

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 11 November 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor Wildy, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Stephens, Vice Chair.

Councillors Berrow, Delbridge, Haydon, Mrs Nicholson, Roberts and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representatives: Jenny Evans, Kerry Whittlesea and Mr Kevin Willis

Apologies for absence: Councillor Mrs Foster

Also in attendance: Colin Moore – Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning, Simon Arthurs - Finance Client Manager, Councillor Mrs Watkins - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, James Coulton – Assistant Director for Culture, Sport and Leisure, Sally Walsh – Schools Library Service Manager, Jayne Gorton - School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager, Jonathan Fry - Policy and Performance Officer, Candice Sainsbury - Policy and Planning Team Manager, Maggie Carter - Assistant Director for Learning and Family Support, Lisa Hartley- Excellence Cluster Co-Director, Mairead MacNeil – Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care, Maureen Grimley – Safeguarding Manager and Simon White – Safeguarding Business Manager.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 1.00 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

43. **APOLOGIES**

Under this agenda item the Chair welcomed to the Panel Jenny Evans and Kerry Whittlesea as newly co-opted members representing young people.

The Chair also highlighted that a siren would sound to announce a two minute silence for Armistice Day which the Panel would observe.

44. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

45. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

46. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

Under this item the Chair informed the Panel that agenda items 11, 'The Plymouth Report', and 13 'Updates from Partner Organisations – Children's Trust', would be discussed together.

47. **APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES**

The Vice Chair proposed to the Panel that Alderman Pauline Purnell be co-opted onto the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel; Councillor Roberts seconded the proposal.

Recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that Alderman Pauline Purnell be co-opted onto the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Agreed that the voting rights of Kevin Willis, co-opted representative for parent governors, would be investigated by the Democratic Support Officer and clarification sent via email to Kevin Willis, the Chair, Vice Chair and Lead Officer.

48. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Chair updated the Panel on their tracking resolutions and feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

With regards to tracking resolutions, the Panel was informed that –

- (i) as referred to on page seven of the agenda the briefing note on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) had been circulated to Members; this item was now complete;
- (ii) as referred to on pages eight and nine of the agenda the following items were on target to come to 6 January 2011 meeting:
 - 15 July 2010 – minute 19 (1)
 - 15 July 2010 – minute 19 (2)
 - 15 July 2010 – minute 19 (3)
 - 15 July 2010 – minute 19 (4)
 - 15 July 2010 – minute 19 (5)
 - 15 July 2010 – minute 19 (6)
- (iii) as referred to on page nine of the agenda the update on Building Schools for the Future Strategy would be discussed in the meeting later on in the agenda; this item would remain on the agenda for future meetings;

- (iv) as referred to on page ten of the agenda, Colin Moore, Assistant Director Children's Services (Lifelong Learning), updated the Panel on the 15 February 2010 (5.1) budget scrutiny recommendation. The Panel was informed that discussions had taken place with Plymouth Association of Governors regarding the establishment of an agreement for the better use of facilities in the community, specifically school buildings; the obligation was with the Governing Bodies to ensure that the tariff of lettings equals what the community was able to pay. The use of school playing fields was also to be part of the agreement. Discussions had also taken place with Widewell Trust regarding tariffs related to Widewell School – it was agreed that a written report be submitted to the Panel at its next meeting to keep the Panel informed of progress;
- (v) as referred to on page 11 of the agenda, recommendations 52 and 53 from 15 February 2010 Budget Scrutiny meeting would be submitted to 6 January 2011 meeting;
- (vi) as referred to on page 12 of the agenda, recommendation 5.6 from 15 February 2010 Budget Scrutiny meeting would be discussed later in the agenda; this item was now complete;
- (vii) as referred to on page 13 of the agenda, minute 33 from 9 September 2010 meeting would be discussed later on in the agenda; this item was now complete;
- (viii) as referred to on page 13 of the agenda, minute 39 from 9 September 2010 meeting an update would be provided to the Panel in 6 January 2011 meeting.

Agreed that a written report be submitted to the Panel upon the engagement between school governors and third sector organisations regarding the aim for schools to maximise the way in which their facilities are available and accessible to the local community.

Under this item the Chair informed the Panel that their lead officer, Claire Oatway, Head of Service for Performance and Quality, was on sick leave and as a result Colin Moore, Assistant Director Children's Services (Lifelong Learning), would act as replacement for this meeting.

49. **COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW**

Simon Arthurs, Finance Client Manager and Councillor Mrs Watkins, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People provided the Panel with an update on the Comprehensive Spending Review.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (i) the Council was eligible to apply for a Capitalisation Direction grant to help pay for redundancy fees and pension contributions;

- (ii) it was expected that the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) would be closed to new applicants in 2011;
- (iii) it was not known what would replace the EMA;
- (iv) there was a high level of participation in 6th form studies and apprenticeships in Plymouth;
- (v) population in Plymouth was increasing and it was expected that 500 extra children would be going into the schooling system in 2011;
- (vi) different departments in the Council were prioritising their workload however changes would not be confirmed until December 2010;
- (vii) there were five schools in the BSF project that had been affected by the Comprehensive Spending Review:
 - Marine Academy – to be rebuilt
 - All Saints – to be refurbished
 - Sir John Hunt and Lipson Colleges – to have new ICT facilities
 - Stoke Damerel – to be completely rebuilt.

Under this item Councillor Mrs Watkins informed the Panel that she had attended a meeting with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools regarding the Capitalisation Programme and raising the profile for Plymouth Schools. It was highlighted that £15.8bn would be divided amongst 600 schools in the country and it was hoped that Plymouth would receive a share of the fund – a response was expected to be provided by December 2010.

The Chair thanked Simon Arthurs and Councillor Mrs Watkins for their attendance and proposed that these items remain on the Panel's work programme.

Agreed that the Democratic Support Officer would circulate a copy of the presentation to Members of the Panel.

50. **COMMISSION ON SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

James Coulton – Assistant Director for Culture, Sport and Leisure and Sally Walsh – Schools Library Service Manager provided the Panel with an update on the Commission on School Libraries.

The Panel was informed that the commission on school libraries was funded by the contribution buy back from schools – there was a high level of buy back which was reflected in the quality of service provided.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (i) the schools libraries commission was on the brink of disappearing in schools across the county due to tight budgets and focus upon ICT resources;

- (ii) school teachers appreciated the service however were restricted by small budget allocations;
- (iii) dialogue with Devon and Cornwall upon the service was still ongoing; it was highlighted that Cornwall operate with a devolved budget in which it was voted that all primary schools would continue to receive the service (not necessarily provided by Cornwall) whereas Devon's system was separate from the public library service and was instead part of a partnership that offer its services to schools;
- (iv) discussions were ongoing with Marjons regarding the commission on school libraries;
- (v) due to the continued buy back service, the commission on school libraries was considered to be stable for the next three years;

Agreed that the Panel:

- 1) recognise the importance of the School Library Service in supporting the educational needs of children in the city;
- 2) approve the proposed developments to enhance the service to schools, in particular:
 - Partnership working with Devon Schools Library Service and Cornwall Education Library Service;
 - The development of Regional provision to schools;
 - Joint working with Museum and Archive service to create multi-media resource packages for schools
- 3) suggest the service seek innovative ways of working with the University and the College of St Mark and St John (Marjon) in particular through the use of ICT;
- 4) require an update on Commission on School Libraries in six months.

51. **YOUTH JUSTICE ACTION PLAN**

The Chair informed the Panel that no officers were in attendance for this item.

Agreed that the Youth Justice Action Plan report be noted and a further update on progress be submitted to the Panel in six months.

52. **HOSPITAL SCHOOL**

Jayne Gorton, School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager, provided the Panel with an update on the Hospital School.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (i) there were proposals for Plymouth Hospital and Outreach School to be discontinued and be replaced with a support service managed as part of the new Alternative Complementary Education (ACE) Service;

- (ii) the aim of the new service was to provide short stay provision for pupils to complement existing maintained provision for challenging and vulnerable children;
- (iii) the proposal for the new service was focused on attainment and continued improvement for its pupils;
- (iv) the Hospital School had received a very negative Ofsted inspection;
- (v) there were no elected members on the governing body for the school;
- (vi) the head teacher would manage the site and was accountable to the local authority through Children's Services;

The Chair thanked Jayne Gordon for her attendance.

Agreed that –

- 1) the Panel support the proposal to transform the Plymouth Hospital and Outreach School to an Alternative Complementary Education (ACE) Service;
- 2) a report on the ACE provision, including the new support service proposed to replace the Plymouth Hospital and Outreach School, is provided to the Panel in six months time;
- 3) the Democratic Support Officer email Panel Members on the governance of how the current hospital school is organised as well as arrangements for the future;

53. **PLYMOUTH REPORT**

Jonathan Fry, Policy and Performance Officer, provided the Panel with an update on the Plymouth Report. Under this item Candice Sainsbury, Policy and Planning Team Manager, also provided the Panel with an update on the Children's Trust.

The Panel was informed that –

- (i) the Plymouth Report identified that Plymouth children were achieving well in their GCSEs however girls were still outperforming boys;
- (ii) there was a strong variation across neighbourhoods on the number of young people progressing to University;
- (iii) great inequalities of health and housing were identified in the western part of the city;
- (iv) the relationship between child poverty and education attainment needed to be monitored closely;

- (v) there were significant trends highlighted in the report of children attending higher and vocational education;
- (vi) it was identified that resources should be used affectively amongst partners;
- (vii) the Children and Young People Trust was no longer a requirement from Government however it would continue to work in Plymouth and become a sixth Local Strategic Partnership theme group;
- (viii) the Children and Young People Trust had its own priorities, as well as working towards the four new council and city priorities;
- (ix) partnership working was considered to be excellent in Plymouth.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (x) participation in higher education to the age of 19 was high, however entry to university was not as high;
- (xi) a needs assessment for children in different wards had recently been completed using 09/10 data;
- (xii) performance measures acted as indicators and were comparable to other authorities.

Recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel be linked to the new Children and Young People Theme Group.

Agreed that

- 1) the priorities for the Children and Young People Trust be submitted to Panel Members via email;
- 2) a briefing report be submitted to the Panel in January 2011 outlining the work of the Children's Trust and its interface with scrutiny as well as an item at the next meeting and a standing item on the Work Plan.

54. **LOCALITY WORKING**

Maggie Carter, Assistant Director for Learning and Family Support, and Lisa Hartley, Excellence Cluster Co-Director, provided the Panel with an update on Locality Working.

The Panel was informed that Locality Working had been adopted across the city through several partnerships.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (i) the locality commissioning group used local ward intelligence to gain a better understanding of different wards in the city;

- (ii) some residents were more forthcoming in providing their views than others, it was a challenge for officers to ensure that the opinion of everyone was heard; officers also considered it a challenge to get young people to participate in locality working;
- (iii) approaching schools councils was another way of reaching and listening to young people;
- (iv) neighbourhood profiles were not always linked to the allocation of resources however it was a challenge to ensure that money was available when required; different wards had different needs.

The Chair thanked both officers for their report and attendance at the meeting. She requested that the work of the Excellence Cluster in Plymouth was recognised as having been very successful.

Agreed that –

- 1) a written update on Locality Working be scheduled into the Work Programme;
- 2) the paper regarding current restructuring work, proposed delivery and structural models for integrated locality teams to be submitted to the January 2011 meeting.

55. **UPDATES FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

Mairead MacNeil – Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care, Maureen Grimley – Safeguarding Manager and Simon White – Safeguarding Business Manager provided the Panel with an update on Plymouth Local Safeguarding Children’s Board.

The Panel was informed that –

- (i) the Children Act 2004 required every local authority to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards. In Plymouth this was known as the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board (PSCB) and was the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations would co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- (ii) the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board (PSCB) had completed and published a serious case review into the circumstances surrounding the abuse at a local nursery;
- (iii) the majority of recommendations in the report had been completed, some were still ongoing and all were under constant review;
- (iv) best practice guidance on the use of mobiles in a nursery setting had been issued but this was not enforceable.

Agreed that –

- 1) the Panel note the actions taken in the report and progress being made;
- 2) the Panel note the key findings in regard to Ofsted and their use of local information and strongly support the efforts of local Members of Parliament to ensure this formed part of any future inspection arrangements;
- 3) the Panel receive updates when appropriate

56. **TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

The Chair presented the findings of the Young Carers Task and Finish Group to the Panel however highlighted that the report was not complete due to officer illness.

The Panel endorsed the Project Initiation Document (PID) for the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People in Care and were happy for the Chair/ Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Group to sit on the Panel.

Agreed that:

- 1) the Chair, Vice Chair, Councillor Mrs Nicholson and the lead officer complete the Young Carers Task and Finish Group report and submit it to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for their approval;
- 2) Councillor Wildy would chair the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People in Care Task and Finish Group and Councillor Mrs Stephens would sit as Vice Chair;
- 3) the Democratic Support Officer would circulate potential dates to Members for the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People in Care Task and Finish Group.
 - (i) Young Carers in Plymouth
Minute 56 refers.
 - (ii) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People in Care
Minute 56 refers.

57. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel discussed its 2010/2011 work programme and identified several failing national indicators to include in its programme of work.

Recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the following items be included on the Children and Young People OSP work programme:

- Primary School Attainment , KS2
- Emotional Health of Children
- Bullying
- Stability of Placements
- Special Educational Needs statements
- Prevalence of and screening arrangements for Chlamydia in under 25 year old women

58. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.