

scrutiny



**A Report of:
Children & Young People Scrutiny
Committee**

Annual Report 2015 – 2016

May 2016



The City and County of Cardiff Council

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP



Councillor Richard Cook
(Chairperson)



Councillor Paul Chaundy



Councillor Derrick Morgan



Councillor Iona Gordon



Councillor Dianne Rees



Councillor Jim Murphy



Councillor Jo Boyle



Councillor Heather Joyce



Councillor Lynda Thorne

Co-opted Members:



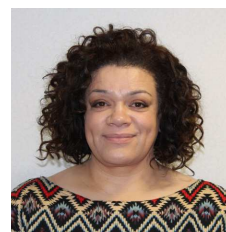
Mrs Patricia Arlotte
Roman Catholic
Representative



Carol Cobert
Church in Wales
Representative



Vacant
Parent Governor
Representative



Mrs Hayley Smith
Parent Governor
Representative

Ms Catrin Lewis (Parent Governor Representative) resigned in February 2016

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I'm pleased to present the Committee's Annual Report for 2015/16. Firstly I'd like to thank the members of the committee, especially the co-opted members, for their hard work and knowledge of the issues which have made my job much easier. I'd also like to thank Scrutiny officers for their usual professional support and all witnesses who have spoken to the committee, especially those who have given up their free time to share with us their expertise in Task and Finish inquiries.

This year the committee continued to address the concerns of Estyn in their monitoring visit of February 2014, and were pleased with the comments of Estyn in their letter after the third and final monitoring visit in January 2016:

"The children and young people scrutiny committee is increasingly effective. The committee has agreed a framework to provide its members with structured development and training opportunities. This training has helped scrutiny members to improve their understanding of the issues relating to the achievement and attainment of children and young people, and how to interpret the data sets used by education officers and schools to track outcomes.

The committee has put in place a number of actions to better manage its range of duties and the size of its agenda. These include a programme of pre-meetings and briefings, as well as monitoring panels which look specifically at budget and performance reports. These pre-meetings and panels enable the members to identify clear lines of inquiry for follow-up at committee meetings. These changes have helped the scrutiny committee become more focused.

The Care & Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) also inspected Children's Services in January 2016 and commented of the committee:

"Scrutiny arrangements had been strengthened."

Apart from the monthly meetings, we have carried out a Task and Finish inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation and continued our inquiry into schools that are not performing as well as they could do, visiting three schools. The committee continues to challenge both the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service and the Education department in order to support schools and improve educational standards which are still not as high as they should be.

The Children & Young Peoples scrutiny committee is responsible for scrutinising departments whose expenditure is approximately 53% of the Council's net budget of £520M, given the scale of that task it may perhaps be time to review the areas of scrutiny that the five scrutiny committees are responsible for.



Councillor Richard Cook

Chairperson of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

June 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee plays an important role in assessing service performance and informing service and policy development across a range of Council services, including all aspects of Education, Social Care for Children, Children's Play and the Youth Service.

This report presents the Committee's main activities during 2015-16 and uses where ever possible the National Welsh Characteristics of Good Scrutiny to ensure that there are:

- Better outcomes - Democratic accountability drives improvement in public service.
- Better decisions - Democratic decision making is accountable, inclusive and robust.
- Better engagement – The public is engaged in democratic debate about current and future delivery of public services.

Between May 2015 and April 2016 the Committee Members have undertaken training in performance information and budgeting, and visited front line services. The Committee has scrutinised a wide range of topics contributing to the development and improvement of services for children and young people, a list of which is set out below under the following headings:

- **Inquiries** – Where the Committee has undertaken an examination of a topic over a period of time, resulting in a formal report to the Cabinet. The Committee has also undertaken a number of short one day investigations.
- **Policy Development** – Where the Committee has contributed to the Council's policy development processes by considering draft policy documents.
- **Pre-decision** - Where the Committee has evaluated and commented on policy proposals before they go to the Cabinet, giving the Cabinet the opportunity to know Scrutiny Members' views prior to making their decision.

- **Monitoring** - Where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's performance and progress in implementing actions previously agreed. The Committee has also set up two Monitoring Panels, one for Budget monitoring and the other for Performance monitoring
- **Call-In** - Where a Member has invoked the Call-in procedure under the Council's constitution, to review a Cabinet decision prior to its implementation.

Inquiries

- ❖ The Effectiveness of School Governors
- ❖ Child Sexual Exploitation
- ❖ Schools Causing Concern
- ❖ Procurement of external fostering service
- ❖ Cost of accommodating Looked After Children

Committee Panels

- ❖ Budget Monitoring
- ❖ Performance Monitoring

Policy Development

- ❖ Regional Adoption Services
- ❖ Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act
- ❖ Youth Guarantee
- ❖ Prevent Strategy
- ❖ Long-term Plan for Education (Cardiff 2020)
- ❖ Scrutiny of Central South Education Consortium

Pre-decision Scrutiny

- ❖ 2015-16 Budget Proposals
- ❖ Corporate Parenting Strategy
- ❖ Play Strategy
- ❖ Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy

Performance Monitoring

- ❖ ESTYN Inspection monitoring
- ❖ Children's Services – Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- ❖ Education and Lifelong Learning – Schools Annual Report 2014/15 and quarterly performance reports
- ❖ CSSIW Evaluation on Social Care in Cardiff in 2013/14 (Jointly held with Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee)
- ❖ Central South Education Consortium – Annual Performance Report
- ❖ Integrated Family Support
- ❖ Corporate Parenting Annual Report
- ❖ Families First Annual Report

Member Briefings

- ❖ Social Services Managed Team
- ❖ School Organisation Planning Proposals
- ❖ Pool of Social Workers

Call-in

- ❖ Welsh Medium Schools Catchment Areas

Inspection Reports

- ❖ CSSIW – Inspection Report on Children's Services
- ❖ Estyn – Monitoring Visit Letter
- ❖ WAO – Corporate Assessment

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has held 12 full Committee meetings, and two joint meeting with Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee since May 2015. As a result of the consideration of over 41 reports covering policy development, pre-decision scrutiny, monitoring progress and service area performance, the Scrutiny Committee Chairperson sent 32 letters to the Cabinet and officers, which included requests for additional information, comments, and observations on items considered at the Committee Meetings.

Also as a result of these meetings the Committee agreed to write to the relevant Cabinet Member identifying 13 recommendations for the Cabinet and officers to consider. The Committee received timely responses from the Cabinet to all letters that requested a response. In addition officers have provided information where requested and agreed to amend future reports in response to the Committee's requests. Members of the Committee have also participated in a cross cutting Task and Finish Group inquiry along with Members from other Scrutiny Committees, namely a joint inquiry into the Community Infrastructure Levy.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO SCRUTINY – BETTER ENGAGEMENT

The Council’s five scrutiny committees regularly invite citizens and representatives of community and third sector organisations to provide evidence at committee meetings and Task & Finish inquiries. During 2015/16 the committee has received advice, comments and concerns from numerous people who have either been invited or requested attendance at Committee.

During the summer of 2015 the scrutiny chairs introduced arrangements for public questions from the City’s Third Sector Council (C3SC) around issues of interest to the C3SC. On this occasion C3SC did not identify any issues within the terms of reference of this Committee, but the Committee remains willing to receive questions from third sector bodies and citizens.

The Committee is committed to ensuring that citizens are involved in Governance and that the “voice” of local people and communities are heard as part of decision making and policy development. To this end the Committee has encouraged the participation of the public at numerous meetings, with representatives from the following external organisation participating in the Committee work:

Barnardos’	YMCA (SHOT)
Action for Children	South Wales Police
Grangetown Play Centre	C&V Health Board
Chair C&V LSCB	Probation Services
Safer Wales / Streetlife	Ely Play Centre
NSPCC	Youth Offending Service
Head Teachers	School Governors
Sexual Assault Resource Centre	Welsh Government
Public Health Wales	

Inspection and Assessment of the Committee's work – Better Decisions

The work of this Committee has been assessed by her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn), the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Corporate Assessment, during the last 12 months. The assessments have been undertaken through attendance as observers at Committee meetings, review of reports, minutes and letters, together with interviews with Councillor Richard Cook, the Committee Chairman and Officers.

The aim of each of the assessments was to review and acknowledge the Committee's key role in holding the Executive to account, aiding in the pre-decision scrutiny of policy development helping challenge and monitor the performance of services provided for Children and Young People in Cardiff.

During the past year all three Inspectorates have provided reports on Cardiff Council, which included an assessment of the work of Scrutiny.

WAO - Governance – *“The Council's scrutiny function is improving. Actions from scrutiny meetings are issued to relevant Cabinet Members by the Scrutiny Committee Chair, and our review found that Cabinet Members respond promptly”.*

Estyn – Improve the Scrutiny of local authority education services and partnership working – *“The authority has made satisfactory progress in addressing this recommendation.*

The authority has responded well to this recommendation in a timely and appropriate manner. The Council has made changes to the scrutiny committee structure and responsibilities. There are now five scrutiny committees, and each is responsible for the scrutiny of partnership work and its impact, in its respective work programme. The children and young people scrutiny committee's work programme appropriately includes arrangements for the scrutiny of all education

services for children and young people. This includes services delivered through community settings and through schools.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is increasingly effective. The Committee has agreed a framework to provide its members with structured development and training opportunities. This training has helped scrutiny members to improve their understanding of the issues relating to the achievements and attainment of Children and Young People, and how to interpret the data sets used by education officers and schools to track outcomes. The Committee has put in place a number of actions to better manage its range of duties and the size of its agenda. These include a programme of pre-meetings and briefings, as well as monitoring panels enabling members to identify clear lines of inquiry for follow-up at committee meetings. These changes have helped the scrutiny committee become more focused.

The Committee also makes good use of task and finish groups to follow up identified areas in greater detail and to produce reports for the wider scrutiny Committee. The task and finish groups are working well. Their findings have, for example, led to improvements in the way the local authority appoints its school governors and matches governors' skill sets to the needs of a governing body. Following each scrutiny meeting, the chair writes to the cabinet member setting out findings and recommendations from the meeting, and these are generally clear and challenging. For example, following the task and finish group, which met with head teachers from schools categorised as red, the chair of scrutiny's letter included challenges and recommendations to the education department and the regional consortium. However, the letter does not include any challenges or recommendations to the schools they scrutinised".

CSSIW – Theme 1 - Providing Direction – *“Scrutiny arrangements had been strengthened. Considerable investment in promoting improvement in Children’s Services using expert advice to support better practice and strengthen scrutiny arrangements”.*

Committee Member Development – Better Decisions

Scrutiny is a Member-led function whose success is closely linked to the capacity and capabilities of the Members who sit on Scrutiny Committees. The Scrutiny Team therefore worked closely with colleagues across the Council to provide a continuous range of opportunities for Members to build or refresh their Scrutiny skills, and to extend their knowledge and insight into a range of issues relevant to their Scrutiny role.

The Committee undertook a four-module programme of school performance and analysis training to further support the Council in improving the educational outcomes for its pupils. These outlined the various levels of accountability and performance reporting that underpins schools performance, with input from Scrutiny officers, corporate performance officers, managers from South Central Wales Consortium and the Council's Education Service. The Committee also holds Committee pre-meetings to discuss, analyse and understand the issues being considered, and where necessary asks for further clarification of information. From this, the Members established a number of lines of inquiry for the meeting.

Members of the Committee participated actively in briefings provided in the lead up to the Budget scrutiny meeting in February. The Members also agreed to set up a Budget Monitoring Panel and a Performance Monitoring Panel. These were developed to better focus the work of the Members on monitoring Directorate performance, and to reduce the number of items considered at Committee meetings. Members received briefings and guidance on various aspects of expenditure and performance.

Highlights from the Committee's work during 2015/16

This section of the Annual Report presents highlights of the Committee's activities during 2015-16. The report identifies what the scrutiny committee was trying to achieve in each piece of scrutiny, and what it actually achieved.

Task & Finish Group Inquiries – Better outcomes

A key part of the Committee's work is identification and investigate of a key area of concern, to enable better outcomes for public services and drive improvement in service provision. These are often areas which are not being actively worked on by a Directorate, or which are cross cutting in nature, involving several Directorate and partner organisations. The outputs from these investigations are reported back to the Cabinet Member for consideration, and – where appropriate – the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

The Appointment and Effectiveness of Local Authority School Governors

The Committee agreed to undertake a phased inquiry into Local Authority School Governors (LASG). The first phase of the inquiry was held in 2014 /15 to gain an understanding of the role of school governors; assess the level of local authority governor vacancies across Cardiff's schools. The key issue that the Members anticipated achieving was identify ways in which the skill base of local authority governors could be improved, the process by which local authority governors are appointed be improved and the number of local authority governors vacancies reduced.

The Members received and reviewed evidence from key professionals and supporting organisations and agreed a report. The Members recommended that the Council delegate its powers of LEA Governor Appointment to a cross party Member Panel. The Director of Education, Monitoring Officer and a representative

from the Cardiff Governors Association would act as advisors to the Panel, the Panel also should ensure that appointees had the appropriate skills for the Governing Body.

The Cabinet Member subsequently confirmed support for these proposals and recommended to amend the Constitution at the council meeting on 29 January 2015 and was implemented at the beginning of 2015/16. The Committee was pleased to see that its recommendations were fully implemented.

The second phase of the inquiry was held during June and July 2015. The expected result from this phase was the identification of key issues to improve the effectiveness of Governing Bodies. The Members received background information in respect of the support and training of school Governing Bodies, as well as the findings of a survey of 599 Governors.

The Task & Finish group and the Committee agreed ten specific recommendations for the Cabinet to consider, which covered: the Effectiveness of the Governing Body, the Support for School Governing Bodies; and the Training of Governors, which if all implemented would over time improve the effectiveness of Cardiff Schools' Governing Bodies.

The Cabinet Member responded to the inquiries recommendations in a detailed letter dated October 2015.

In the letter the Cabinet Member agreed to all the recommendations except for "That the Cabinet explores whether there would be benefits from the Governors Support Services being transferred fully to the Central South Consortium". The Committee was pleased to learn that the Inquiry's recommendations were also reviewed during the recent Estyn Inspection, which commented: "the task and finish groups are working well. Their findings have, for example, led to improvements in the way the local authority appoints its school governors and matches governors' skill sets to the needs of a governing body".

Schools Causing Concern

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee was concerned at the number of schools classified by Estyn as “causing concern”. The Members agreed to review the improvement action for a number of schools together with the support and advice provided by the Council and Consortium. Following the completion of these meetings and visits the Members identified a number of issues which they captured in a report approved by Committee in November 2015. The report included 14 recommendations for the Cabinet Member and Consortium to consider. These covered the school improvement process; Governing Bodies and Governors’ involvement in school improvement; and school support categorisation.

The Committee was pleased to receive the Cabinet Member’s answer to the inquiry’s findings and recommendations in January 2016. She provided a full response to the issues raised in the first phase of the inquiry, and explained the work which was now being undertaken to improve the services and support for these specific schools.

The Members agreed to refocus the second phase of the inquiry to visit schools which had experienced unexpected recent dips in pupil performance. The Members were particularly interested to find out what had cause the dip in performance, what actions had been put in place and what support and advice the schools had received. The Members have already visited a number of schools, but this inquiry is still ongoing. It plans to report back to Committee in the summer.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The Committee agreed to undertake a Task & Finish Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Cardiff, as concerns had been raised during last year’s inquiry into Trafficking. The Director of Social Services also highlighted it as an issue of concern. The Members organised the inquiry to assess the robustness of the CSE strategy, the preventative measures in place and the level of the Council’s and partner organisations response to incidents of CSE. It agreed to explore

partnership working and resource allocation associated with managing CSE in Cardiff. Members were also interested in assessing the scale of CSE in some communities.

On 7 January 2016, the Director of Social Services asked the CSE Task Group to review the draft Cardiff CSE Strategy, which was due to be considered by the Cabinet on 10 March 2016. The Task Group reviewed the draft Strategy and Action Plan made a number of observations and recommendations for consideration by the Directorate prior to the implementation of the Strategy, which were reported to Committee and sent to the Cabinet Member.

The Committee were pleased to receive a letter clarifying a number of points that the Committee identified, and outlining the approach being taken by partners in Cardiff, in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, to make sure that the Council has a coherent starting point from which to strengthen prevention and intervention in relation to CSE in Cardiff.

The Task Group has continue its investigations into CSE in Cardiff and has heard from third sector organisations, the Police, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, Probation, Youth Offending Service, Education, Welsh Government and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The Members have also considered the All Wales Protocol and best practice examples from other Local Authorities.

The Task Group is expected to report its findings to the Committee's May meeting

Policy Development & Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Better Decisions

A key part of the Committee's work is the review and assessment of effectiveness of the Council's policies which will impact of the lives of Children & Young People in Cardiff. The Committee always ensures that its work programme enables the scrutiny of any policy development and the pre-decision of any Cabinet report seeking approval for a strategy or policy affecting Children & Young People.

The Committee has during the past year undertaken pre-decision scrutiny of the following key policies:

National & Regional Adoption Services

The Committee had previously reviewed the establishment of a National and Regional Adoption Service in 2014/15. It wished to receive a further update on the implementation of the service, further reviewing the structure, the role of the central team, governance arrangements and performance measures to ensure that they were fit for purpose. This was arranged at Committee's October 2015 meeting.

The Committee was pleased with the progress being made by the National Adoption Services in particular the Governance and Operation. Members also welcomed the additional performance data as well as the positive picture it was now showing.

The Members recommended that that the scrutiny of the National and Regional Adoption Service should continue, to enable the Committee to be assured that the services are providing an appropriate service for Cardiff's Looked After Children.

Prevent Strategy

The Committee agreed to review how the Government's Prevent Strategy is being implemented in Cardiff. The Committee was interested to hear how various partners were working together and how the Strategy was being developed to work in Cardiff.

The Committee was informed that Welsh Government was still developing an updated guidance and self assessment tool. Members considered the training and awareness raising to be of key importance, and requested that specific training must be developed for Councillors. In addition Members felt that clearer links needed to be made with Council directorates.

The Committee subsequently received a very positive response from the Prevent Coordinator, which responded to all the points raised by the Members, agreed to organise Training for Members, and to ensure that the strategy clearly identifies links with all Council Directorates.

Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014

The Committee requested a series of reports on the progress being made to ensure the Council is prepared to implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Committee initially considered the Regional Implementation Plan, which had been submitted to Welsh Government on 16 October 2015. Members noted that the Plan reflects the nine work streams being delivered through the Sustainable Social Services Programme and includes a risk assessment of the tasks required to implement the Act. The Members also reviewed the governance structure for this Programme, which included regional task and finish groups for each work stream and lead co-ordinating officers. The Committee requested further reports

giving more detail on the implementation on the areas of the Act that will introduce the greatest change, namely:

- Information, Advice and Assistance Service
- Financial Assessment and Charging
- Planning and promoting Preventative Services
- Eligibility/Assessment of Need
- Performance Measures
- Advocacy.

The Members are now receiving a programme series of briefing papers covering each of the above elements. Members are providing feedback on each work stream so that the regional task & finish groups and lead co-ordinating officers can take into considerations the comments, concerns and recommendations of the Committee.

2016-17 Budget Proposals

The Council's Constitution allows for Scrutiny Committees to consider the draft Cabinet budget proposals prior to their consideration by the Cabinet and Full Council. The Committee considered the Council's draft Corporate Plan and draft budgetary proposals for 2016 -17, including their detailed savings proposals and Capital Programme at its meeting in February 2016. It reviewed the draft Corporate Plan and budget savings proposals, and tested their impact on the outcomes for Children and Young People.

The Committee expressed concern around the budget consultation exercise undertaken during December 2015, as Members considered that the weight given in the formulation of the budget to such a small sample was overstated. The Members also expressed concern around the achievability of a number of budget savings proposals. In particular Members were concerned that the savings in respect of tuition of children who are not educated in school could have a

detrimental impact on their educational outcomes. The Members also expressed concern that the Play Service savings proposals did not allow for the continuity of the service during the transfer of facilities.

The Committee's letter was considered by Cabinet and Council during their deliberations on the proposals. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance also responded to the letter providing a full explanation on the specific budget savings points raised by the Committee and also provided assurance that the review of the budget consultation would include the comments made by the Committee.

Performance Monitoring – Better outcomes

The Committee has a clearly defined role in the Council's improvement and governance arrangements, and its work programme includes a high level of the monitoring and review of Directorate performance, resource management, target setting and improvement management.

This year the Committee reviewed the level of Member involvement in monitoring performance and budget, particularly at Committee. The Committee agreed to set up a Budget Monitoring Panel and a Performance Monitoring Panel to determine whether this would free up some time at Committee and better focus the Members' analysis of information through an ongoing informal panel that reported back to the Full Committee.

Budget Monitoring Panel

The Committee agreed to create a Budget Monitoring Panel to more effectively investigate each Directorate's progress in achieving the Council's agreed savings proposals, and in managing any potential expenditure overspends during the year.

The Panel agreed a programme of four meetings to review the Cabinet Budget Monitoring reports as and when they are published. The Panel has met three times this year and has reviewed the Month 4, 6 and 9 Cabinet budget monitoring reports. The outcome of each panel meeting has been reported to Committee and appropriate letters sent to Directors seeking clarification on savings programme, details of funding calculations and a commitment to undertake a detailed investigation.

All requests for information have been responded to promptly and reported to Members at the next Panel meeting.

Performance Monitoring Panel

The Committee agreed to create a Performance Monitoring Panel to more deeply investigate each Directorate's progress against the key performance indicators.

The Panel has undertaken its work during the pre-meeting before Committee as it was subsequently felt that the Corporate Performance Reports were better reviewed at a public meeting.

The three pre-meetings already held have enabled the Members to understand in more detail the narrative behind many of the indicators, and Members have requested clarification on particular indicators, background information and a commitment to undertake more detailed investigation into the reasons for variations in performance.

The pre-meeting format has worked well and it is anticipated that this format will continue in the future.

Quarterly Performance Reports – Children's Services

During 2015/16 the Committee noted generally improving performance across many indicators; however they expressed their concern at a few indicators showing reduction in performance. The Committee has reviewed each quarterly corporate performance report together with a catalogue of local indicators which the Members have requested to regularly monitor.

The Committee has reviewed all of the local performance indicator reports in detail, following which the Committee has always written expressing their concern about areas where performance was either slowly reducing or had experienced a sudden dip in Performance, Members have also written passing on their appreciation of the work officers had made in those areas where performance has improved.

Performance Reports – Education and Lifelong Learning

The Committee continued its new approach to the scrutiny of educational performance by scheduling throughout the year examination of particular aspects of performance, in addition to an overview of Annual Performance in January. This approach has, however, been seen to have created duplication in reporting, and as such will be reviewed during the development of next year's work programme.

The performance monitoring reports enable Committee to review, assess and challenge the implementation of all actions and thereby the delivery of high quality education and improved outcomes for children and young people in Cardiff's Schools.

The Committee has regularly written to the Cabinet Member seeking clarification on actions and recommended improvements in performance.

Central South Consortium – Annual Performance Report

The Committee considered the Consortium's draft business plan and reviewed the agreed business plan as part of its consideration of the Education Business Plan. The Committee's key task was to ensure that the two business plans fitted together in ensuring the improvement of outcomes of Cardiff's pupils.

The Committee also reviewed the monitoring and assessment of the work of the Consortium in Cardiff, and agreed to continue to do this at three meetings a year. The Members also discussed how best the five participating local authority's Scrutiny Committees could scrutinise the strategic direction and output of the Consortium, and agreed initially to enable the Chairpersons of all five scrutiny committees to meet to undertake a more strategic overview.

The Committee at its Meeting in March queried the Director of Education and the Consortium as to whether the two Business plans did complement each

other in driving forward improvements in outcome for Cardiff's pupils. The Members were reassured to receive confirmation that both Business plans did ensure Cardiff's pupil outcomes would improve during the year.

ESTYN Inspection Report

An ESTYN inspection of educational services in Cardiff took place in the summer of 2011, to help form a judgment on the local education authority's performance. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was of the opinion that the local authority was in need of significant improvement. An additional follow up monitoring visit was undertaken in February 2014, which recognised that progress had been made, but that there was still more that the local authority needed to do.

The Committee continued to monitor the service area's progress in improving educational attainment, and received regular briefings and progress reports throughout the year.

The Committee continued to work to address its actions designed to address the Estyn recommendations directed to the scrutiny committee:

- Ensure that the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee receive clear, accurate and up to date information, together with improved quality analysis in all school performance reports;
- Develop and agree a clear protocol on the roles and responsibilities of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Cardiff Partnership Board Scrutiny Panel in respect of the performance of education services;
- Develop and deliver a formal programme of training, covering education performance, analysis, and assessment, for Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Members; and
- Establish a programme to scrutinise the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate's delivery of its Monitoring Revisit Action Plan which addresses

Estyn's recommendations and which will improve educational performance in Cardiff schools.

The final Estyn inspection was undertaken in January 2016, which assessed the Council's progress against all six recommendations. The outcome of the assessment was that the Council had made satisfactory progress and was removed from Estyn monitoring.

In respect of the recommendations directed at the Scrutiny Committee, the inspection letter stated that "The children and young people scrutiny committee's work programme appropriately includes arrangements for the scrutiny of all education services for children and young people. This includes services delivered through community settings and through schools. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is increasingly effective. The Committee has agreed a framework to provide its members with structured development and training opportunities. This training has helped scrutiny members to improve their understanding of the issues relating to the achievements and attainment of Children and Young People, and how to interpret the data sets used by education officers and schools to track outcomes".

CSSIW Evaluation on Social Care in Cardiff in 2014/15 (Joint CYP & CASSC Scrutiny)

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) Performance Evaluation Report 2014-15 of the City of Cardiff Council Social Care Services provides their judgements on both Adult Services and Children's Services, and details their findings on the key strengths as well as areas for development and improvement.

The report takes into account the Director of Social Services Annual Report 2014-15, as well as the views of other auditors, and draws on inspection work undertaken during the year. It also provides a summary of the overall review and evaluation of performance for 2014- 2015. The main messages in the summary are:

- The Director's report presents a clear picture of the challenges and areas of progress made, as well as clearer aims for improvement;
- Performance indicators show some key areas requiring improvement although the Council is moving in the right direction;
- Improvements are required in reducing the number of people waiting for Hospital discharge, and Children's intake and assessment needs continued improvement;
- Planned appointments of assistant directors should enable the department to:
 - Take up the strategic challenge it faces;
 - Promote integrated services with Health and the Vale of Glamorgan;
 - Manage new models of care;
 - Promote service users well being in ever increasing financial restraint.
- There is strong corporate support for the delivery of social services;
- Elected Members are briefed and understand the implications of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act;
- There is good corporate understanding of the challenges facing the department, and the difficulties it faces in its efforts to provide services to the most vulnerable.

Following consideration of the Inspection report The Joint Committee wrote to the Cabinet Member setting out the following comments and concerns that related to Children's Services:

- ***to prepare an action plan to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the CSSIW report;***
- ***That the Director of Social Services to provide a written briefing on our readiness to implement the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 to our January 2016 committee meetings, with progress reports on each work stream to come each month to subsequent committee meetings;***
- ***Be informed about how the Directorate proposes to monitor performance in the critical area of Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children and to be informed how this will be reported;***
- ***Provide Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members with sight of the review into recruitment of Personal Advisors;***
- ***Provide reassurance regarding the clarity of the various responsibilities and roles for early intervention and prevention services.***

Committee Briefing Reports – Better outcomes

The Committee agreed to receive briefing papers outside the normal Committee agenda so that they could be more effectively reviewed. The Committee agreed to receive these briefings as and when they were available.

Subjects covered included:

- Social worker vacancies and the pool of social workers
- Budget scrutiny
- Schools organisation plans.

The outcome from the Members' review of the briefings has been reported to Committee and appropriate letters sent to Directors. All requests for information have been responded to promptly and reported to Members.

CALL-IN of Welsh Cabinet Decision 15/CAB/84 Medium Schools Catchment Areas – Better Decisions

The Council's Call-In Procedure provides that any non-Executive Member may request to call-in a decision of which notice has been given in writing to the Operational Manager (Scrutiny Services). The Committee received a request for a call in on Cabinet Decision CAB/15/84 on Welsh Medium Schools Catchment Areas. **The Call-in was held on 17 May and the outcome of the meetings was to :**

Suggested Items for 2016/17 Work Programme

The Committee receives regular work programme updates at which Members have the opportunity to consider items suggested by members of the public, young people, organisations, Council Members and other Scrutiny Committees, for inclusion on the work programme. Committee Members can also suggest any new issues which may be of interest to the Committee.

The Committee will be starting the development of its work programme in June 2016. It has recommended that the following issues could be prioritised for scrutiny:

- Schools Causing Concern
- Education Long term Strategy
- Update on Youth Guarantee
- Cardiff Commitment to Youth Engagement and Progression
- Appointment of School Governors
- Consortium performance
- Merger of Glyn Derw and Michaelston High Schools
- Social Services Wellbeing Wales Act
- Regional Adoption Service
- Play Service.

The Council is responsible for co-ordinating the production of the main strategies and plans covering service development and provision across a range of services and agencies. The Committee's future work programme could include:

- Education long term strategy
- Children's Services Improvement Plan
- Corporate Plan and Budget
- Integrated Family Support Team.

The Committee has undertaken a number of Task Group inquiries during the year and will be identifying further issues for consideration during June/July 2016.

It is suggested that the Committee continues to receive the regular progress and performance reports on:

- Children's Services performance
- School performance
- Budget proposals and monitoring.