

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2014

Present: Councillor Cook (Chairperson), Councillors Boyle, Chaundy, Gordon, Govier, Murphy, Rees and Lynda Thorne

Co-opted Members: Mrs P Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative) and Ms Catrin Lewis (Parent Governor representative)

Apologies: Councillors

36 : APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

37 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson reminded Members of their responsibility under Part III of the Members' Code of Conduct to declare any interest in general terms and to complete personal interest forms at the start of the meeting and then, prior to the commencement of the discussion of the item in question, specify whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest. If the interest is prejudicial Members would be asked to leave the meeting and if the interest is personal, Members would be invited to stay, speak and vote. The following declarations were made:

<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Interest</i>
Gordon	Item 4: Central South Consortium – Annual Performance Report.	Personal: Member of governing body of Severn Primary School.
Dianne Rees	Item 6 – Cardiff Youth Offending Service – Annual Plan	Personal: Councillor Rees is a magistrate

38 : MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 7 October 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

39 : CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM - ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Julia Magill, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor Chris Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools (Vale of Glamorgan Council) and Chairperson of the Central South Consortium Joint Committee, Hannah Woodhouse, Managing Director of Central South Consortium, and Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.

The purpose of this report was to enable Members to receive a report on the performance and budgetary position of the Central South Consortium and help the Committee contribute to the development of next year's business plan. The report

also enabled the Committee to judge the Consortium's progress in addressing those actions identified to address the recommendations within the Estyn Monitor visit letter.

Hannah Woodhouse gave a presentation on the report.

The Committee was informed that after being set up rather speedily in 2012 the Consortium has undergone a significant period of change. Before Christmas 2013 the Welsh Government set out the responsibilities of the Consortium and the local authority. One change was to refresh and review the role of the Challenge Advisors. There have also been changes to governance and to the leadership of the Joint Committee, so that it has greater focus and holds the Consortium to account. Cardiff Council is now well represented in the governance structure; Paul Orders is the lead Chief Executive for the region this year and Councillor Julia Magill chairs the Consortium's Executive Board. The report gives information on performance at regional and national level for all the key stages. It is notable that in Cardiff there has been a narrowing of the performance gap between those pupils who receive free school meals (FSM) and those who do not. The report sets out how the Consortium is building a self-improving school system, how it is addressing the Estyn recommendations and sets out a number of issues that it would like to focus on during the coming year. Cardiff Council contributes £1.5 million to the Consortium's core costs, which are just over £5 million, and is the largest contributor. The biggest cost is the Challenge Advisor (CAs) group. There has been a larger group of CAs but there has been a 35-40% turnover in the group. There are many former headteachers in the current group and the guidance they provide is more focussed.

The Chairperson invited comments and questions from the Committee.

The Committee asked about the accountability of the Consortium in the event that there is not an improvement in the performance of Cardiff's schools, and asked if the Council could withdraw the £1.5 million it contributes. The Committee was advised that ultimately the responsibility for the performance of Cardiff's schools remains with the Council, which has commissioned the Consortium to work with the Council to improve performance. The Consortium is a national model and is the intermediate level that the Welsh Government wants between itself and local authorities.

The Committee asked if data is available on the number of teachers who have had performance assessments. The Committee was advised that there has to be a differentiation between the Council's role and the local management of schools. Performance assessments are the responsibility of schools and there are two questions in relation to them; one is are headteachers managing performance management effectively and the other is the question of the low number of teachers that are the subject of capability procedures, procedures which there is an inappropriate reluctance to use and which are a way of getting teachers back to a position where their performance is satisfactory. School improvement is an outcome of a lot of different activities, not just the activities of the Consortium. There was a misconception that the Consortium alone would deliver improvements. The challenge is to get into alignment all of the activities that are taking place to bring improvement. The Consortium is making progress with all of the five local authorities that have commissioned it, and if there were to be no performance improvements then the Consortium would expect to be held to account. It would not be an option for Cardiff to withdraw its £1.5 million contribution.

The Committee asked whether the CAs are making a rigorous enough challenge to schools and asked how the Consortium identifies schools that are under-performing. The Committee was advised that the Consortium uses the categorisation model and starts with performance and benchmarking data. After that, it becomes more a matter of judgement, which is why it is important to have very capable CAs. When looking at the input of the CAs, the Consortium looks for consistency of judgement. The Consortium management team visits schools with the CAs. It sets out guidance for CAs and has discussions with them. All this encourages reflection and builds strength into the CA group. The local authority's role is to look at these judgements with the Consortium, bringing its own knowledge of the school to the process. It is a matter of comparing the local authority's view of the school with the intelligence gathered by the Consortium. Part of the challenge is to recruit very good CAs and this year there has been an upsurge in the number of headteachers showing an interest in doing the job.

The Committee suggested that the level of pupil turnover should be considered when comparisons are being made between schools; a school with less turnover is likely to show better performance, especially when the school with a greater turnover in pupil numbers also has a much higher percentage of pupils who have English as Another Language (EAL). Also, comparisons based on the receipt or non-receipt of FSMs may be deceptive, as parents can be struggling in very low-paid jobs but be earning just enough to exclude their children from entitlement to FSM. The Committee was advised that performance indicators are just indicators. The CAs take these kinds of differences into account and make their judgements according to context.

The Committee was concerned that the title 'Challenge Advisor' may come across to school staff and governors as unnecessarily aggressive, and that there may be some competition between the Consortium and the Council when it comes to obtaining the services of retired headteachers, as the Consortium may want them as CAs and the Council needs more school governors. The Committee was advised that 'Challenge Advisor' is a national title for the role. School governors are taking on increased responsibilities and have to be more accountable. They receive training and support but there has to be an improvement in schools' performance very quickly, and a realisation that for too long there has been under-performance. It can sometimes be uncomfortable to be challenged, but the current system is not capable of doing what the Council needs it to do, especially regarding governance; secondary schools are very large and very complex organisations. People have woken up to the challenge and now they need to support improvement. The Welsh Government is working on bringing improvements to teacher training. Two reports have been critical of initial teacher training and where good practice is identified it is important to find a mechanism that allows those teachers to work with others to improve school performance.

The Committee asked whether the Council has difficulty in recruiting good teachers, especially in Physics and Maths. The Committee was advised that there is a big opportunity for the authority to work with the teachers it already has, to develop them as they move through their careers. Another challenge is for the authority, in its recruitment efforts, to portray the region as somewhere where the skills of new teachers will be developed. It is the case that there has been a particular problem with Maths and Physics. There have been improvements but if they are to continue the authority has to retain its good teachers. On comparisons, the Director advised

the Committee that whilst statistical data is available to enable these, there is an increasing divergence between England and Wales on teaching and assessment, so comparisons with comparable cities need to be treated with caution.

The Committee asked how the Consortium identifies schools that are doing well but could do better. The Committee was advised that this is done through contextualisation, previous performance and intake. If the schools that are already doing well can improve their performance then that will raise Cardiff's averages, so the Council has been very clear about the need to challenge these schools. If challenge and support are delivered well by the Consortium and the local authority it sends a clear message about what the priorities are. Previously, the language that has been used has been rather impenetrable, especially for some school governors. Challenge Advisors need great skill, they have to be good communicators with vast experience and must not mind giving a hard message in a way that governors can understand.

The Committee asked whether there is a way to standardise the self-assessment of schools, and asked how the performance of CAs is measured. On self-assessment, the Committee was informed that there is legislation which standardises self-assessment. CAs have line managers and supervision sessions, and they all support each other, so if they have a problem there is support for them.

The Committee asked how the performance of the Consortium can be measured. The Committee was advised that this involves three things. Firstly, there should be no surprises for the Council; if the CAs say a school is good and Estyn says it is not then something is wrong. Secondly, there should be improved outcomes. And finally it involves soft intelligence – what people are saying about a school. Added together these things would give a good indication of the performance of the Consortium.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor Magill, Councillor Chris Elsmore, Hannah Woodhouse and officers for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

**AGREED:** That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member and to Hannah Woodhouse highlighting the following issues:

The Committee welcomed the explanation of the governance and accountability arrangements recently implemented for the Consortium and agreed that the updated governance model provided greater clarity and clearer lines of responsibility, within the Consortium and across the five local authorities. Members particularly appreciated the attendance of Councillor Chris Elsmore and the Cabinet Member, which helped emphasise the composition of the governance arrangement.

The Committee did however raise a number of concerns at the inconsistency in the operation and management, by some headteachers, of the Performance and Personal Development Review system for teachers. The Committee considered that a consistent application of the process across all schools was a crucial element of school improvement. Members therefore recommended that the Consortium must identify and address any inconsistencies as soon as possible.

The Committee also expressed some concern around the general problem of the recruitment of high quality teachers, particularly in certain specific subject areas. Members suggested that the Consortium supports schools wherever possible in their recruitment process.

Members were pleased to receive positive responses to all the issues they had identified in the Estyn Monitoring letter, for the Consortium to address, and were considered to be a priority; however Members were unclear as to how the Consortium was addressing Estyn's concerns that school governors were unclear about the areas for improvement in their schools. Members requested clarification of how the Estyn concerns would be addressed either by the Consortium or Council.

Members requested that the Annual Cardiff's Schools Performance Report, presented to Committee in January 2015, must include comparative data from England, and in particular the Core Cities.

#### 40 : ESTYN MONITORING VISIT ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Julia Magill, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Marie Rosenthal, County Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Carol Jones, Assistant Director of Education, Angela Kent, Head of Achievement and Inclusion, Simon Morris, Youth Development Officer and Phil Norton, Achievement Leader (Targetted Support).

The purpose of this report was to provide the Committee with an opportunity to receive an update on progress being made in the implementation of actions to address the next set of recommendations from the Estyn monitoring visit, namely:

Recommendation 2 - Reduce exclusions and reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training post 16;

and

Recommendation 6 - Improve the scrutiny of local authority education service and partnership working.

The Director gave the Committee a presentation on the report.

The Committee was advised that the report is a suite of progress reviews, partly comprised of internal reports gauging the progress of the Estyn Action Plan. Monthly progress groups, chaired by the Chief Executive, receive these reports. There has been some improvement on school exclusions and the figures on those young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) are due later in the year. There has been a need to review the reporting arrangements between the Cardiff Partnership Board and the Cabinet as it was found that the Partnership Board had no constitutional status or formal reporting mechanism. The new governance arrangement, under which the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for scrutiny of all partnership issues concerning children and young people, is a much simpler arrangement and makes the Board more accountable. When Estyn visited in 2011 they were interested in newly instigated partnership scrutiny, however when they visited in 2013 they were not satisfied with what they

found, especially in relation to the Partnership Board. There has now been an improvement in that, and in the quality of information that is being provided to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to enable it to effectively scrutinise partnership working.

The Chairperson invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee noted that the target for reducing exclusions has not been met. The Committee was advised that it is the short, fixed-term exclusions that are the problem. All other indicators around exclusions show that they are falling at a good rate; some are significantly below the Welsh average or are approaching it. The message to schools is that the Council wants to see fewer exclusions. The picture is not uniform across the city, with 26 secondary schools being responsible for 97% of exclusions. Local authority teams are now much more challenging to the schools that are the cause of concern, and school governors and exclusions officers are being given training.

The Committee asked whether the schools that are responsible for more exclusions are the poorly-performing schools. The Committee was advised that some of the schools would be categorized as poorly-performing, but improvements can be made in any school and it is down to good practice, which is something the local authority wants to see shared between schools across the city.

The Committee noted that for a small number of schools performance on exclusions performance is deteriorating and asked what else can be done now that measures have been tried. The Committee was informed that the local authority receives information from the Consortium's Challenge Advisors, who would have knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school, and would put this together with its own information on the extent to which the children that are being excluded are known to display behaviour that is particularly challenging. Once this has been done a judgement is then made about the appropriate measures to be taken to try and reduce exclusions in a school that is the cause of concern. But generally speaking the picture is much improved.

The Committee enquired about the prospect for improvement in reducing the number of NEETs. The Committee was informed that the precise data on NEETs is not yet available from the Welsh Government but it is thought that the picture is positive, thanks to a programme of identification that has been put in place so that a range of support can be offered to those young people who are thought to be at risk of becoming without employment, education or training. At the end of July 2014, 180 young people were identified through the local authority's work with partners and for 67% of these a destination, a route of progress once they leave school, has now been identified. Lead workers have also been embedded in schools, to work with young people, building their confidence, assisting them to identify destinations and working with Careers Wales.

The Committee asked what proportion of young people in Cardiff will have left school this year without a qualification. The Committee was informed that the exact figures on that are not in yet but it is thought that there will have been a slight increase. It could be a mixed picture that will have contributed to that, not just the poorly-performing schools but those schools that are just coasting.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor Magill and officers for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED: That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member highlighting the following issues:

#### Recommendation 2 - Exclusions

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be updated on the progress being made in addressing this part of recommendation 2 and in particular the good progress being made in reducing exclusions across Cardiff's schools.

Members did however note with concern that two performance indicators had deteriorated and following further analysis members noted that this had resulted from only a small number of schools. During the way forward section of the meeting, the Committee agreed to request details of the department's actions to address the deterioration of these two performance indicators in the schools.

#### Recommendation 2 - NEETS

The Committee welcomed the positive picture being portrayed, although Members did note that precise data was not yet available. Members particularly appreciated the description of the work being undertaken with the 180 originally identified NEETs and that through intervention 121 now have a destination with 23 fully engaged.

#### Recommendation 6 - Scrutiny

Members appreciated the summary given by Marie Rosenthal, the County Clerk and Monitoring Officer, and noted the progress that had been made in supporting Members in addressing the actions for this Committee. The Members also noted that following a review of the Partnership Scrutiny Panel it was now agreed that Partnership issues would be considered directly by each Scrutiny Committee, and Members further agreed to receive all children and young people partnership reports.

### 41 : CARDIFF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE - ANNUAL PLAN

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Families and Ingrid Masmeyer, Manager (Cardiff Youth Offending Service).

Ingrid Masmeyer gave a presentation.

The purpose of this report was to provide the Committee with a copy of the Youth Offending Service's Annual Plan 2014-15, which included an update on the Youth Offending Team's progress in achieving its key objectives utilising the Results Based Accountability (RBA) methodology.

The Committee was informed that from April 2015 the Youth Offending Service (YOS) will take over the responsibility for management of the Youth Attendance

Centre, which is a valuable resource for YOS as some of the young people with whom YOS is involved already attend the Centre and so it is a good way of maintaining contact with them. The underspend that can be seen in the financial statement for YOS is the result of long delays in recruitment. The police, Careers Wales and many other organisations in Wales are economising and this is having an effect on YOS, with the police in particular reviewing the role of its officers that are involved with YOS. The police service would like these officers to move to a more traditional role and although YOS has not yet been told that they will be reassigned it is certain that their role will change. This year there have not been any significant losses in funding contributions from partners but YOS will be losing two members of its staff as their posts have been cut. YOS has continued to keep children out of the Youth Justice system and in times of austerity and greater poverty this is an achievement.

Children who re-offend are a big challenge for YOS as it does not have the skills base to deal with children who are so challenging at such a young age. This needs collaboration between YOS, Education and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). YOS has developed a relationship with the Forensic Psychology unit at Cardiff Prison. Professionals in the unit work with adults but have the skills to work with children and have expressed interest in developing their skills in this way. YOS is making an impact on re-offending rates. In July 2010 – June 2011 out of 419 children 190 re-offended, committing a total of 603 offences. During the year June 2011 – July 2012 the number of children in the criminal justice system had reduced to 323 of whom only 155 re-offended committing 539 offences in total. The data on re-offending is always two or three years out of date due to the way data is received by the police. Regarding custody, the Committee was informed that as of the day of this meeting there were five young people between the ages of 10 and 17 years in custody. A few years ago that number would have been closer to fifty. This reduction is replicated across Wales. It is easier to work with young people if they remain in their communities. YOS will continue to use RBA as it is the most useful way to express what it is that YOS does.

The Chairperson invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee asked if there is confidence that YOS will continue to receive £79,000 in funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Alun Michael, over the next two years, and whether he is likely to ask YOS to spend the money differently. The Committee was advised that the preventative work that YOS does saves the police a lot of time and money and that the objectives of YOS and the Police and Crime Commissioner are nicely aligned.

The Committee asked about the number of Looked After Children (LAC) that would feature in the figures given in the report and the officer advised the Committee that she could not give the precise number but that it is in single figures and that in Cardiff usually has fewer LAC involved with its Youth Offending Service than other areas do.

When the officer was asked if there was anything that she would like YOS to do that it does not do at present she advised the Committee that she would like YOS to be able to work with children from the age of 8 years upwards. As it is, the law prevents YOS from working with children of that age because 10 years is the age of criminal responsibility. At present YOS works with children and young people between the



ages of 10 and 17 years but Alun Michael is looking at extending this age range so that YOS could work with young people up to the age of 21 years.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor Lent and the officer for attending the meeting, for their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED: That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member highlighting the following issues:

The Committee were pleased to be informed that between April 2007 and March 2012 the number of young offenders in Cardiff had reduced from 992 to 363, however Members expressed their concern that the proportion who subsequently reoffended had, over the same period, increased as a percentage, from 38% to 47.7%. Members hope that actions identified within the plan will address this situation quickly.

Members also welcomed that at a strategic level the YOS manager is in discussions with the Cardiff and the Vale Health Board, which are making significant progress towards designing a mental health service for children and young people that will deliver services in a radically different manner from the conventional CAMHS approach, which will include the pooling of budgets and joint working. The Committee suggested that this type of joint working, and specifically pooled budgets, could be piloted across other areas.

#### 42: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 4.30pm in Committee Room 4.

The meeting closed at 5.55pm.