

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JANUARY 2019

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),
Councillors De'Ath, Philippa Hill-John, Morgan, Phillips, Taylor and
Singh

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative),
Carol Cobert (Church in Wales representative) and Karen Dell'Armi
(Parent Governor Representative)

Yasmin Bahary (Cardiff Youth Council)

59 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heather Joyce and Councillor Phillips had indicated that he would be delayed.

60 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Patricia Arlotte declared a prejudicial interest in Item 9 on the basis that her grandchildren attend St Peters Roman Catholic Primary School.

61 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairperson.

62 : SAFEGUARDING POLICY - PROGRESS REPORT AND POLICY REVIEW

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Chris Weaver (Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance and Chair of the Corporate Safeguarding Board), Claire Marchant (Director of Social Services) and Alys Jones (Operational Manager, Safeguarding) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Weaver to make a statement in which he highlighted the fact that Safeguarding spans all Directorates and it is important that the requirements of the policy are understood by all.

Members of the Committee were provided with a presentation ([Corporate Safeguarding Policy & Progress Report](#)) which outlined a number of matters including the key achievements to date and the future work programme.

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members discussed some examples of safeguarding issues that have been raised, Officers referred to an example of concern being raised about a taxi driver. Consideration has had to been given as to what arrangements the local authority have in place to address such issues and the procedure for either preventing such

a person being a taxi driver or ensuring that safeguarding procedures are in place. Officers also referred to an example of a refuse collector collection rubbish and becoming aware of a child at the home being in a distressed state. It is recognising a potential problem and reporting it to enable it to be investigated.

- Members expressed concerns as to whether a small team, such as licensing, have the capacity to fully realise the safeguarding aspirations but noted that it is necessary to ensure that safeguarding is embedded to ensure that all staff have an understanding of their responsibility and what is required.
- Members noted that basic safeguarding awareness training was being provided, the training can be accessed by staff with devices, for those who do not have access separate training is being provided.
- Members queried the correlation between the policy and the Prevent Strategy. It was noted that whilst it does have it is problems work is ongoing with partners to ensure that training is being conducted correctly. When considering the statutory requirements it is vital that training elements are joined up.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

63 : CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM'S CONTRIBUTION TO RAISING STANDARDS IN CARDIFF SCHOOLS.

At the start of the agenda the Chair indicated that this item and the Schools Annual Report item would be dealt with together.

The Chairperson welcomed Louise Muteham (CSWC Development Officer), Geraint Lewis and Catherine Rowlands (Senior Challenge Advisers) to the meeting.

The Chairperson also welcomed Councillor Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning), Jackie Turner (Assistant Director (Education and Lifelong Learning) to provide Members with their views on the consortium's report and to present the Schools Annual Performance Report.

The Assistant Director provided Members with a presentation ([2017/18 Annual Performance Report of Cardiff Schools](#)) which ended with the key challenges namely; reducing the gap in performance for children who are looked after with children of their own age; improving outcomes for learners at Level 1; improving the outcomes of learners educated other than at school (EOTAS); continuing to reduce the gap in outcomes for young people eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and those who are not (nFSM); and, ensuring high quality provision is in place to improve the wellbeing of all learners and staff in education.

Catherine Rowlands presented the Central South Consortium report and informed Members that the Managing Director had left the Consortium at the end of last month.

Members were provided with updated information in relation to the progress of the schools in need. Of the 127 schools 3 required red level support in 2017/18 but there will be 2 this year; 11 required amber level support in 2017/18 but there will be 12 this year; 48 required yellow level support in 2017/18 but there will be 41 this year; and, 65 required green level support in 2017/18 but there will be 70 this year.

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members queried the relevance of the information provided in the league tables. Officers advised that the figures are issued by Welsh Government. What is required is a clear statement of aspiration – Cardiff is a global city and as a capital city Cardiff should be compared with other cities; there needs to be a move away from a comparison with the other 21 authorities in Wales.
- Members expressed concern that although there is a slight improvement in the results for children who are looked after, there is still a long way to go, and there are still concerns about children who are looked after who are placed out of county, particularly with reference to their education. The Cabinet Member advised that it is important that Cardiff delivers for all its children who are looked after including those here from out of county who are in Cardiff. Officers believe that there are issues with the way additional funding is allocated. It should follow the child and the educational plan. Until the allocation of funding changes it is important to try support the system we are in, it is important that funds need to be used more appropriately. There has to be alignment between the authorities and everyone has to be committed to having the best education.
- Members asked about the online readiness tool and were advised that it was based on Kotter's theory of change which is an 8 step process. Members were advised that Cardiff is currently on track bearing in mind the draft curriculum was released in April.
- Members queried where or not the consortium would have expected schools to have picked up on any issues if nothing had been picked up in the last 3 inspections, and where advised that it can happen, the reports can be very subjective but by and large there are not many surprises. Officers advised that joint meetings take place between the local authority and the consortium where each school is considered from HR through to school improvement and pedagogy. There is now particular focus yellow and green schools to work preventatively so that there are no surprises.
- Members noted the importance of consistently good teaching and a rich and well programmed suite of additional learning

experiences for pupils. Engagement with businesses and employers is deliberately targeted at schools in lessor advantaged areas.

- Members asked whether there was now more movement in senior leadership posts. The Development Officer indicated that there were more professional development opportunities with the School Improvement Groups.
- Members discussed whether there was a collective steer on homelessness and sofa surfing. It was noted that whilst the picture in relation to NEET's is good, it is still an issue for the city. Nationally the number of children in temporary housing is increasing.
- Members were advised that there is an increasing trend in elective home education but that those figures are not contained within the EOTAS figures. It was noted that there has been an increase in the number of less than 5 days exclusions in the primary sector and Members queried whether there was any trend or pattern. Officers advised that some of the growth of elective home education covers the children that are not wanted by schools.
- Members queried whether the loss of Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant would affect those schools with a higher proportion of ethnic minority groups, specifically Romany and Gypsy Traveller groups. The Director advised that whilst there has been some shift in the view held by Welsh Government politicians are still lobbying Welsh Government on this issue. Sometimes one model of delivery may not be the right for every authority.
- Members queried how actively the Consortium was involved with School Governing Bodies and were advised by CR (Senior Challenge Advisory) that initially not enough – whilst training had been given it did not mean that they operated as they should. However, there have been reviews of Governing Bodies, an action plan has been created and then a further review has been taking place. Whilst that course of action is proving to be effective there is still more to be done.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

64 : CARDIFF SCHOOLS ANNUAL REPORT

To be removed from minutes – see previous item.

65 : ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATIONAL TRIBUNAL ACT 2018- PROGRESS BRIEFING REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills) Nick Batchelar, (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning), Jenny Hughes (Senior Achievement Leader Inclusion), and Liz Jones (ALN Transformation Lead Central South Region) to the meeting.

Jenny Hughes provided Members with a brief presentation ([ALNET Act, Implications for Cardiff](#)) which outlined the aims of the Act and the key challenges and actions as a result.

Liz Jones (ALN Transformation Lead Central South Region) outlined her role to Members and outlined the work undertaken by the Central South Region to date.

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members noted that the strong link between children with additional learning needs (ALN) and children who are looked after (LAC) has not been specifically mentioned. Officers advised that every child with ALN who is LAC will need an individual development plan (IDP). There has to be active involvement between the school and other agencies, which will enable more attention to be given to early intervention. It was noted that Welsh Government have indicated that the implementation of this is resource neutral. LJ advised that it will have implications on resources. Unified plans have to be aligned. An IDP will be an integral part of the PEP.
- Members sought clarification as to where the IDP in relation to children 0 – 3 years will come from, further how does it then feed into nursery education and school. Members were advised that there is currently grant funded work ongoing in relation to that. Referrals would come from the Health Service. Whilst they would be key to setting up the IDP the authority would have a responsibility under the code to make sure that it is put in place. Two new post have been created a designated clinical lead officer as well as an early years additional learning needs officer. They are statutory posts with the intention that they working together with the local authority to ensure that no children fall through the net.
- Members queried whether there would be any obligation on private nurseries to follow through with the IDP's and where advised that officers are already working with the independent sector, there will be a responsibility and training provided.
- Members noted that these are fundamental changes to this system. Arrangements are currently being reviewed with the consortium to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The question is whether there is sufficient capacity and resolve to deliver all that we aspire to deliver. There are big challenges within the school development programme in relation to the ALN changes; it is certainly not resource neutral.

- Members, having undertaken work in the Committee in relation to LAC children, noted how poor PEPs were and queried what assurance can be given that they are consistent and of a high standard. The ALN transformation lead advised that the Independent Reviewing Officers have the responsibility for PEP's, however in relation to IDP's trials are currently being run to ascertain what a good IDP looks like.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

66 : SOP 21ST CENTURY (BAND B) - REPLACEMENT FITZALAN HIGH SCHOOL

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills) Nick Batchelar, (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning), and Janine Nightingale (Head of Schools Organisation & Planning) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Merry to make a statement in which she confirmed that the majority of the responses received during the public engagement exercise were largely positive.

The Director highlighted the commitment to work together with a wide range of partners and referenced the Creative Education Partnership which has been established with Cardiff West Community High School, and the relationship between Eastern High School and Cardiff and the Vale college. The new school sport facilities will be available for use the communities as is the case is other schools.

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members queried the size of the 6th form at the new school and were advised that the information could not be provided at the time of the meeting, but Fitzalan will be an 11 – 18 school. It was noted that there is currently real pressure on post 16 funding.
- Members noted the importance of primary school access to the facilities, and were advised that at Eastern High School there is a particular gate that is used by the pupils from Trowbridge Primary School. It is important that the facilities are used to a maximum.
- Members asked about partnership working and what partnerships would be involved with the new school, and were advised that some strong links have already been made, for example the combined cadet force; and the strong links with businesses through the courses provided at the school. Officers are also looking to look at sports development in that part of the city, but also do not want to force a school into a set mould. It is important not to dictate but to encourage.

Members were also advised that the shared use of sports facilities in the area are currently being discussed but have not yet been defined.

- Members noted what will be the phenomenal improvements in the school, but were concerned to clarify how the structure of the building can contribute to the well-being of the pupils. Officers advised that one of the key groups in the consultation exercise were the young people themselves and their views on the design of the building and how they occupy the building have been fed into the design. The cycle routes and new crossing points, which take into account the desired lines for walking to school have also been the subject of input from the pupils.
- Members also queried whether there will be specific assessment on air pollution either at the school or getting to school. Officers confirmed that there has been detailed transport assessment, there will be the same amount of children – it is just the site that has been amended slightly. It is accepted that it is a busy area with the football ground and the school. Air pollution and quality dictates what air and heat exchange units are put at the school. It was noted that the acoustics are also important and the sound of the traffic is being monitored. Members were also advised that any outdoor learning has to be behind the school building to provide an acoustic buffer.
- Members noted that whilst 3 years ago there were places available at the school, currently the school is hugely oversubscribed, and that the pressure on places will increase over the next few years, it is the rationale for the Band B investment.

The Director advised that there has not been a different approach for matching supply and demand for school places, there are however better schools and whilst catchment areas do have a place in the system of criteria it does not guarantee a school place. There has to be an open system of criteria. Schools need to be in the right area.

It was noted that what is important is not that particular schools increase in size because of parental choice, but that every school provides what is wanted for our children.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

67 : ESTYN INSPECTION REPORT - ST PETERS RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Patrica Arlotte re-declared a prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills) Nick Batchelar, (Director of Education

and Lifelong Learning), and Catherine Rowlands (Senior Challenge Advisers) to the meeting.

The Director advised that he has made use of his powers as a result of the school be placed into special measures. Consideration has been given to what measures would assist the school to get back on to a secure footing as possible. The Governing Body and the Diocese have been consulted as it is a voluntary aided school; the delegation will be withdrawn; the school will be required to partner with Whitchurch Primary which is a school well placed to offer advice on aspects which have not been improved on over the years; and 3 new Governors will be appointed. Members noted that the Governing Body and the Diocese have agreed.

The Committee were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members were advised by CR that it is the responsibility of the School to draw up an action plan to address the recommendations contained in the report. It is necessary for there to be robust monitoring of the that plan. There is also a Governing Improvement Group and the Challenge Advisor will attend the school 6 times a year to evaluate the monitoring. It is also important that there is good communication with the parents.
- The Chair, on behalf of a Member of the public, sought information as to why, bearing in the failure by the school too act on the recommendations made in the reports, the current Headteacher is allowed to stay. The Director advised that it is the role of the Governing Body to hold the Headteacher to account. What has been done now is to put in a measure of assurance to ensure that the Governing Body do carry out their support and challenge role and hold the leadership to account. The purpose of actions is to put in place degree of security of parents. The Director believes that the parents have been involved that the School is in special measures, the Estyn Report was published on 10 December and the press have reported it.

AGREED – To note the report and that the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

68 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled.

69 : WAY FORWARD

Members discussed the information received and identified a number of issues which the Chairman agreed would be included in the letters that would be sent, on behalf of the Committee, to the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers.

70 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee is the budget meeting on Tuesday 19 February 2019 at 1.30 pm.

The meeting terminated at 8.10 pm