

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 JUNE 2016

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

1 : CHAIRPERSON

It was noted that at the Annual meeting of Council held on 26 May 2016, Councillor Richard Cook was appointed as Chairperson of this Committee.

2 : APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was noted that at the Annual meeting of Council held on 26 May 2016, that the following would comprise the Committee membership:

Councillor Richard Cook (Chairperson);
Councillors Boyle, Chaundy, Gordon, Govier, Derrick Morgan, Murphy, Rees and Thorne.

Mrs P Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative); Mrs Hailey Smith + Vacant (Parent Governor representatives).& Carol Cobert (Church in Wales representative).

It was noted that at the Annual meeting of Council held on 26 May 2016, that the following would comprise the Committee's Terms of Reference.

Terms of Reference

- To scrutinise, measure and actively promote improvement in the Council's performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of children and young people, including:
 - School Improvement
 - Schools Organisation
 - School Support Services
 - Education Welfare & Inclusion
 - Early Years Development
 - Special Educational needs
 - Governor Services
 - Children's Social Services
 - Children & Young Peoples Partnership
 - Youth Services and Justice
 - Play Services
- To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including the Welsh Government, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies, joint local government services and

quasi-departmental nongovernmental bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.

- To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures which may enhance Council performance and service delivery in this area.

RESOLVED: To agree the Terms of Reference & Appointment of Committee Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

3 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Patricia Arlotte and Hayley Smith.

4 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A Declaration of interest was received from Councillor Gordon for item 6 – this was a prejudicial interest as she is a Trustee of the Grassroots project and a trustee of South Riverside Community Development Centre.

5 : CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance and Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board and Tony Young Director of Children's Services to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which he stated that he became Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board last August and this has given the Cabinet another view of Corporate Safeguarding, which doesn't deal with operational issues but promotes looking after young people corporately; consisting of things such as DBS checks and implementing processes across directorates. He added that it is important to raise the profile of Corporate Safeguarding as it is the responsibility of all who work for the Council; alongside this there needed to be the appropriate funds for adequate training. This Annual Report is the first one produced and is in draft format.

The Chairperson invited the Director of Social Services to make a statement in which he welcomed the Cabinet Member taking on Chair of the Board; he stated that previously Corporate Safeguarding had been seen as a service responsibility, but it now has a raised profile and it is understood that it is not just the responsibility of social services and schools. With reference to the Annual Report, the Director reiterated that it was in draft format and needed work to be done with regard to formatting and references to Audit had to be removed. He stated that the key issue was that audit had identified that too few staff understood safeguarding, who the lead officers were etc. and that all staff needed to be brought up to speed on the issue; this would take time as it would need embedding but progress was being made. It was important that other Board members understand their roles; performance management frameworks had now been done and responsible officers and their roles had now been identified; training had been initiated which included a video being produced as a training tool for staff who did not work in the safeguarding environment; there was a Member protocol and the topic had already been taken to Standards and Ethics Committee and Full Council.

The Chairperson noted that things seemed to have moved on from the position stated in the report; he asked whether there were responsible officers from across all directorates and was advised that there were.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members considered it would be helpful to have the responsible officers named; officers advised that they were not named in the Annual Report as they are subject to change but that they are named in the Member protocol for reference. Members noted that the WAO had stated that roles needed to be clarified so they should be clearly stated; officers agreed that the report could include the post name rather than the post holder.
- Members sought clarification on the make of the Corporate Safeguarding Board and were advised that they were senior officers, all Operational Manager level or above.
- With reference to performance management, a question was asked about whether target dates had been met or were ongoing. The Director advised that the plan related to 2015/16 and that all but 3.3 had been completed. Members noted that it was classed as Amber and sought clarification on this; officers advised that when the plan was written in 15/16, colour coding made reference to the priority level not whether it was completed or not.
- Members discussed the reporting process of other boards such as the LSCB and how this feeds to the Corporate Safeguarding Board; officers advised that LSCB and LSAB were embedded boards with a National approach; the Corporate Safeguarding Board replaces an inadequate arrangement where no policies or structures were in place; this was the first year of the Board aiming to put this right and now it was time to deliver.
- A Member considered that there was not enough information in the annual report to satisfy point 4 of the WAO proposal regarding Scrutiny; the Director stated that the report was in draft format and needed more work; bringing the draft to scrutiny at this stage was a means of consulting; only having been established last year it had taken time to get the mechanics in place and that next year officers wanted Members to be assured that they are doing what they say they are doing; WAO have seen the responses and declared that they are satisfied and that foundations have been laid appropriately. The Cabinet Member added that good progress had been made in the past 8 months or so, working with Caerphilly to get faster DBS checks; training programmes being drawn up and improvements on referral processes being implemented.

Members considered that the report didn't evidence any of this progress and lacked information making it difficult to scrutinize. Officers agreed that it was a light report as it was starting point, and that next year it would be significantly evidenced.

- Members discussed training and asked how it would be delivered and monitored; the Director stated that induction was very important, the video that

had been produced was very helpful and that parts of it was it relevant to each directorate so that training reflects the nature of the work of the officers; there would be training and briefings for staff and also e-based learning packages; as part of performance reporting training would need to be signed off and the percentage of staff trained would be reported. The Chairperson noted that committee could ask at a future meeting how much training had been signed off.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member 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.

6 : CARDIFF YOUTH SERVICE

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Simon Morris (Achievement Leader - Engagement and Progression) and Angela Kent (Head of Achievement and Inclusion) to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation on Cardiff's Youth Offer.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked for an update on the Trelai service, officers advised that they have the building which belongs to Education and that services are run from there but there is no full time worker there.
- Members discussed post 16 non-school/work based learning and noted that Cardiff and Vale college have developed a post 16 apprenticeship programme.

Members asked whether post 16 education was an umbrella term for vocational training. The Cabinet Member stated that it wasn't prescriptive, there were a variety of options such as work based, volunteering and not always employment based; prior to April last year there was a benefit to people to have a young person at home that was not in work; this is no longer the case so there is a drive to get young people into education or work; routes into education/work based learning/volunteering are now being driven to develop skills.

- Members were grateful for the overview, and being aware of the reduced offer since the budget cuts considered that this was a positive position in light of the funding challenges.
- It was noted that collaborative working had been referred to, members asked if the youth offending teams were included in this. The Cabinet Member stated that they were on a number of levels and in a variety of ways.
- Members noted the figures for pre16 in the report were reported as being 592 and in Red category; and asked if there was a split in the City or whether this was across the City as a whole. The Cabinet Member stated that there were particular areas with higher vulnerability than others, this was recognised by

the resources put into the schools. Members asked if there was also a split in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. The Cabinet Member stated that pupils taking part in this scheme were primarily in the North of the City, middle class pupils; it was important to encourage all schools to be involved and put resources into these schools at the beginning of the programme cycle. Connectivity with Members was also important on a neighbourhood basis; the Cabinet Member said she would make an effort to develop this as a piece of work.

- Members considered that buildings were not being used to their full capacity and could be offered out to leisure/music activities. The Cabinet Member stated that 6 buildings are used for other activities although not fully used; there was scope for delivering youth services etc. from schools to utilise the building stock and provide an income. Members considered that any cost should be measured so as not to make it unaffordable.
- Members referred to the European Social Fund and asked if there was scope for additional funding. The Cabinet Member stated that the European Social Fund was broken down into 2 delivery elements, it was not a huge fund, but it brings in match funding of around £700k over 3 years; elements of it are for mental health, Cardiff youth Council prioritises mental health as the top priority.
- Members considered it would be useful to have presentations in advance of the meetings.
- Members asked about Youth Innovation Grants, its current budget and how long it can be sustained. Members were advised that there is a ring-fenced budget of £260k for each year of a 2 year period, committed to last year and this year. The Cabinet Member stated that they will have to look at ways of sustaining beyond the 2 years
- Members referred to VAP and the gap between supply and demand and asked if it realistically gets that many people into education and employment. The Cabinet Member stated that yes there was a gap, this was identified and it was important to look at the individuals, what service can be brought in to intervene with the young person and what other organisations can do to help; schools identify what level of interventions is needed.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member 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.

7 : LONG TERM STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - CARDIFF 2020 STRATEGY - AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning) and Suzanne Scarlett (Performance Manager) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she noted that standards are improving, some at a faster rate than Wales as a whole; Cardiff was a growing city with challenges to face; there was a moral duty to ensure that people right across the City are not excluded from the benefits and full life chances that a good education can bring. She added that it was not just about academic improvements but also the personal wellbeing of the City's young people; it was important to have a self-improving school system with partnership working.

Members were provided with a presentation entitled 'Cardiff 2020 – Aiming for Excellence – a renewed vision for education in Cardiff' which included information on: The strategy so far; Improvements; Impact of improving standards; Challenges; Cardiff 2020 Vision/Mission/Goals; Excellent outcomes for learners; A high quality workforce; 21st century learning environments; A self-improving school system; Schools and Cardiff in partnership and Next Steps.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members considered that there was nothing to object to in the theory but were concerned about how it would be delivered; they provided examples such as no reference to addressing the issue of school places or additional learning needs. Officers agreed and stated that they had discussed what to include as if they had included all the delivery plans that sit underneath the strategy then it would be huge; they added that there was the Directorate Delivery Plans at level 1, school organisation plans etc. sat at level 2 and then there were split level 3 plans that sit below that contain all the details. Officers also noted that schools that had improvement plans liaise with the Consortiums challenge advisors.
- Members asked what made a 'great' school. The Cabinet Member stated that this was an aspiration but it was what we should expect, as previously there has been an accepted certain level of failure.
- Members noted the growing population in the City and the issue of catchment areas and that neither of these were addressed in the strategy. Members also asked what officers envisaged with regard to Federation Schools. Officers stated that planning going forward would depend on the needs of the areas that are being developed; they are trying to avoid Federation and try to use collaboration, share leadership/finance building expertise etc., as there was no one size fits all, they need to look at alternative models and bring schools together, noting that there are not enough Head Teachers.
- The Chairperson noted the reference to outstanding teachers/leaders etc. and asked if there was scope within the remuneration system to be able to attract outstanding leaders or whether a ceiling would be reached. Officers stated that there was some flexibility but not as much as in England where they have 25% plus the top of the scale. Where Head Teachers take on other schools this is recognised by a graduated pay scale.
- Members asked about numbers of Governors vacancies and were advised that there were currently 150 vacancies, officers were trying to prioritise where schools are struggling with categorization.

- Members asked for further information on schools maintenance. Officers advised that the pot of money to refurbish schools was small, work was being done for economies of scale, and designs of new schools - same design on three sites meant that savings could be moved into the maintenance budget.
- Members discussed reducing the numbers of pupils in the classroom; this would mean more teachers would be needed. It was noted however that there was no evidence that reducing the numbers of pupils in the class by 5 increased educational attainment.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member 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.

8 : CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

The correspondence report was noted.

9 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 11 July at 4.30pm.

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