

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 25 February 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)
Councillor S Bains
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor G Duggins (substitute for Councillor C Miks)
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor H Noonan
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor P Seaman

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

Cabinet Members: Councillor D Kershaw
Councillor E Ruane

Employees (by Directorate):

A Brennan, People Directorate
A Brunt, People Directorate
J Gregg, People Directorate
M Rose, Resources Directorate
M Stokes, People Directorate
S Watson, People Directorate
A West, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillor N Akhtar, C Miks and S Thomas (Deputy Cabinet Member for Education)

Public Business

54. Declarations of Interests

There were no discloseable pecuniary interests.

55. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 16th December, 2015 and 7th January, 2016 were approved.

The Scrutiny Board discussed Matters Arising from the last meeting including

- further to Minute 43/15 'Serious Case Review' members had received further information about domestic violence screening and members were invited to attend Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the 20th April, 2016 for the discussion about links with agencies such as the Barnado's Project on Children Missing from Care.

- further to Minute 49/15 'Progress on the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) the Cabinet Member had been sent the recommendations from the Board.
- further to Minute 50/15 'School Place Planning and Admissions' the list of schools had been circulated.

56. **Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy**

The Scrutiny Board received a briefing note of the Executive Director for People which detailed the revised Workforce Development Strategy. The strategy would build on the progress of the service over the last two years and support the aim of achieving the right capacity, capability and culture that was needed to confidently face organizational challenges.

The report noted that the Strategy was embedded in the Council's Behaviours Framework which forms part of the overall approach for achieving the Council's vision, purpose and values. The Strategy set out key priorities for continuing to value and develop employees as follows:

- 1) To draw on national and regional strategies and opportunities to enhance the recruitment and retention of social workers
- 2) To align the workforce with the needs and priorities of the organization to ensure it can meet its legislative, regulatory, service requirements and the organizational objectives
- 3) To continue to train and offer workforce development opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and values of staff
- 4) Enhance leadership, management and supervision to improve the quality of social work practice across Children's Services
- 5) Assuring Quality in Children's Services
- 6) Implementation and embedding of Signs of Safety

The Workforce Strategy Action Plan was appended to the briefing note and areas of progress to date were listed.

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and officers on the following:

- The Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) and early intervention work with families
- Reducing reliance on agency staff and 'growing our own Social Workers'
- Retention of staff
- Shortage of staff available
- Links with Universities

The Board noted that they would be invited to attend Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the 9th March, 2016 which will include further information about the Drug and Alcohol Strategy.

RESOLVED that the Board:

1. **note the report and request an update in 12 months**
2. **request further information about the Family Drug and Alcohol Court with a focus on early intervention**

57. **Improvement Board Progress Report from 6th January, 2016**

Further to Minute 39/15 the Scrutiny Board noted a joint briefing note which detailed progress on the Children's Services Improvement Plan, reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board on 6th January, 2016 based on data from November, 2015. The next Improvement Board would be held on 17th February, 2016.

The progress report included an update on the six themes aligned to the Department for Education (DfE) Improvement Notice including an update on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member and officers on the rise in the number of re-referrals since April 2015. An audit of the re-referrals had been completed and an action plan had been discussed at the Improvement Board meeting on 17th February, 2016.

RESOLVED that the Board note the update and request that the action plan in response to the audit be circulated.

58. **School Improvement and Education Progress**

Further to Minute 30/15 the Scrutiny Board received a briefing note of the Executive Director for People which updated members on Coventry's Schools 2015 validated results data, performance of vulnerable groups and Coventry's Improvement Strategy.

The report noted that the marked improvement in Coventry primary schools was recognised in the Ofsted Annual Report 2014/15 (published 1st December 2015). Further developments this year were ensuring that the model for improvement was sustained into the future. All secondary school head teachers were committed to making rapid improvement to secure improved outcomes, building upon the success of the school-to-school support strategy in primary. Since September 2015 secondary headteachers had adopted a refreshed approach to partnership working and developed and implemented a new secondary school improvement strategy in January 2016.

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

- Input from school governors
- Concern that Looked After Children results in Key Stage 2 for reading, writing and maths were below average
- Academies
- Special Educational Needs

The officers explained how small numbers within a cohort had an effect on percentages reported.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board note the report and request they be kept up to date with changes to the Improvement Plans

59. **Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Board noted that they were invited to attend Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 9th March, 2016 to consider the Drug and Alcohol Strategies and 20th April, 2016 to consider the Barnados Project on Children Missing from Care.

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) meeting on 17th March, 2016 meeting would be held in the Central Library.

60. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 2.50 pm)