

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 4 October 2018**

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)  
Councillor S Bains (substitute for Councillor B Kaur)  
Councillor L Bigham  
Councillor D Kershaw  
Councillor J Lepoidevin  
Councillor A Lucas  
Councillor C Thomas

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson

Other Members: Councillor C Miks

Employees (by Directorate):

S Frossell, People Directorate  
J Gregg, People Directorate  
G Holmes, Place Directorate  
M Rose, Place Directorate  
R Wilshire, People Directorate

Apologies: Councillor B Kaur  
Councillor P Male  
Councillor K Maton  
K Jones

Invited: Martyn Rubery One Body One Life- South Warwickshire  
Foundation Trust  
Holly Andrews Ignite project  
Diane Golding Coventry Independent Advice Service  
Sam Coles Infant Feeding Team

## **Public Business**

### **26. Declarations of Interests**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **27. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 were agreed as a true record.

## 28. **Partnership Working in Children's Services**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided an update on partnership working within Coventry's Early Help offer that included the family hub model. A range of partners had been invited to attend including representatives from health, youth work and the police.

The Coventry Early Help Strategy (2016) set out the vision for early help work in Coventry and outlined principles of practice and cooperation between all partners providing services to children and families. The Strategy was currently being refreshed to reflect the commitment and responsibility of all partners to deliver an effective Early Help offer to children and their families, which was responsive and focussed on building resilience as well as providing the right help at the right time.

In November 2017 the Family Hub model in Coventry became operational. The next phase for the Early Help offer was developing the Hubs further, which was building on existing partnerships and enhancing the delivery of help and support to families in their local communities. Strengthening the Early Help partnership was fundamental to establish a seamless service to families and improving children and young people's outcomes.

The Family Hub model showed extensions of existing partnership working collaboratively to deliver a whole family approach. The work of the Family Hub continued to target and address the needs of the most disadvantaged children (0-19) early help offer, who were identified through direct contact, self-referral, step down and diversion process from children's social care or via requests for support from a range of professionals and services. An activity timetable for each Hub area was widely publicised within the local communities, which included services delivered by partners, and was available on the City Council website and activities were promoted through social media. Each family hub had an active Facebook page.

The Early Help offer was made up of a range of services delivered by partners that include: family hub practitioners, targeted youth support workers, primary mental health workers, health visitors, midwives, school nurses, police officers, NHS community organisations, advice services (e.g Law Centre and Coventry Independent Advice Service) Housing, benefits advice, Primary and Secondary schools, specialist mental health services and social workers. Many of these services were delivered from the Family Hub sites.

The report included examples of partnership working including weekly interagency case discussions (Family Matters Meetings) and the delivery of summer holiday programmes funded by "Feeding Britain" which delivered targeted support to vulnerable children and families, delivered by partnerships including Ignite, local supermarkets, schools, churches and faith groups.

The report also contained information about training, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the next steps including the development of an Early Help Development Plan.

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

- Support for people without access to on-line information
- Co-ordinating support so that there are no gaps
- Checks and expenses for volunteers
- Information to allow Ward Councillors to support residents
- The need for evaluation information and statistics such as the number of people using hubs, evidence of improved outcomes and hubs sharing good practice
- Challenges to partnership working
- Supporting and tracking families identified as vulnerable but not accepting targeted services
- The high threshold before intervention
- Language barriers
- Vacancies in MASH and services into hubs
- Domestic abuse
- C card and sexual health services

The Scrutiny Board felt that future discussion would benefit from contributions from the Police and Education partners.

Officers and partners discussed examples of how all partners, including education and the police, work in partnership in hubs and other venues. Positive outcomes from hubs evidenced included improved Breast Feeding and the Acting Early pilot which had been evaluated. Officers highlighted that austerity cuts have affected the way we deliver services.

The Scrutiny Board requested that the following information be circulated:

- The evaluation of the Acting Early pilot
- The data on improving breastfeeding rates
- Picture slides photos from the hubs
- Investigate whether members of the public were ever turned away from hubs due to language barriers
- Information on where hubs were located and which areas they covered be re-circulated

The Scrutiny Board thanked all the partners present for their contributions to the meeting.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board requests that the following items be considered at a future meeting of the Board:**

- 1) A follow up report in January 2019, to include evaluation data, sharing good practice, use of satellite venues and outreach work, engagement with schools and education, and how the impact of the work is being assessed and evidenced.**
- 2) The Early Help Development Plan report.**

29. **Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Board requested a visit to a hub when they consider the evaluation report in January, 2019.

**RESOLVED that further to Minute 28 above, the Board agrees to discuss the report back on Partnership Working at a Hub.**

30. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 3.25 pm)