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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee** CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time of Meeting** TUESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2015, 2.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

11 **Correspondence** (*Pages 1 - 12*)

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Date 18 September 2015

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH  
Your Ref:

Councillor Sue Lent  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

Thank you for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2015 to help introduce the Child Health and Disability progress report, Families First Annual Review and Quarter 1 Performance Information. I would also like to thank Tony Young and his officers, as well as Rachel Jones, Sara Payne (Barnardo's) and Eve Williams (Action for Children) for their full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations which they asked me to write to you.

### **Child Health and Disability progress report**

The Committee were pleased to receive the update on the Department's progress in implementing its development plan and addressing the Committee's inquiry recommendations. Member noted that the disability team was now more stable and that the take up of direct payments had improved.

Members were however concerned that there was still a lot of partnership work to be undertaken and that the eligibility criteria had still not been developed. Members recommended that the department consult on and implement the new criteria as soon as possible.

Finally the Committee were disappointed that regular consultation meetings with children and their families or carers were not occurring. The committee recommends that these should be started straight away, so that Children's Services can ensure that the service and support provided is appropriate and effective.

### **Families First Annual Review**

The Committee were extremely impressed with the work that the Annual Review report highlighted. Specifically impressive is the partnership working, the clear monitoring of the packages and presentation of outcomes achieved, the willingness to take difficult decisions to change providers when outcomes are not achieved and the flexibility that

enables gaps in the delivery being identified and then funding re-allocated to fill the gaps. Members noted the clear positive impact of the packages and felt that they might also be having an impact on school attendance (anti bullying and “connect” courses) and Children’s Services referrals (Disability Focus).

Finally the Committee recommended that you and Officers must lobby the Welsh Government to try to ensure that the funding and packages continue to be provided after the present funding programme ends in 2017.

### **Quarter 1 Performance Information**

The Committee welcomed the number of key improvements shown in the report’s performance indicators.

The committee noted that the PI “recording decisions on referrals” performance was reported as having improved from 85.8% in Q4 to 89.8% in Q1, however the number of referrals had reduced by 16%, which should have enabled the staff to deal with considerably more cases. Therefore Members were concerned that this PI had not improved more rapidly, and would expect to see an improvement at Q2, if the number of referrals continues to fall.

Members also questioned why the indicators used by the Wales Data Unit had not been included in the corporate monitoring report as these PI’s were being publically report by the Welsh Government. The Committee recommended that future corporate performance reports must include those indicators published by the Wales Data Unit, to enable them to be closely monitored.

Members also questioned the number of cases that social workers currently had, as they had been informed that some had over 25 cases whereas the average was 18.9 as reported in the corporate performance report. The Director informed the Committee that an analysis had been undertaken and some social workers did have case loads of 25 however those cases were appropriate for the social workers and he was satisfied with the level of caseloads across all social workers. Members noted that social worker case loads were now more manageable and also welcomed the development of a pool of social workers, to help reduce the need for agency workers and help to eliminate the establishment gaps, which inevitably occurs during the recruitment process.

Members also discussed the current and forecasted budget position for Children’s Services for this year and requested clarification of whether the contingency budget had already been fully used in Q1.

Finally the Committee wished to inform you that they approved their work programme for the year, as required by the constitution, and I have attached, for your information, a copy of the work programme calendar so that you and your officers are aware of the issues that the Committee will be seeking to scrutinise at each meeting.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for children. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows, and requires a response:

- Recommended that you consult and implement the new Child Health and Disability eligibility criteria as soon as possible;
- Recommends that regular consultation meetings are undertaken with children and their carers who use the Child Health and Disability service;
- That you and officers lobby the Welsh Government to ensure that the Families First funding and packages continue to be provided post 2017;
- That future corporate performance quarterly reports include the relevant performance indicators published by the Wales Data Unit and publicised by the Welsh Government; and
- Provide details of the use of the contingency budget for Children's Services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cook', with a horizontal line underneath.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children's Services  
Rachel Jones, Operational Manager - Partnerships & Citizen Focus  
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader  
Irfan Alam – Assistant Director of Social Services

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

18 September 2015



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Councillor Sarah Merry  
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sarah

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to provide an opening statement and answer questions on the agenda item **Quarter one performance and Provisional School Results 2014/15**. I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar for his introduction of the report and answers to Members questions. During the way forward section of the meeting the Members' considered the information in the report and answers to their questions, and identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations for your consideration, as detailed below.

### **Quarter 1 performance**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be presented with the Directorates Quarter 1 performance report. Members were pleased to read about the progress being made to improve the performance of all areas of Education. In particular Member commented on the improved performance in respect of Neets, which had been in decline. Members noted that many of the problems were now being addressed and performance had improved. The Committee also considered that the new data sharing protocol, across organisations, should further help reduce the number of Neets.

Members did however question the primary schools admissions procedure, as some Members were aware of a cohort of pupils who were still not attending school as places had not been found. Members noted the Directors comments that all pupils had been offered a school place, however a number of appeals were still being processed and they will all be completed within the statutory time scale. The Committee requested a further update on the outcome of the appeals, to Members, following the 30 days statutory time scale. Furthermore Members would like a breakdown of the numbers of Primary and Secondary school children who as of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 had not yet attended school because of appeals, or that they had not yet accepted an offered place.

A Member expressed concern that in the Q1 performance reports, corporate risk section, the School Organisation Programme (SOP) was shown as "red/amber". The Director stated that the "red/amber" risk was due to capacity issues in achieving the ambitious timescales for project delivery. The Committee requested assurance that

additional management actions would be put in place to ensure that the SOP programme would be fully implemented.

Members, when questioning the poor performance of certain school causing concern, were informed by the Director that Estyn had recently sent a letter about Eastern High, stating that improvements had been made. The Committee requested that they receive a copy of this and any other similar letters that Estyn send in respect of their monitoring visit to any schools causing concern.

### **Provisional School Results**

Members welcomed the continued and sustained improvements in the overall results, however, Members did express their wish for further improvements, across all performance measures, to ensure that every Cardiff school is a good school where learners achieve well.

The Committee did however express considerable concern that the performance of pupils, in Mathematics, was the most significant area that needed improvement, particularly in certain schools. The Committee recommended that you and the Director of Education ensures that the Central South Consortium immediately implements appropriate measure to bring about significant improvements in results in Mathematics across all key stages, and in all schools.

The Committee also expressed its concern that teacher assessments were inconsistent across schools. The Committee requested details of the actions being proposed by you, the Director of Education and the Central South Consortium to address this issue.

Finally the Committee wished to inform you that they approved their work programme for the year, as required by the Constitution, and I have attached, for your information, a copy of the work programme calendar so that you and your officers are aware of the issues that the Committee will be seeking to scrutinise at each meeting.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires a response:

- A further update on the outcome of the admission appeals, following the completion of the 30 day statutory timescale for an appeal hearing, and the numbers of pupils who have not yet attended school because of appeals or pressure on the admissions process;



- Assurance that additional management actions would be put in place to ensure that the SOP programme would be fully implemented;
- A copy of the recent Eastern High Estyn letter;
- Details of the measures being implemented to bring about significant improvements in results in mathematics across all key stages; and
- Details of the actions being implemented to address the inconsistencies in teacher assessments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Nick Batchelar – Director of Education and Lifelong learning  
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger  
CC Nichola Hayward – Resources Manager  
CC Paul Burke – Committee Clerk

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My Ref / Fy Ref: CM32215

Your Ref / Eich Ref : Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

Date / Dyddiad: 4 November 2015

Councillor R. Cook  
Chair  
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear / Annwyl Richard,

**RE: Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee 15 September 2015**

Thank you for your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 following the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

**Quarter 1 Performance**

You requested a further update on the outcome of appeals. I can confirm that all appeals have been completed within the statutory 30 day timescale. Pupils have been offered places in both English and Welsh medium provision in both the Primary and Secondary sector and it is now down to parental choice as to which option is taken up for the child. This is because, within the Primary Sector, there are currently 222 places available in 19 different English medium schools and 36 places in 7 different Welsh primary schools. In addition, in the secondary sector there are Welsh medium places available in Ysgol Glantaf and Bro Edern and English medium places in a number of community schools.

You also expressed concern that in the Q1 performance reports, corporate risk section, the School Organisation Programme (SOP) was shown as red/amber. SOP is shown as red/amber because, whilst the design of Eastern High Project has progressed to Planning Committee, the high value construction contract has not yet been signed off. This is anticipated to be completed on time and by the end of the year. At this point the risk rating of the Project will be reduced when there is certainty of delivery of this large scale project. Additional experienced staffing has been secured to strengthen capacity in the SOP Team.

With regards to the discussion of schools causing concern, I enclose a copy of the Estyn Monitoring Report for Eastern High dated June 2015, which identifies the improvements that have been made, and what more needs to be done.



## Provisional School Results

With regard to the Committee's concerns about performance, specifically in mathematics, please find attached a report that went to the Education Development Board on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 which outlines the appropriate measures that are being taken to bring about significant improvements in results in mathematics.

You have requested details of action being implemented to address the inconsistencies in teacher assessments. The Consortium is commissioned to address the consistencies in teacher assessment and have taken the following actions:-

In 2014 – 15 there have been some key developments that have begun to improve the standardisation, moderation and verification processes across the Central South Consortium region, namely:

- Many headteachers and senior leaders attended the information sharing sessions for the dissemination of the CSC booklet "Securing Consistency in Teacher Assessment. These sessions provided further training and guidance to support a consistent approach to standardisation and moderation of teacher assessment within and between schools.
- Many clusters across the region provided dates for their moderation and had consortium officers to attend and monitor end of foundation phase and key stage 2/3 cluster moderation meetings in English, Welsh and mathematics.
- Clusters provided CSC with a clear audit trail of their standardisation and moderation processes.
- A 10% sample of schools across the region have had their teacher assessments verified by the consortium. This exercise exemplified some examples of good practice but also highlighted in some cases insufficient evidence as a key barrier to awarding accurate levels.

The Welsh Government commissioned a report on the external verification of Teacher Assessment, in the summer term of the last academic year. It is currently still in draft and will be submitted to WG at the Internal Partnership Board meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November. Once they have agreed it then copies can be distributed to all stakeholders.

Yours sincerely  
Yn gwyir



**Cllr /Y Cyng Sarah Merry**  
**Cabinet Member for Education/**  
**Yr Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg**  
**Member for Cathays /**  
**Aelod Dros Cathays**

**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD  
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM32215

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 25th November 2015

Councillor Richard Cook  
Cardiff Council  
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Annwyl / Dear Richard

**Children & Young People Committee September Letter**

Thank you for your letter dated 18 September outlining the discussions held and recommendations made by the committee.

In relation to the recommendations, I can confirm that the first two recommendations in relation to Child, Health and Disability (CHAD) are accepted. The change manager Eve Williams was present at the committee and will continue working on the CHAD development plan which incorporates your recommendations.

I can confirm that officers are in conversation with the Welsh Government in respect of funding for Families First post 2017. I have copied in the Operational Manager Rachel Jones in to this letter who will keep me updated of any developments or challenges.

I can also confirm that future performance reports will include the relevant performance indicators published by the Welsh Data Unit, though I must emphasise that these indicators are likely to change in light of the Social services and Wellbeing Act (2014).

The £950,000 contingency budget was allocated as part of the Council's 2015/16 Budget. It was set aside to reflect the potential for additional costs to be incurred in supporting looked after children in external residential and fostering placements. At month 4 the projected expenditure was above budget in this area and therefore the drawdown of the contingency sum was put forward for approval. The allocation of the contingency budget was therefore in line with the purpose of the budget as approved by Council in February 2015 and was approved by Cabinet as part of the Month 4 Monitoring Report. If the monitoring

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position in this area were to improve during the year then an adjustment to the contingency allocation can be made, however at this stage there is no indication that this will be the case.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

*Susan J. Lent.*

**Councillor / Cynghorydd Sue Lent**  
**Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd**  
**Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families**  
**Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynyddoedd Cynnar, Plant a Theuluoedd**