

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 7 January 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor S Bains
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor C Miks
Councillor H Noonan
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor P Seaman

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and Mr R Potter

Cabinet Members: Councillor D Kershaw (Cabinet Member for Education)
Councillor E Ruane (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)
Councillor S Thomas (Deputy Cabinet Member for Education)

Employees (by Directorate):

A Brennan, People Directorate
A Carr, People Directorate
J Gregg, People Directorate
G Holmes, Resources Directorate
S Horsley, People Directorate
N Meehan, People Directorate
K Nelson, People Directorate
M Rose, Resources Directorate
A Simpson, People Directorate
S Whitmore, People Directorate
D Wilson, People Directorate

Others Invited: K Argyle – Health Representative
Sgt S Grundy – Police Representative

Apologies: K Jones

Public Business

47. Declarations of Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

48. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December, 2015 were approved.

49. **Progress on the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

The Board received a briefing note and presentation about progress on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) from City Council officers and partners, including Police and Health colleagues.

Members had visited the MASH informally in December, 2014 and requested a formal update once MASH had been in operation for a year. The update provided detail about the following:

- How MASH was making a difference and how we know
- Systems used
- Performance Data
- Monthly Activity
- Agencies contacting the MASH
- Timescales
- The MASH review
- Case Studies

The Board questioned the officers and partners on the following:

- Dip sampling scoring and learning
- Improving timescales
- Early Help offer working with the MASH
- Contacting and signposting for the MASH
- Defining categories further than referring to 'other' eg agencies contacting the MASH
- Sharing of information across boundaries ie police forces, council areas and health commissioning groups
- Review of the service
- Rotation of staff in the MASH including offering opportunity to newly qualified staff

The Board discussed the benefits of rotating staff in the MASH and the benefits of having an Early Help Team to filter enquiries before they enter the MASH, as some calls received could be signposted to other services.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- 1) Approve the contents in the presentation and progress made with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub**
- 2) Recommend the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People explore rotation of staff within the MASH and also explore an initial early help team which would filter enquiries into the MASH and signpost callers to other services where appropriate**

50. **School Place Planning and Admissions**

The Board received an update on admissions to schools and also current and future provision of school places in Coventry. The report recognised changes to Government Policy and the challenges for planning provision. Primary and

Secondary projections until September, 2025 and comparative information on primary allocation for September, 2014 and 2015 were appended to the report.

The report noted that Local Authorities were under statutory duty, section 14 of the 1996 Education Act, to secure sufficient education provision within their areas and to promote higher standards of attainment. In its strategic role as commissioner of school places, the City Council must respond to changes in demand over time by increasing or removing capacity. The range of educational provision for children and young people was now both broad and complex in terms of the number of providers involved, and also their roles. The City Council had parallel responsibilities as both direct provider (in maintained or voluntary controlled schools) and also as commissioner of other providers.

The report also noted forecasts and projections, funding, the local education landscape, increasing numbers of academies and free schools, partnership working, current provision and sites secured through 106 Agreements for new primary schools.

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member for Education and officers on the following:

- The different and changing categories of schools in the city
- Admissions policies
- Comparative information on Primary Allocation
- Sites secured through 106 Agreements for new primary schools including Bannerbrook and New Century Park
- Data used to make projections and working as early as possible with planning colleagues
- Special Educational Needs provision

The Cabinet Member for Education recognised the hard work and commitment Coventry dedicated to partnership working with Coventry schools and networks and the benefits to Coventry children. The Cabinet Member for Education also discussed raising performance and promoting choosing Coventry schools.

The Board requested a list of schools and their category be circulated and felt reassured that provision of school places in the City was constantly reviewed.

RESOLVED that the School Place Planning and Admissions update be noted and the Board were reassured that places were constantly reviewed.

51. **Selection, Nomination and Removal of Local Authority Governors**

Further to Minute 8/15 the Board considered an update on support to school governors. Also following the Trojan Horse report in Birmingham also in July, 2015 it was considered beneficial to strengthen and formalise the selection, nomination and removal of Local Authority Governors. A proposed procedure for 'Selection, Nomination and Removal of Local Authority Nominated School Governors' would be considered by the Cabinet Member for Education following consideration of the briefing for Scrutiny Board.

Under both the 2012 Constitution Regulations and the 2012 Federations Regulations, the Local Authority can nominate any eligible person as a LA

governor, but it was for the Governing Body to decide whether the LA nominee had the skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school and met any other eligibility criteria they had set. Local Authority's should therefore make every effort to understand the Governing Body's requirements and identify and nominate suitable candidates. The LA had the right to nominate a representative governor to the Governing Body of an Academy where there was provision in the Academy's Articles of Association for such an appointment.

Statutory guidance on the constitution of maintained school Governing Bodies published in August 2015 stated that all governors need a strong commitment to the role and to improving outcomes for children, the inquisitiveness to question and analyse, and the willingness to learn. They needed good inter-personal skills, appropriate levels of literacy in English (unless a governing body was prepared to make special arrangements), and sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data. Therefore, all volunteers who wished to be nominated or recommended by the LA for appointment as a school governor were required to provide evidence of these skills and abilities in their application. Also they must abide by the Nolan principles of public office and adhere to the Model Code of Conduct for Governing Bodies.

The report also detailed applying to become a nominated school governor and representative governor, the approval process, appointment and removal of governors.

The Board questioned the officers on the following:

- Communication with Elected Members
- Opportunities and vacancies
- Communicating the appointment to schools
- Matching skills of volunteers and school audit of need
- Governors number of years of service
- Schools buying into the service

The Board noted that the Policy would be updated and then marketing and communication of governor skills vacancies would follow, subject to approval of the Cabinet Member for Education.

RESOLVED that the update be noted and the revised Policy would be promoted and communicated to Elected Members and officers.

52. **Work Programme**

The Board noted that they were invited to attend the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) meeting on 3rd February, 2016 for further consideration of Transforming Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

53. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)