

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 27 April 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)
 Councillor N Akhtar
 Councillor S Bains
 Councillor D Kershaw
 Councillor M Lapsa
 Councillor A Lucas
 Councillor P Male
 Councillor C Miks

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson

Other Members: Councillors

Employees (by Directorate):

J Applegarth, People Directorate
S Giles, People Directorate
G Holmes, Resources Directorate
P Kay, People Directorate
N MacDonald, People Directorate
K Nelson, People Directorate
M Rose, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillor D Gannon
 K Jones and R Potter

Public Business

79. Declarations of Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

80. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6th April, 2017 were approved.

81. One Strategic Plan for School Organisation

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note and presentation of the Director of Education, Libraries and Adult Learning which provided an update on school organisation in Coventry.

The briefing note indicated that local authorities continued to have statutory responsibilities for school place planning, securing a sufficient supply of schools and school admissions. School organisation issues rarely affected schools in

isolation; therefore strong local authority and school partnerships were important to understanding the impact of school organisation decisions.

The briefing note recognised that as Coventry was a growing city and projections predicted a significant increase in the demand for school places from 2019/20 onwards, the focus had been to work in close collaboration and partnership with schools for an approach to address this predicable growth.

The work with schools to build and develop a Coventry Family of Schools and Partnership approach had been a strong foundation for this work. Appended to the briefing was the Primary and Secondary Partnership School Improvement structure and organisation. This partnership approach was irrespective of the status of schools (e.g. Maintained, Academy, Free, and University Technical College) and had led to the development of a set of principles leading to a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix 3). This would be a basis for the development of options for the provision of new places moving forward.

The presentation provided information about:

- the education service vision, values and principles
- the strategic plan for school organisation
- partnership working
- criteria for additional places
- growth summary and planning
- Grammar schools

The Scrutiny Board questioned the Cabinet Member and officers present on the following:

- Grammar schools
- Alternative provision / working differently
- Student number projections
- Special needs provision
- Home schooling
- Planning new developments
- Collaboration between schools
- Home schooling
- Local authority support following Ofsted assessment

Officers reassured members that school placements were reviewed every six months.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board noted the update and requested the following items be added to the work programme for the next municipal year:

- **Home schooling**
- **Local authority support following Ofsted action plan/progress report**

82. **Improving Quality and Performance of Social Workers**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Director of Children's Services regarding improving the Quality and Performance of Social Workers.

The report outlined the support, high expectations and challenge to Front Line Social Workers who provided direct intervention and services to children, young people, their families and carers. Coventry's Children's Services Social Workers provided early help and protection for children who were in need, Children Looked After, children placed for adoption and young people who were preparing to leave care. Social workers within the fostering service provided direct assessment and family placement services to foster carers.

The report detailed the following:

- recruitment strategy
- social work pathway
- social work academy
- social work teaching partnership
- social work accreditation
- performance of social workers
- supervision
- performance management review and appraisal
- management of poor performance

The Scrutiny Board questioned the officers present on the following:

- recent recruitment and retention of staff
- accreditation
- pathway progression
- appraisals and supervision
- training
- quality of performance

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the Scrutiny Board noted progress and request further information about whether the 61 recently appointed Social Workers had been retained and how many had met their accreditation**
- 2) **a further report be considered in October, 2017**

83. Commissioned Children's Services

The Scrutiny Board noted a briefing note of the Director of Children's Services which provided an overview of Commissioned Services for Children and Young People.

The briefing note explained why services were commissioned from external providers, how services were commissioned, how services were procured, monitoring the quality of service and cost effectiveness of provision.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the officers present on the following:

- Monitoring visits
- Contract Monitoring and Quality Assurance of Supported Accommodation
- Working with providers
- Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes (England) Act 2015 requirement to visit homes
- Duration of contracts

84. Improvement Board

Further to Minute 59/16 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 19th April, 2017 based on data from February, 2016. The next Improvement Board would be held on 7th June, 2017.

The Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services commenced on 7th -30th March, 2017. The focus of the inspection was on practice, evidence and impact and did not include a review of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board this time. The scope included:

- Children and young people who are receiving or who need early help
- Children and young people who are referred to the local authority and are assessed (or not)
- Children and young people who become the subject of a child protection plan or have been the subject of a plan and need continuing support
- Children who receiving support through a child in need plan
- Children looked after (with a plan for adoption, to return home, special guardianship or residence order, living with a foster family) and children accommodated
- Care Leavers

The purpose of the inspection was to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers
- Ascertain the extent to which the help, care and protection given to children and young people does protect them
- Whether services support families and improves the quality of lives and futures of children and young people
- Assess the quality of work to support children looked after and care leavers to meet their potential
- Examine the quality and impact of supervision and management oversight

The inspection lasted 4 weeks, overall feedback was provided by Inspectors on 30th March, 2017 to senior managers and elected members. The final report would be reported to a future Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board.

The report also contained the summary of short term priorities for improvement progress, and updates on the following:

- early help and partnership working
- quality and effectiveness of practice
- quality assurance and audit
- leadership and governance
- services for Looked After Children, care leavers and permanency

Appended to the report were a one-page summary of the Improvement Plan and a performance overview.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the Cabinet Member and officers on leadership and governance and the publication of the Ofsted report.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board noted the progress and requested the Ofsted Action Plan be considered at a future meeting

85. **Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board noted the briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator regarding actions requested by the Board.

RESOLVED that the officers responsible for outstanding actions be contacted.

86. **Work Programme**

The Board noted the work programme.

87. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 3.30 pm)