

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 14 July 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor Wildy, in the Chair.

Councillor Stark, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Berrow, Bowie, Mrs Bragg, Browne, Delbridge, Haydon, Singh and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representatives: Mr Kevin Willis and Alderman Purnell.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Mrs Bowyer and Mrs Nicholson, Jenny Evans and Kerry Whittlesea

Also in attendance: Councillor Sam Leaves – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Bronwen Lacey – Director of Services for Children and Young People, Ian Gallin – Assistant Chief Executive, Colin Moore – Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning), Maggie Carter – Assistant Director (Learner and Family Support), Jayne Gorton – School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager, Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Claire Oatway – Lead Officer and Amelia Boulter – Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.45 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.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following declarations of interest were made, as follows –

Name	Minute	Reason	Interest
Councillor Stark	Minute 18 and 20 – Priorities and Challenges and In-year Admissions	Governor of All Saints and Stoke Damerel.	Personal
Councillor Wildy	Minute 18 and 20 – Priorities and Challenges and In-year Admissions	Partner is a Governor of Lipson Community College.	Personal
Councillor Mrs Bragg	Minute 18 and 20 – Priorities and Challenges and In-year Admissions	Director of Marine Academy Plymouth.	Personal

Councillor Beer	Mrs	Minute 18 and 20 – Priorities and Challenges and In-year Admissions	Governor St Maurice School Primary.	Personal
Councillor Singh	Chaz	Minute 20 – In-year Admissions	Member of School Admissions Forum.	Personal
Kevin Willis		Minute 19 and 20 – Budget and Performance and In-year Admissions	Governor at Ridgeway School and a member of the School Admissions Forum.	Personal

14. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the 16 June 2011 were approved as a correct record.

15. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair informed the panel that agenda item 9, 'Update from Partner Organisations', and agenda item 6 'Priorities and Challenges', would be discussed together.

16. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM MANAGEMENT BOARD**

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

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

- (a) the Vice-chair had spoken to the Diocese but was awaiting a response. Colin Moore, Assistant Director further added he had written directly to the Diocese and was also awaiting a response;
- (b) the CYP OSP Terms of Reference were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

The Chair gave feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to the panel. It was reported from OSMB that scrutiny panels may not be able to undertake as many task and finish groups. The CYP OSP would therefore need to re-consider task and finish groups put forward.

17. **UPDATE FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sam Leaves, the new Cabinet member for Children and Young People to the meeting. Councillor Sam Leaves informed the panel of her role and stated she was impressed with the dedication of staff within Children Services. The statementing of children was high on her agenda and she recently attended her first Children's Trust meeting as Chair where child poverty is an important issue.

Ian Gallin, Assistant Chief Executive explained to the panel the role of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), it was reported that –

- (a) a lot of changes had taken place nationally and there is no longer a requirement to have an LSP;
- (b) there were significant benefits from working in a partnership environment. The LSP Executive had looked at the benefits of partners coming together and assessed that some topics could only be addressed through wider partnership working;
- (c) emerging issues for the partnership:
 - child poverty;
 - alcohol abuse;
 - worklessness.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (d) the partnership needs to understand what partners can support and commit to. The child poverty work plan is a good example of partners working together;
- (e) the LSP Wise Theme Group address the wider issues on behalf of the city.

Agreed that –

1. plans for each of the five themes listed in the LSP Wise Theme Group report to come back to the panel on a regular basis;
2. the panel to receive an overview on the different theme groups and how they fit together and contribute to the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011 – 14.

18. **PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES**

Colin Moore, Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning) gave an update to the panel, it was reported that –

- (a) GCSE results have never been better, however, cannot be complacent as under half of youngsters were still leaving school under the national average in terms of their skills set;
- (b) raising aspirations is one of the four priorities for the city. This is also crucial for young people and to fit this into the growth agenda for the city;

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (c) priorities are monitored by the Corporate Management Team, Department of Education, Cabinet, Children's Trust and inspected by Ofsted;

- (d) The three main priorities for Lifelong Learning:
 - Children and Young People's Plan;
 - work with the Department of Education on revising the Participation Age;
 - restructure of Lifelong Learning division.
- (e) Careers South West are specialists for ensuring young people have access to the right opportunities;

Maggie Carter, Assistant Director (Learner and Family Support) gave an update to the panel. It was reported that there is a very clear requirement to champion the needs of young and vulnerable people and their families, working closely with Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Care making sure all children's needs are not lost.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (f) there is likely to be changes to the statutory responsibilities with the new government proposals on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and services would have to adapt to the changes;
- (g) efficiency savings made with streamlining the number of managers and bringing some services together and protecting the frontline services;
- (h) the primary schools to be expanded to meet the growth in birth rate:
 - Prince Rock
 - Mount Wise
 - Riverside
 - Weston Mill
 - Ernesettle
- (i) children's school meals are healthy and locally sourced;
- (j) there had been a significant increase with children being diagnosed with autism and every school needs to be equipped to deal with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD);

Agreed that -

1. Adult Learning to be added to the CYP OSP Work Programme;
2. information to be provided on the work undertaken by the Employment and Skills Group;
3. the panel to receive information on the children's workforce induction programme undertaken by all staff working with children and young people;
4. the panel receive a report on the uptake of free school meals;

5. the panel to receive information on whether the build and recreation of full production kitchens in remaining primary schools and PRU to end transported meals was on track for completion by August 2011;
6. further information be provided on Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding for 2012/13 to the panel in January 2012.

19. **BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Chair informed the panel that the budget and performance report (position as at 31 March 2011) was the most up to date report. The panel raised concerns with the format of the report and receiving information that was not up to date.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (a) sickness levels were improving and monitored;
- (b) historically it was a statutory requirement for the local authority to provide school transport for SEN pupils and this can be costly. In the past we had consistently overspent in this area and set a more realistic budget for this year;
- (c) agency spend had reduced. The current spend was in school admissions, catering and passenger assistance to cover for sickness absence.

Agreed that –

1. the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be made aware that for scrutiny panels to be able to monitor Budget and Performance effectively, corporate reporting cycles need to facilitate panels receiving timely reports containing up to date information;
2. the Corporate Parenting Group to provide the panel with an update on children in care to include-
 - age profile of children in care;
 - time spent in care;
 - number of children returning back into care.
3. further information be provided to the panel on the 2011/12 budget for SEN transport.

20. **IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS**

Councillor Mary Aspinall put forward a case relating to in-year admissions. It was reported that -

- (a) this is not an isolated piece of casework and affects other wards in the city;

- (b) a young family moved into the area and applied for school places for their two children, one primary place and one secondary place. A primary school place was offered to the youngest child but the school was some distance from the family home. A secondary school place had recently been resolved after intervention from Councillor Mrs Aspinall;

Jayne Gorton, School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager responded to Councillor Mrs Aspinall's case and updated the panel on the in-year admission process. It was reported that -

- (c) many transfers take place within the city with new families moving into the area and families moving within the city;
- (d) heads of the School Admissions team have a two week backlog and receive in excess of 20 applications a day for in year admissions;

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (e) there is no relocation plan in place for the family to move them closer to the allocated school;
- (f) schools with their own admission authority arrangements would have to comply with the Admissions Code. If a school does not comply, the Secretary of State or the Schools Adjudicator would be contacted to intervene;
- (g) since September 2010, 2500 in-year admissions were received by the School Admissions Team.

Agreed that the issues with in-year admissions to be highlighted to the School Admissions Forum. A further report on findings to come back to the panel and Councillor Mrs Aspinall at a later date.

21. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered its work programme for 2011/12.

Agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair, Lead Officer and Democratic Support Officer to meet and populate the work programme. The completed work programme to be circulated to panel members.

22. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.