised her priorities for the year ahead, including;

- School performance – First round of schools going through the new Ofsted framework
- Working with Attain Group – school development and improvement
- SEND overspends
- Building more special school places

In response to a Panel member's question, the Assistant Director of Education explained that we are notified of permanent exclusions immediately as we must find alternative provision within 5 days. We are also notified of fixed term exclusions quite quickly and there is no difference in this time frame between academies and schools.

5 SCHOOL MAINTENANCE COSTS (Agenda Item 5)

The Head of Contracts and School Organisation introduced the report and in response to Panel Member questions clarified the following;

- Original PFI contract was for 25 years of which there are 10 years left.
- We have a specialist company (CCP) monitoring the contract and they are recommending a number of strategies and tools to hold PFI to account.
- Buildings with asbestos (built before late 1980's) are annually reviewed by specialist surveyors.
- Boilers and disability adaptations do often take priority.
- 28 schools have had solar panels installed. Council is on track to see a return on this investment within 10 ½ years.

6 TROUBLED FAMILIES (Agenda Item 6)

The Head of Adolescent and Family Service introduced the report and explained that the appendices containing number of referrals, case studies and outcome plan were not included within the report.

Action: Head of Adolescent and Family Service agreed to circulate the missing appendices via the Scrutiny Officer.

In response to Panel Members questions,

The Director of CSF further explained that the reorganisation option was chosen by DMT as it allows the Local Authority to continue the work and embed it throughout services which will provide greater resilience.

Action: In response to a Panel Member request to see the final structure/review when completed, the Director of CSF agreed to circulate the final review after November.

7 CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The Chair of the Task Group, Cllr Irons, gave an overview of the work of the task group, highlighted the recommendations and thanked the task group members for their hard work.

In response to a Panel Member question, Cllr Irons agreed that it would be a good idea to nominate a 'champion' from the task group, who will undertake ongoing liaison with officers to implement the recommendations going forward.

Agreed to return to the Panel with an action plan in six months' time.

8 DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

The Director for Children, Schools and Families asked the Panel for any questions about her Departmental update report. In response she stated;

- An expanded use of Section 60 powers has led to the increase in the stop and search figures.
- Interim staff - We are actively driving to shift from interim positions to permanent. Two staff members have moved to permanent appointments already. Frontline social work has the highest number of interim staff.
- Ofsted - We understand our areas for development and the concerns about the quality of the EHCP's, particularly the health content of these plans. We will be looking at these in detail at the Education Standards Panel.

9 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Agenda Item 9)

The Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships drew attention to a factual inaccuracy on line 21 - LAC with agency foster carers 67%. Action: KM to provide accurate figure.

The Director of Children, Schools and Families stated that the number of agency social workers is clearly incorrect at 50%. Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships to check calculation.

PLEASE NOTE UPDATED FIGURE. The revised figure for Agency Social Worker rates is **15.13%** (not 50% as mentioned in the line 39 of the performance report). An incorrect calculation was applied previously.

A Panel Member suggested that a brief narrative of anomalies alongside the data would be helpful in future.

10 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)

Changes to the work programme were noted and agreed.

Nov agenda;

- Additions of 'SEND strategy' and 'Task group update on Digital Technology in the classroom'.
- Moved 'Support for schools to become good' to the February 2020 meeting.