

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 19 November 2009

PRESENT:

Councillor Purnell, in the Chair.
Councillor Mrs Stephens, Vice Chair.
Councillors Mrs Beer, Berrow (substitute for Councillor Reynolds), Mrs Bragg, Delbridge, Roberts and Vincent.

Co-opted Representatives: Ms Kearnes and Mr Paget.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Bowie and Reynolds and Mrs Gee, Mr Lyddon, Miss Taylor and Mr Willis (co-opted representatives).

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.50 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.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made by Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

Name	Minute No. and Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Purnell	Minute no. 39 Children with Disabilities.	School Governor	Personal
Councillor Roberts	Minute no. 39 Children with Disabilities.	School Governor	Personal

33. MINUTES

Resolved that -

- (1) that Councillor Mrs. Stephens' apologies be added to the meeting of the meeting held on 24 September 2009;
- (2) subject to resolution (1) above, the minutes of the 24 September and 22 October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

34. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

35. FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Chair provided verbal feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, which was that finance training for scrutiny Members had taken place and additional practical training around the budget for Children & Young People Panel Members had been requested.

36. QUARTERLY REPORT

The Panel considered the first draft of the Panel's scrutiny quarterly report and highlighted that the following adjustments should be made -

- (i) the report should note the change of time for the panel's business meeting;

- (ii) it should highlight the panel's site visits as an important part of their work;
- (iii) key achievements such as the sustained diverse membership of the group should be highlighted;
- (iv) the Cabinet Member's name be removed from the report's heading as it was a report of the scrutiny panel;
- (v) the Panel Member attendance statistics were incorrect.

Resolved That the Panel's scrutiny quarterly report be amended to include the adjustments suggested in (i) to (v) above and then submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

37. **COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director for Services for Children and Young People submitted a report detailing activity for the period April 2008 – March 2009 in relation to Children's Social Care. The Panel welcomed this annual report which was highly positive and showed that compliments had increased year on year.

The following responses were given to questions raised by Members -

- (i) closer working with 'The Zone' was on the service work plan for next year;
- (ii) the service had worked through the Children's Integrated Disability Service to communicate with disabled children and it was recognised that communication with children who experienced impaired communications needed to be developed;
- (iii) contact cards were provided to those children involved with the service;
- (iv) placement exit surveys were a source of information for the service;
- (v) there was a free phone helpline and children and young people were aware of it;
- (vi) there were no comparators with other Local Authorities due to different ways of collecting data;
- (vii) contact with children and young people in custody and secure units would be reviewed.

Resolved that -

- (1) a copy of an up to date pack of information provided to children be made available to the panel;
- (2) comparative data be provided to the Panel on how the service was performing in relation to neighbouring Local Authorities.

38. **PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET REVIEW**

The Director for Services for Children and Young People submitted a report providing in-year updates for finance and performance within the department, combining extracts from the Cabinet update of 15 September 2009 and the Performance Framework used by the Children's Trust Executive to track progress against the Children and Young People's Plan.

The following responses to Members' questions were provided -

- (i) the caseload was approximately 2400 cases within the service, with a significant proportion held at Advice and Assessment;

- (ii) placement stability was a challenging area and was an Local Area Agreement priority with a high emphasis; the service would continue to review what the trends were and identify support;
- (iii) the target for Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) was a continued concern although there was successful partnership work in areas of the city;
- (iv) pooling budgets took place where there was a need to do so and the rules allowed it, although national reporting requirements were causing slow progress;
- (v) aligning services within local services had driven down costs, with partner agencies providing staff and services;
- (vi) there were budgetary pressures and actions were being taken to address them; there was always the likelihood of further external pressures;
- (vii) 'healthy schools plus' was a targeted approach to obesity within 16 schools across the city.

Resolved that -

- (1) a view of where budgets may be pooled be provided to the panel;
- (2) a breakdown of figures for numbers of full time equivalent posts, vacancies, number of cases and numbers of agency staff over the past five years be provided to the panel;
- (3) comparison national figures for teenage pregnancies be provided to the task and finish group considering reducing teenage conception rates in the city;
- (4) regarding performance indicators, numbers rather than percentages be provided to the Panel;
- (5) consideration of the performance indicators causing concern and what localities they occurred in be placed on the Panel's work programme;
- (6) additional practical finance training be provided to the Panel.

39. **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

The Integrated Disability Service Manager from Services for Children and Young People's Department submitted a briefing paper on Children with Disabilities and the Panel viewed a DVD on young people's views on short breaks. The Service manager highlighted that the video was part of a consultation process to find out what young disabled people wanted for their future.

Responses to questions from Members were as follows -

- (i) the adaptation process was long but the service was working with occupational therapists to provide a flowchart to families explaining the process;
- (ii) there were a small number of people using the short break provision during the school holidays;
- (iii) initial assessment covered the whole family, how they enjoyed their time together and the reason for requesting a break;
- (iv) transition planning started in year nine;

- (v) a small group of young people worked with the service;
- (vi) short break foster carers were available but more were needed.

Resolved that -

- (1) a joint task and finish group with Customers and Communities OSP on facilities for disabled people be included on the work programme;
- (2) information on integration and support for children with disabilities, short breaks, independent living, pooled budgets and education be considered at a future meeting.

(Councillors Purnell and Roberts declared personal interests in the above item.)

40. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

A schedule of tracking resolutions was submitted and considered.

41. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme of the Panel was submitted and considered.

Resolved that the following be added to the work programme -

- (a) a review of the action plan from OFSTED's inspection of Children's Service Advice and Assessment;
- (b) a review OFSTED's action plan from Little Teds, when available;
- (c) a review of the flowchart created by Occupational Therapy regarding adaptations;
- (d) cyber-bullying.

42. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved that the next meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Panel be held on 28 January 2010 at 10am in the Council House.

43. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.