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GOHEBIAETH YN DILYN CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR

Pwyllgor Y PWYLLGOR CRAFFU PLANT A PHOBL IFANC

Dyddiad ac amser y cyfarfod DYDD LLUN, 11 GORFFENNAF 2016, 2.30 PM

Gweler isod gohebiaeth anfon gan Gadeirydd y Pwyllgor ar ôl y cyfarfod , ynghyd ag unrhyw ymatebion a gafwyd

Am unrhyw fanylion pellach, cysylltwch â scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

Gohebiaeth yn dilyn Cyfarfod y Pwyllgor (*Tudalennau 1 - 6*)

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



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Date 19 July 2016

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

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank you, Tony Young, Angela Bourge and Cheryl Chapman for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 11 July 2016 to present **The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act Prevention Services Briefing**. Firstly the Members wish to apologise for starting this item earlier than you were informed.

During the way forward section of the meeting the Members considered the information in the report, comments made during the consideration of the briefing, together with answers to their questions, and agreed to provide you with the following advice, comments and concerns.

The Committee was pleased with the work that had been undertaken to develop The Act's requirements for the Provision of Preventative Services, in particular the work of the Regional Planning and Promoting Preventative Services Task and Finish Group.

The Committee initially discussed the online access service "Dewis Cymru". Members noted that Dewis is the place for information and advice regarding well-being in Wales and helps people find what they need to know for both themselves and the person they may care for. Members were interested in seeing how much the system was being used and therefore requested details of the usage of the system since it went live, together with which elements of the site people were accessing most.

The Committee then discussed Families First, as there were clear links with the Early Help Strategy, Members were also aware that funding would be ending on 31 March 2017. Following this discussion Members were still unclear as to what plans and processes are in place to manage the ending of funding on all services, together with the timetable for the commissioning of new services from 1 April 2017, should new funding become available. The Committee therefore requested that a briefing paper be provided for the Members, on the plans and processes in place to manage the potential loss of funding, and commissioning of new services, sometime in October 2016.

Members were also surprised to be informed that in past years unspent Families First funding had been returned to the Welsh Government. The Committee requested details of how much had been returned in the last two years, and which schemes had been underspent at the end of the year.

The Committee then focused on the Early Help Strategy. The Members noted that more work was needed to fully develop and implement the strategy, however they did suggest that particularly in the Early Help Planning and Assessment Pathway (Page 40), some of the elements should be more prescriptive, i.e “someone should act as the lead worker” so that it is clear what needs to happen and by whom. The Members also suggested that Services and support for Young Carers must be clearly referenced in the Early Help Strategy.

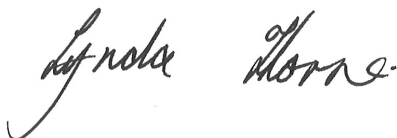
Finally I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the Committee agreed to continue to monitor and review the implementation, performance and outcomes of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act throughout the next year.

I hope that these comments, advice and requests for information, will be of use and support in improving implementation of the Act, and as such the Committee looks forward to receiving the information requested, future progress reports as well as a positive response to this letter, within the next month.

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

- Details of the usage of the “Dewis Cymru” site, together with which elements were accessed most;
- A briefing paper on the plans and processes in place to manage the potential loss of funding, and commissioning of new services, sometime in October 2016.
- Details of how much Families First funding had been returned to the Welsh Government in the last two years and which schemes had been underspent at the end of the year;
- Amendments to the wording and contents of the Early Help Strategy as stated above;
- Regular briefing papers to enable the Committee to continue to monitor and review the implementation, performance and outcomes of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act throughout the next year.

Yours sincerely



COUNTY COUNCILLOR - LYNDA THORNE

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children’s Services
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader
Angela Bourge – OM Resources
Cheryl Chapman (OM for Early Intervention)

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

19 July 2016

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member - Education
County Hall
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Dear Sarah

Cabinet Report School Organisation Proposals: Specialist Provision for Primary Aged Pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties, and with Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties.

The Committee has asked me to write to you following its consideration of the Cabinet report on the proposals for Meadowbank School, at Committee on 11 July 2016. During the way forward section of the meeting the Members considered the information in the report, comments made during the consideration of the report, together with answers to their questions, and agreed to provide you with the following comments, concerns and recommendations in respect of the further review, engagement and work with governing bodies being undertaken to help develop any revised proposals.

The Committee welcomed the recommendations set out in the Cabinet report and considered that the report addressed most of the issues that the Committee highlighted in its letter dated 26 May 2016, following the Members' consideration of the consultation proposals on Meadowbank School at the Committee's meeting on 17 May 2016.

The Committee noted that in the Cabinet report, the Cabinet is recommended to authorise the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, to;

1. Carry out a further review of speech and language support in Cardiff with the aim of bringing forward revised proposals;
2. Undertake further engagement with schools and other stakeholders in relation to early intervention for children with behavioural emotional and social needs;
3. Work with the governing bodies of Meadowbank and Allensbank Schools to ensure the needs of children with speech and language needs placed at the schools can continue to be met effectively, pending any revised proposals.

In respect of the recommendation to carry out a further review, the Members expressed some concern that there could now be a perceived blight around the future of Meadowbank School, which could cause some parents to seek alternatives for their children. The Committee therefore recommends that the Cabinet and

Officers must ensure that this is actively discouraged, through the continued promotion and support for the services provided at the school.

The Committee considered, from the information available, that specialist provision does have a place in the Council's overall education mix. Members noted that there are 12 primary aged pupils benefiting from specialist support sanctioned by the Council at considerable cost, other than at Meadowbank School. The Members wished to inquire as to what benefits the private facilities have that Meadowbank School does not, and what the school can do to cater for these needs.

Members also had a number of suggestions, in respect of the further review of speech and language support in Cardiff, with the aim of bringing forward revised proposals; and to undertake further engagement with schools and other stakeholders in relation to early intervention for children with behavioural emotional and social needs, these were:

- Members noted that a school based Speech and Language service was being rolled out across mainstream schools, Members requested that a review of the roll-out be undertaken, to determine whether there were improved outcomes for all pupils with speech and language difficulties.
- Members recommended that quantitative research should also be undertaken to provide an analysis of the full spectrum of pupils needs, particularly highlighting those who were assessed as complex need (level 4 / 5).
- that the review must include an assessment of the different models of support provided by other authorities and core cities as the Members considered that a mixed provision should be provided in Cardiff.
- a timetable for the completion of each element of the review must be set out in the review plan, together with an estimated date for the Cabinet to approve the outcome of the review.

In addition, the parents and supporters of Meadowbank School had sent questions for the Committee to ask you and the Officers, but the Members were unable to ask all the questions, and therefore invited them to provide any outstanding issues for inclusion with this letter. I have therefore attached some additional questions, so that you can provide a response to their concerns as part of the response to this letter.

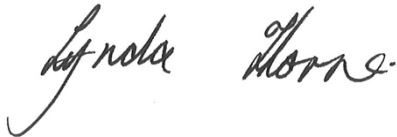
Finally the Committee agreed to visit a school which had a number of pupils with speech and language difficulties, who are being supported in the mainstream environment, to gain an understanding of how the specialist support fits in with the mainstream provision. I have therefore asked the scrutiny officer to contact the National Head Teachers Association in Cardiff, to identify an appropriate school.

I hope that these comments, advice and requests for information, will be of use and support in the future review of Specialist Provision for Primary Aged Pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties, and with Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties and I look forward to receiving the revised proposals in the future as well as a response to the letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows

- Actions, such as promotion and support of the school services, to discourage any perceived blight around the future of Meadowbank School;
- An assessment of what benefits do the private facilities have that Meadowbank does not, and what can Meadowbank School do to cater for these needs;
- Incorporate Members suggestions, in to the further review, namely:
 - a review of the roll-out speech and language service, to determine whether there were improved outcomes for all pupils with speech and language difficulties.
 - quantitative research to provide an analysis of the full spectrum of pupil's needs, particularly highlighting those who were assessed as complex need (level 4 / 5).
 - an assessment of the different models of support provided by other authorities and core Cities.
 - a timetable for the completion of each element of the review with an estimated date for the Cabinet to approve the outcome of the review.
- Response to the questions raised by supporters of the school as attached to this letter.

Yours sincerely



COUNTY COUNCILLOR - LYNDA THORNE

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC: Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Jennie Hughes, Senior Achievement Leader (Inclusion)

Additional Questions from Supporters of Meadowbank School

- (i) Given the 'note of caution' urged by the Children's speech and language therapy service (p95), what measures will be used to evaluate the support in mainstream schools? We would wish to see data for children with severe speech and language needs in Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 respectively?
- (ii) How will the data from the evaluation of mainstream support for children with severe speech and language needs be used to inform the revised proposals?
- (iii) The collective response on behalf of the Cardiff Primary Head teachers (p86) highlights that "...the high quality of teaching that they have received during their time in specialist provision has made a long lasting impact...and enabled them to access their high school education in a mainstream setting."
- (iv) Will the evaluation include the outcomes of children from both specialist provisions, including success of integration into local schools? If so how would this data be utilised to inform the revised proposals?
- (v) How will the LA engage with and utilise the expertise of stakeholders to inform their revised proposals?
- (vi) What proportion of the £364,896 released from the proposed closure of Meadowbank is likely to be reinvested in services for severe speech and language needs?
- (vii) If additional monies from elsewhere/revised proposals meet the needs of children with BESD, and given the possibilities that are yet to be explored, would the specialist speech and language provision at Meadowbank be retained and developed rather than dismantled?
- (viii) Finally, we reiterate the parents continuing concerns about access to specialist provision for severe and complex speech and language needs. The collective response on behalf of the Cardiff Primary Head teachers (p86) expresses surprise that the demand for places at Meadowbank and Allensbank has fallen in recent years. This response cites that "the statement requests for pupils with complex SLC needs have been turned down much more readily in recent years." The Children's speech and language therapy service appear to have concerns about the current capacity of local school to deliver specialist speech and language interventions to the most needy children in mainstream (p94).

At the scrutiny committee, Jennie Hughes explained that the role of the panel is important and the panel does and will advise parents, less often judging that needs are not well met in mainstream. However at a recently publicised open day at Meadowbank school, 12 new parents attended....3 of whom were very interested in the possibility of a part time placement

- (ix) Who sits on the panel and since the perceived shift in 2010, were they directed to place children in mainstream as a preferred option? Is the expertise of staff from specialist speech and language provisions and speech and language therapy utilised in the panel's examination of severe and complex cases?

we are encouraged that the Local Authority have recognised there needs to be a more comprehensive review of educational provision for children & young people with speech, language & communication needs so we need to ensure that this review is carried out impartially and with transparency so that Cardiff Council can best serve its children both now and for future generations.