

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 1 March 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)
Councillor S Bains
Councillor D Kershaw
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor A Lucas
Councillor P Male
Councillor C Miks
Councillor K Mulhall
Councillor P Seaman

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and Mrs K Jones

Cabinet Members: Councillor K Maton

Employees (by Directorate):

C Bodenham, People Directorate
V Finlay, People Directorate
S Frossell, People Directorate
S Giles, People Directorate
J Gregg, People Directorate
G Holmes, Place Directorate
T Jacques, People Directorate
H Nagra, People Directorate
M Rose, Place Directorate
S Watson, People Directorate

Apologies: Councillor J Clifford
Councillor E Ruane

Public Business

48. Declarations of Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

49. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th February, 2018 were approved.

50. Coventry Parenting Strategy 2018-2023

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which presented the Coventry Parenting Strategy 2018 – 2023, updated on progress made to strengthen parenting provision in the city and provided an

opportunity for contributions and suggestions to strengthen the parenting offer in Coventry. The draft Coventry Parenting Strategy 2018-2023 was appended to the report. The Parenting Strategy was produced and would be monitored by the multi-agency Coventry Parenting Steering Group. The Steering Group, which report to the Children and Young Peoples Partnership Board included representatives from parents, statutory and non-statutory organisations including the voluntary sector. The strategy would be driven by the multiagency task and finish sub-groups.

The draft Coventry Parenting Strategy 2018-2023 identified areas for improvements and key recommendations, bringing together the views of parents and stakeholders and researched evidence. The approach taken was to strengthen these services within existing resources. The recommendations in the strategy were:

- To strengthen availability and accessibility of general information and advice to parents
- To harness technology and the develop digital systems across agencies to strengthen the parenting offer
- To ensure there was a systematic approach to ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the parenting offer across the whole system
- To ensure that the system-wide parenting offer was delivered in a way which progressively provided more support across the social gradient and level of need
- To ensure there was a clear focus on early help and prevention
- To improve cohesiveness of parenting support across Coventry
- To build parenting capacity in specific areas where gaps had been identified

Officers discussed working in partnership, early intervention and the consultation.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on the following:

- Working with less resource
- Reaching minority groups and hard to reach families
- Improving communications between partners including schools
- Effectiveness of hub and spoke model across the City
- Previous parenting strategies
- Training for staff
- Communication with families and communities
- Working with all cultures
- Monitoring the strategy

The Cabinet Member for Education discussed the links with a recent report on child poverty considered at Children and Young Peoples Partnership Board and key stages for supporting families.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board:

- 1) Having reviewed the information, supports the recommendations in the Parenting Strategy which had been brought together by partners across Coventry.**

- 2) **Requests a report back in 12 months with a Red/Amber/Green rating on recommendations in the action plan.**
- 3) **Requests that the Child Poverty report, that was considered at Children and Young Peoples Partnership Board, be referred to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.**

51. **Children's Services Redesign - Progress Report**

Further to minute 14/ 17 the Scrutiny Board noted the briefing note and presentation of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) regarding progress being made on the redesign of Children's Services. The re-design was implemented in September 2017. The changes reflect the requirements of and underpin the Improvement Plan as well as the learning from the Ofsted inspection in March 2017.

The fundamental aim of the children's transformation changes were to ensure that Coventry City Councils Childrens Services were fit for purpose, the changes included:

- Responding earlier to children's and parent's needs
- Targeting vulnerable and potentially vulnerable children
- Reducing the number of repeat assessments and hand-offs or changes in worker that children and families experience
- Enabling single assessment or support plans to be created and sustained through a child's service journey
- Creating more opportunities for other agencies and professionals to integrate their services around the needs of individual children
- Supporting new ways of working based on a sustainable structure and resource base as part of the Councils medium term financial strategy
- Developing a self-improving system of working where doing the right thing is made easier

Officers reported that they were 'looking through a lens of good' when reporting in order to continue along the improvement the journey.

The Scrutiny Board were supportive of the philosophy referred to in the presentation 'do it once and do it right'.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on the following:

- partnership working with schools
- family group conferencing

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board notes the progress made on the redesign of Children's Services.

52. **Progress on Ofsted Recommendations and Improvement Board**

Further to Minute 36/17 and 44/17 the Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which detailed progress with the Children's Services Improvement Plan. The information had been reported to the Children's

Services Improvement Board on 10 January 2018 and was based on data from December 2017. The next Improvement Board would be held on 11 April 2018. Following the publication of the documents for the meeting, Ofsted had published their letter regarding the focussed visit to Children's Services on 30th and 31st January, 2018, this was circulated as soon as possible to allow for an informed discussion at the meeting.

In March 2017 Coventry Children's Services were judged by Ofsted to be "requires improvement". The re-inspection of Children's Services highlighted nine recommendations in the Inspection Report published in June, 2017 and a summary of progress against these recommendations was provided.

The report included an update on improvement plan progress and children's services redesign. The Department for Education (DfE) Review took place in January, 2018 and they had received the level of assurance required the next review would be held in June, 2018.

Officers reported that steady progress was being made and the Ofsted letter supported the improvement approach.

The Scrutiny Board congratulated the Children's Services Team on the progress that they had made and noted that the Ofsted letter validated the work of the task and finish group on Social Worker Retention.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on the following:

- Partnership working
- Engaging with children - referred to in the Ofsted letter
- Recording views of children and parents

Members reported that they had found the informal Case Audit workshop very informative.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board:

- 1) Notes the progress made against the Ofsted recommendations and thanks be conveyed to staff.**
- 2) Notes that regular updates on progress would be provided.**

53. Outstanding Issues

The outstanding issues were picked up in the work programme.

54. Work Programme

The Scrutiny Board discussed the Work Programme and that it would be useful to visit a family hub for the next meeting.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny Board agrees that the next meeting of the Board be held at the Family Hub on Foleshill Road with transport provided for members.

55. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 3.40 pm)