

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 10 November 2016

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor S Bains
Councillor J Clifford (substitute for Councillor Gannon)
Councillor D Kershaw
Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor P Male
Councillor S Walsh (substitute for Councillor Miks)

Co-Opted Members: Mrs Hanson

Cabinet Members and
Deputy Cabinet Members: Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor K Maton
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor P Seaman

Employees (by Directorate):

G Holmes, Resources Directorate
G Kell, People Directorate
L Pardy-McLaughlin, People Directorate
M Rose, Resources Directorate
M Stokes, People Directorate
R Sugars, Resources Directorate
G Thomas, People Directorate

Apologies: Councillors D Gannon, A Khan, A Lucas, C Miks
K Jones, R Potter

Public Business

32. Declarations of Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

33. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October, 2016 were approved.

34. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children

The Scrutiny Board considered a report of the Executive Director for People which detailed new schemes relating to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children. The Board also considered a briefing note containing additional information and recommendations. The Cabinet were due to consider the report on 29th November, 2016.

The report noted that the City Council had always welcomed and cared for unaccompanied asylum seeking children who had arrived in Coventry and the Council was clear in its commitment to welcome refugees to the City. The need to now welcome and support many more unaccompanied asylum seeking children displaced as a result of events abroad was critical.

The Government had made a number of commitments in relation to supporting and caring for children. The three schemes relating to these children had been issued by Central Government for local authorities to consider and adopt and were detailed in the report. Coventry had registered for the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and intended to welcome children and families identified under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS). The report detailed the financial implications of the support.

The additional briefing note recognised that starting in July 2014, Coventry was the second local authority to take Syrian refugees and accordingly had built up a network of support and other extended services to assist in the resettlement of vulnerable refugees fleeing conflict. The Council relied heavily on the expertise and support of local voluntary sector agencies to support this programme. Citizens Advice Coventry, Coventry Law Centre and Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre provided key support to Syrian refugees in the City along with assistance from a number of other partners including City of Sanctuary, Positive Youth Foundation and local faith groups. Importantly Coventry schools had also played a key role in meeting the needs of newly arrived communities, as had local NHS services.

There was cross-party support from the Scrutiny Board for the proposals and they agreed that the decision of the Leader, Cabinet Member's and officers was the right thing for the City to do, continuing Coventry's tradition as a city of Peace and Reconciliation.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the Cabinet Members, Deputy Cabinet Member and officers on the following:

- Costs and grants
- Criticism and opposition
- Corporate Parent responsibilities for the young people including progress in school
- Considerations prior to placement including family and religious support
- Expertise and support of local voluntary sector agencies

The Scrutiny Board requested data on progress of these children in school in the education performance report to be considered in January, 2017.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board agreed the recommendations in the report and the additional recommendations in the briefing note

- (1) Approve and endorse the three schemes proposed by Central Government to support and care for unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children**
- (2) Note that the City Council has registered for the National Transfer Scheme (this decision having been made by the Chief Executive in**

- consultation with the Leader as a decision having been required in an emergency)
- (3) Delegate responsibility to the Executive Director People to confirm the total number of unaccompanied children that could be placed in the City for the remainder of this financial year.
 - (4) Confirm the City Council's commitment to welcoming children and families identified under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.
 - (5) To note the financial implications of resolving to support and care for unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children as detailed in this report.
 - (6) Cabinet consider the additional information
 - (7) Notify that meeting the needs of this vulnerable group places our potential financial burden on the LA and partners (NHS and Schools)
 - (8) Promote locally and nationally for all councils to take an equal share of responsibility for these children
 - (9) Petition central government for a full family formula

35. Coventry Youth Offending Service (CYOS) Youth Justice Plan 2016/17

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Executive Director for People which provided information about the Youth Offending Service in Coventry and the Youth Justice Plan. Appended to the report were the Inspection Report and Action Plan and the Youth Justice Plan.

The briefing note provided information about the Coventry Youth Offending Service (CYOS) Youth Justice Plan, which has been agreed and signed off by its Statutory Partners, and sought endorsement of the plan that will be submitted to The Parliamentary Library in line with the requirements of the Crime Disorder Act, 1998. It also provided an update on the outcome of HM Inspectorate of Probation Short Quality Screening inspection that was undertaken in July 2016 and the service's response.

CYOS were required to report against three national indicators:

- Reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system (FTE)
- Reducing re offending
- Reducing the use of custody for young people

The briefing note included headlines and priorities.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on the following:

- Safeguarding as an area for improvement
- Performance management and supervision of staff
- Positive work activities and communication of these
- Positive partnership working
- How scrutiny could input earlier in the process
- Family support team
- Timescales

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Scrutiny Board agreed the recommendation in the report to endorse the Coventry Youth Offending Service (CYOS) Youth Justice Plan that will be submitted to The Parliamentary Library in line with the requirements of the Crime Disorder Act, 1998.**
- (2) to endeavour to look at next year's action plan as timely as possible and requested an update on this year's action plan in 3 months time**

36. Prevent in Schools

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Executive Director for People which briefed members on the Prevent programme in schools.

The Prevent Duty was established in July 2015 as part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act and in particular Section 26 which came into force on 1 July 2015. It outlined the duty for a school or college to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Schedule 6 confirmed that all schools were covered by the requirements (whether maintained or independent are specified authorities for the purpose of the act). This report outlined those requirements and the implications for schools in the City, the key actions which had been taken to support implementation and proposals for further action.

The Prevent Duty stated that the requirement to have due regard to the risks of radicalisation to support extremism was part of the wider safeguarding duties of schools and public bodies and should be incorporated within their main resources.

The Prevent Duty was closely associated with supporting local communities to resist the threat of violent extremism. It was overseen locally by both the Community Safety Partnership and by both of the Local Safeguarding Boards.

Essentially the Prevent Duty was based on the principle that recognising children can be vulnerable to exploitation and radicalised to support and engage in violent extremism was one part of the safeguarding duties of teachers – and was therefore part of the overall duty of care. There were four key duties for schools:

- Identify local risks
- Identify at risk students
- Work in partnership with other agencies
- Keep children safe online where much of the radicalisation takes place (including phones not just PCs and Laptops)

In addition, all schools must meet the requirements set out in section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural values (SMSC) to develop their pupils in "Self knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, distinguish right from wrong, contributing to their locality and society, further tolerance and harmony encourage respect for other people and the rule of the law." The achievement against this requirement was assessed through Ofsted.

The principles of the Prevent Duty were clearly outlined in support of the Equality Act – 'Extremism' is defined in the 2011 Prevent strategy "as vocal or active

opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.”

A large part of the response to the Duty had been to provide training and awareness to schools in the City. Since October 2015, and the appointment of the Prevent Co-ordinator, further training had been available. During that time almost 40 schools had been directly trained by the Co-ordinator, with over 1,000 staff attending, the principal form of training was based on the Home Office model known as the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent.

The Government required all areas to establish a Channel Panel. A multi-agency group, led by the Local Authority, with its principal aim to provide a safeguarding support to individuals who may be at risk of radicalisation.

The Scrutiny Board appreciated the work of officers on Prevent.

The Scrutiny Board questioned Cabinet Members, Deputy Cabinet Members and officers on the following:

- Training in Coventry
- Partnership working
- Faith organisations
- Monitoring training
- Work with Universities

The Board sought clarification that all schools had received quality training.

RESOLVED that

- 1. the Scrutiny Board considered the report and requested that the Cabinet Member congratulate officers and continue to work with partner organisations and agencies in the city**
- 2. data regarding the number of schools delivering prevent training be made available**
- 3. officers monitor the quality of the training where we can gain access to the material**

37. Outstanding Issues

The Scrutiny Board noted the briefing note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator regarding outstanding actions requested by the Board and that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People referred the Health Visiting recommendation to officers.

38. Work Programme

The Scrutiny Board noted the work programme and requested that we hold a future meeting in a school.

RESOLVED that arrangements be made to hold a future Scrutiny Board meeting in a school.

39. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)