

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 APRIL 2016

Present: Councillor Richard Cook (Chairperson), Councillors Boyle, Chaundy, Gordon, Joyce, Murphy and Dianne Rees

Also: Co-opted Members: Mrs P Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative), Carol Cobert (Church in Wales representative) and Mrs Hayley Smith (Parent Governor Representative)

### 82 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Derrick Morgan and Lynda Thorne.

### 83 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 84 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 January 2016, 16 February 2016 and 15 March 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

### 85 : EDUCATION DELIVERY PLAN 2016-2018 & CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM BUSINESS PLAN 2016-2017

The Chairperson welcomed Angela Kent Head of Achievement and Inclusion, Nick Batchelar Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Councillor Sarah Merry Cabinet Member for Education, Robert Hopkins Head of School Improvement Central South Consortium and Neil Hardee Head of Performance Resources and Services to the meeting.

Nick Batchelar presented the Directorate Delivery Plan for Education to the Committee.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked to be directed to the page in the delivery plan that addresses the catchment area issues affecting many schools in Cardiff. Officers advised that page 33 of the Plan contained this information, however Members considered that there was not enough information on this issue detailed.
- Members made reference to the Directorate Action 4.1 'Further develop working relationships with health, children's services and other partners to promote a single approach to assessment, planning and provision'; and asked what this would mean in practice and if budgets would be pooled. Officers stated that this was included as a corporate commitment, it was early days, the consultation period had recently finished and they were exploring options. With regards to pooling budgets, officers stated that they would be having discussions with the partners, however this would not be ruled out; officers

were looking at collaboration between schools and between local authorities and other stakeholders as there were significant challenges and financial pressures on the Additional Learning Needs area of provisions.

- Members made reference to priority 4 – ‘Improve the availability of appropriate school places across the city’ and noted that in this section of the plan, only primary schools were referenced. Officers explained that projected numbers are known and that there are sufficient places in Secondary schools at the current time therefore the focus was on Primary School places as this was where the pressures were being felt.
- Members discussed the Youth Service and where it fitted with Education. Officers stated that there would be tighter alignment going forward, it was noted that budgets were reducing but more efficient and effective working was in place with the new structures that were in place; there would be a focus on pupil outcomes and their impact on wellbeing and accredited attainment. Officers made reference to a grant from the European Social Fund which would enable more resource to be targeted towards joining up schools and the youth service and providing wider support. It was added that provision needed to be appropriate and balanced, there needed to be recreational aspects to it rather than providing provision that prolonged the school day.
- Members expressed concern regarding the transition between school and employment and training, noting that due to reduction in budgets, not as much support could be offered as was previously.
- Members noted the reference made to the European Social Fund and asked what would happen if the United Kingdom left the European Union following the referendum. It was considered that this was a question to be taken back to the Leader.
- Members were disappointed that the plan did not contain any performance measures or timescales. Officers understood these frustrations and explained that it was a draft plan that would be completed, finalised and brought back to committee.
- With reference to the appointment of a Head teacher at a secondary school in the west of the City, Members asked for timescales for this process. Officers advised that the application process had finished and that the appointments process with the temporary Governing Body would begin within the next week.
- Members asked when the ‘Planning for the Future’ section of the Plan would be finished and were advised that all actions in the plan would be populated by the end of the month.
- Members referred to the ‘Context, Opportunities and Challenges’ section within the plan, noted that they were all bullet points and asked if these would be expanded upon. Officers explained that they are broad headings and that there would be a range of actions below them.
- Members asked for clarification on what was meant by rationalisation of centrally held school budgets. Officers explained that there is centrally held

budget for schools for projects such as Wi-Fi or energy schemes, whereby efficiencies could be made by borrowing and putting such schemes into schools across the board rather than doing so on a piece meal basis; therefore, there were retained budgets for such projects.

Robert Hopkins presented the Directorate Delivery Plan for the Consortia to the Committee. Members were advised that the priorities for the next year were based on an analysis of the self-evaluation process.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members noted that certain operational aspects would be taken from the Council to the Consortia and asked for clarification on what these would be. Members were advised that the Directors of 5 local authorities meet regularly and take decisions of where there is scope to collaborate; decisions had been taken on collaboration on 14/19 services; HR/Advice services (particularly for under performing schools), Governor training and data production.
- Members referred to Improvement Priority One, objective 1.1 and particularly to 'Increase the supply of secondary mathematics teachers in the region through a dedicated recruitment drive' and asked for an update on this. Members were advised that this was a commitment, mathematics had been problematic so it was a current issue to address; giving it a higher profile and making recruitment more attractive to the region. There had been a recent recruitment event which had promoted leadership and working in the area and over 100 people had attended including head teachers who spoke about their experiences of working in the region.
- Members discussed immersion and asked if there was any progress on the establishment of an immersion centre for people with EAL needs. Officers noted that this had been a debate that had been ongoing for many years, and that evidence had showed that immersion into the classroom environment had been most beneficial. Members discussed Welsh Language immersion EMTAS and considered that they needed more information on the respective budgets.
- Members were concerned with some wards being over capacity with children with EAL needs and that Cardiff had not yet started receiving the Syrian refugee families.

The Chairperson thanked Robert Hopkins for this contribution to the Committee and wished him well on his retirement.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member, representatives from the Consortia and officers for attending the meeting, giving their presentations and statements and for answering Members questions.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes on the Committee's behalf to the Cabinet Member to convey their comments and observations.

86 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES ELEMENT OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES  
DELIVERY PLAN 2016 -18

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent Cabinet Member Early Years, Children and Families, Tony Young Director Social Services and Irfan Alam Assistant Director Children's Services to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Director of Social Services to introduce the Directorate Delivery Plan. Members were advised that the plan outlined Core business, key outcomes, aspirations and achievements and that performance had improved significantly in the directorate in the last year.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked for clarification on the number of Agency staff that worked in the directorate; officers advised that the number had been eroded on yearly basis but it wasn't specifically referenced in the plan; Officers agreed to provide the figures to Members.
- Members made reference to vacancy levels and the employee pool and asked how this would work in practice. Officers explained that vacancies would be filled and the recruitment process would be continued, posts would be created and filled from the pool; there would be seven grade 7 social workers in the pool to service the whole Children's Services Directorate; they would be based in the Intake and Assessment team initially as the turnover of work is greater, then when they are allocated caseloads they can transfer to the relevant section with that case load making it less disruptive for the service user.
- Members noted that the current turnover was noted in the report as being zero, it was noted this was an error and the correct figure would be relayed to Members.
- Members discussed the time taken for schools to refer children to social services and asked if this would be addressed in the delivery plan. Officers considered that the referral process was timely and that there were prescribed timescales to adhere to, however sometimes a school may consider a referral to be urgent when in fact it isn't so there could be misconceived delays. It was added that going forward officers would have to work with partners to understand the processes, and working with MASH and JAF would help; the relationship with schools would need to be reengineered to become more of a partnership approach.
- Members discussed the Family First Strategy and reiterated previous concerns about management and leadership arrangements when transferred from the community to Children's Services. Officers explained that they were not planning to make any changes, the strategy was highly prescribed and the status quo would remain. It was added that the strategy would be aligned with the Early Help Strategy. Officers welcomed the transfer to Children's services and explained that they would work with partners and third sector organisations to ensure that the early help offer was as good as could be. It was added that information would be shared with Committee in an open and transparent way in order that officers are held to account.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member, representatives from the Consortia and officers for attending the meeting, giving their presentations and statements and for answering Members questions.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes on the Committee's behalf to the Cabinet Member to convey their comments and observations.

#### 87 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as being Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 2.30pm. It was also noted that there would be a call in meeting on the same day starting at 11.00am.