

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),
Councillors Cunnah, Philippa Hill-John, Joyce, Phillips, Taylor and
Singh

Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic Representative), Carol Cobert
(Church in Wales Representative), Rebecca Crump (Parent Governor
Representative), and Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor
Representative)

1 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Linda Morgan and Yasmin Bahary
(Cardiff Youth Council representative).

2 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee noted that Council at its Annual meeting on 23 May 2019 appointed
Councillor Lee Bridgeman as Chair and the following Members to the Committee:

Councillors Cunnah, Philippa Hill-John, Joyce, Mackie, Phillips, Taylor and Singh;
and

Co-Optees Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic Representative), Carol Cobert (Church in
Wales Representative), Rebecca Crump (Parent Governor Representative) and
Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor Representative).

3 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference as agreed by Council at its annual
meeting on 23 May 2019:

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, joint local government services, Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental non-governmental 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 or service delivery in this area.

4 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Phillips declared a personal interest in Item 8 on the basis that his daughter is autistic and they are seeking additional learning needs help.

5 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

6 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE DELIVERY PLAN

The Committee agreed that the agenda items in relation to the Directorate Delivery Plan and Quarter 4 performance would be dealt with in one item.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member – Children & Families), and Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services) to the meeting and to present the report.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement in which he highlighted the work with partners and Welsh Government to address the problems facing all authorities across the country; the number of children brought back to Cardiff; the challenges faced by the City and the difficulties with agency staff.

The Interim Assistant Director provided Members with a presentation in relation to the Directorate Deliver Plan. A number of matters were highlighted; Signs of Safety, Parents Charter, Promoting Mental Health, Safeguarding – in particular the threat of exploitation being in a large City; Bright Start traineeship, Workforce Planning which is a key pressure area – increased the number of Social Work posts, reduce the number of residential placements by increasing foster placements, Early Help and Family Gateway, Commissioning Strategy, and Young Carers

The Chairperson invited Councillor Hinchey to make a statement in relation to the Quarter 4 performance during which he highlighted how well Care Planning was progressing and the Child's Rights within Education. There were concerns about the various types of placements offered and also the use of agency staff and drift of staff across boundaries.

The Interim Assistant Director then provided Members with a presentation in relation to the Quarter 4 performance and provided an some information in relation to some of the work being undertaken by the Delivering Excellent Outcomes Board.

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

- Members referred to two issues that have been raised previously; the retention and recruitment of social workers and the independent foster carers versus local authority foster carers position.

Members were pleased to see that there had been an increase in the number of foster carers and sought further information and were advised that there had been a lot of work around fostering undertaken, there had also been an increase of fees, there has been a huge publicity campaign and events. There should be follow up calls within 24 hours. There is now a better understanding of what is required and the process, there is a need to a great deal of support at all stages. Bringing foster carers back to the authority, by better understanding, better support and a better package it could save the authority as much as £4.1m – there would then be no overspend. We want to look at the Scottish model with WG to take the profits out and improve the system.

Members discussed independent care homes, if we can solve the problems of placements in Wales rather than going to Manchester, London – there is great savings, but more importantly the outcomes are also better as well. The Out of County report raised some issues which are now being considered, but perhaps the terminology should be Closer to Home rather than Out of County.

The Committee offered support to Officers about these issues.

The Assistant Director referred to the police in Swansea raising concerns about the number of independent homes for children that have been set up there and bringing children in from across the border, it links in with the low cost accommodation in those areas. If you look at map of Wales and where the host authorities are and placement authorities are, it makes no sense. There needs to be a Welsh Commissioning Plan. There should be the appropriate level of placements within the South Wales region.

- Members queried whether we compare our position with other authorities in relation to the retention of social work staff, and what best practice can be seen in those authorities. Members were advised that for the new qualified and up to 3 years this authority does have a really robust practice, there have been applications from social workers in Scotland because they were impressed with the Welsh offer. There is regular supervision however we do not have a good induction framework but that is currently being reviewed. A business analyst is doing a comparative study of the terms and conditions of neighbouring authorities. Member were advised that the Interim Assistant Director was not aware of any added value that neighbouring authorities provide which can we learn from. We have tried to put coaching and mentoring in one of

our plans, which is something that happens in England.

- With reference to young carers, Members asked that the development of that policy be shared with the Committee. It is an area in Cardiff that is underdeveloped, Cardiff does not have an assessment type provision but funding has been secured for that. There is a carers plan, and young carers are a part of that. There are carers events planned over the next months and an update can be brought to a future meeting.
- Members referred to some of the performance measures in the delivery plan (Strategic Directorate Priority 2), some of them are very specific and referred to figures provided about children who are looked after and placed with parents. Members queried why such a low percentage target was set. Members were advised that placements with parents, children remain with their parents but are subject to a Care Order. The Judiciary, because they do not have confidence in Social Services to provide support to families because of resource issues, more often make Care Order as a default position to ensure that Social Services remain involved. 149 cases are all classed as looked after but living at home with parents – it should really be cut by 50%.
- Members queried whether it was possible to provide information has to how many IOTAS children are looked after. The Assistant Director advised that whilst there were no figures to hand it is a theme that emerges when looking at criminal exploitation and knife crime and significant concerns in relation to any of the exploitations. There is a task and finish group involving the police, ourselves corporately and health which has identified 9 cases where a time line is being done, a lot of them involve knife crime. Being out of formal education always figures.
- Members referred to the information provided in relation to the strategic vision and queried how we monitor the number children placed out of county who do not receive education placements for a long time, and in relation to the care leavers who have experienced homelessness, how long do they remain in unsupported temporary accommodation. Members were advised that the information can be provided in due course, but there has been meetings with housing to look at a pathway for 16 – 18 year olds to start with. A lot of care leavers are not coping and are ending up homeless. A task and finish group has been to review that. Further information can be provided at a later meeting.
- Members discussed the weekly reporting being undertaken by staff and that whilst it helps with balancing workloads it does not always help with stress and the need for staff to do more. Members were advised there is some concern from staff, they do not always like targets but it is a cultural change. In terms of measuring personal outcomes there is work to be done, there is a bigger buy in from Social Workers with that. Good managers will be aware of the

needs of their staff, time needs to be spend with them. A PDP should not be there just for the sake of it.

- Members were advised that information in relation to the number of schools who are able support pupils with sensory impairment which enables them to attend a school of their choice will be provided in due course. However, it was noted that there a number of the High Schools provide very good support, for example the work undertaken with Children who are looked after at St Teilo's Church in Wales High School.

Members sought clarification on the new approach to 'place based' wellbeing and were advised that it is in infancy, and therefore there is not much information about specific outcomes. We have undertaken a restructure and are going back into locality based working where we will be linking in schools, the health hubs and housing hubs. The geographical areas that we will go back into are probably East and West and small area in the middle. It will be about community development looking at anti-poverty, social inclusion. There will need to be a number of engagement events, and in terms of outcomes we want to see improvements in education, health and into work.

Members queried whether it would also cover issues of self-harm and mental health and were advised that it was part of the bid intermediate care fund which has been opened to Children's Services for the first time was around therapeutic support and linking will all of those services, for both young people and parents as well.

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

7 : EDUCATION DIRECTORATE DELIVERY PLAN

Councillor Mike Phillips declared a personal interest in this item on the basis that his daughter has been diagnosed with autism and is seeking additional learning needs help.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills), Suzanne Scarlet (Operational Manager, Partnerships and Performance) and Natalie Stork (Performance and Information Management) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Merry to make a statement in which she

explained the central message is to deliver for all children in the city regardless of circumstances and background. In respect of the performance indicators feedback is welcomed as to how we are progressing and to ensure that the correct indicators have been chosen.

Members were provided with an overview of the context in which the plan for the year 2019-20, its continuing to drive forward the priorities identified as part of the Cardiff 2020 strategy. More information has been provided around self-assessment, rather than big self-evaluation reports it is necessary to self-evaluate all the time.

The Committee were advised that the plan is almost complete, it is necessary to ensure that the document it is updated constantly. Each of the priorities in the plan have been structured so we can look at how we measure performance and success.

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

- Members queried ethnic attainment gap, particularly the gypsy traveller group and queried the reason why there is no target in the plan and were advised that the annual performance report provides details of the performance of a number of groups. Strategic Priority 3 refers to the closure of the attainment gap but no specific target group has been referred to at the present time. Members noted however that the way pupil attainment is changing, particularly at Key Stage 4. Capped point scores could make the measuring attainment more challenging in the future.
- Members sought information in relation to the decline in the last 12 months of the attendance of children who are looked after and were advised that the information was not to hand but could be provided.
- Members discussed the EOTAS learners, querying how those learners were identified, whether the figures were accurate, the number of hours of specialist teaching provided and how is that monitored. A point has been made of identifying this group, for purposes of this plan it is done by a point in time count. There is a register of all the children that are educated other than at school. EOSTA learners can belong to variety of provisions, those groups are dictated by WG. We are trying to increase involvement by Challenge Advisors so that there is greater accountability for this cohort of learners which will help to increase the visibility of the performance of that group. It is identified in the plan as an area for improvement. Children who are looked after (CLA) are referred to in that group of they are educated outside of school. Children who are electively home educated do not fall within that group, discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government at the present time in respect of that group of learners and data is being collected. Accountability is not as strict as it should be at the present time, there are obviously safeguarding to be considered.
- Members wanted reassurance that school leaders have both the

time and scope to make sure that, with the introduction of the ALN legislation and new curriculum for wales, there can be a successful transition. In respect of ALN and in terms of planning the authority is well placed in readiness for that change. Work is ongoing with the Central South Consortium (CSC) and Welsh Government (WG) and providing respect of training. There are some questions, challenges about the responsibilities of schools and local authorities and the capacity to deal with them. That is being picked up.

In respect of the new curriculum , the draft consultation is being led by WG, it is however something the authority has less control of. Cluster groups are being arranged and they are presenting opportunities for school leaders to engage in updates on reform. Natalie Gould is leading on curriculum for CSC, she has provided us with an update on the delivery plan, however it is a complex area.

- Members queried whether there was any further information about the assessment of exams and whether there will be changes within the new curriculum. The Cabinet Member advised that the initial focus is at primary school level and thereafter changes that will work through the system. In terms of assessment of the curriculum - it is so different and could get problematic. The whole accountability and assessment framework is under review and qualifications that schools use. There will be shift towards measurement of progression of individual learners - individual learning for individual children. There is no clarity at the present time in relation to KS4. There has to be clarity in relation to the assessment arrangements for assessment by the time the new curriculum is introduced.
- Members referred to two areas of challenge, firstly in respect of the volume of work that might be required at the more complex end in putting together plans for individual pupils and secondly some of the vagueness of the terminology leading to differences of interpretation, for example the use of the terms majority and significant.

In terms of the expectation of teachers there will be a huge requirement for additional professional learning. A grant is being specifically delegated to schools to ensure their readiness for implementation of the new curriculum.

- Members asked about the recruitment of teachers to Welsh Medium Schools, particularly bearing in the mind the recruitment crisis, and what was being put in place to address the shortage. Work is ongoing in relation to workforce planning and development with the consortium. It is necessary to ensure that workforce can respond to the need to increase the number of welsh speakers.

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

8 : 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B - REDEVELOPMENT OF CANTONIAN, RIVERBANK AND WOODLANDS SCHOOLS

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation and Planning) and Michele Dudridge-Friedl (Operational Manager, School Organisation and Planning)

The Chairperson invited Councillor Sarah Merry to make a statement in which she reiterated the condition issues at Cantonian High School, the provision of school places but also the need to increase specialist provision. It is a particularly large secondary school site, it is therefore an excellent opportunity to move Woodlands and Riverbank to allow them to be rebuilt and to increase provision.

The Programme Director advised that there had been a very extensive consultation, it has been thorough and there has been 759 responses, the majority of which have been positive.

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

- Members questioned the position regarding catchment areas in the Cardiff West area and when they will be considered and expressed surprise that they had not been reviewed previously. The Cabinet Member advised that Fitzalan High School has now reached what is considered to be the best maximum size, Cantonian High School will be increased, Willows, Cathays and Cardiff High Schools are all subject to consultation. There will be catchment area adjustments which is always difficult for parents. There will never be perfect matching between school places and catchment areas. Band B is not a short term programme, it has to be reviewed continually.
- Members asked about the decommissioning and disposal of the old sites when there are proposals for transferring schools to new sites and were advised that generally old buildings would be demolished if there were Health and Safety risks – they would be levelled, and at the point we may look at getting a Capital Receipt. In this context we may also look at considering for education use as a priority. There has been no clear decision at the moment. They are not large sites but are close to other sites.
- Members queried whether, with the introduction of ALN legislation, we are future proofing ALN provision going forward. Members were advised that following the consultation Riverbank is to be increased from 70 – 112. It is necessary to coordinate long term provision and the project is being pushed as far as it can – but there may well be further proposals down the line. It is not suggested that this will provide all of the additional places we require as a city.

The size of the increase at Riverbank has been reduced for exactly that reason as the increase needs to be balanced with the size of the site.

The ALN review has underpinned the growth of the places in this proposals. There are a number of pupil access proving out of county – we need to redress this but we have to ensure appropriate spectrum of provision.

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

9 : WORK PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT 2019-20

RESOLVED: To note the recommendation as set out in the report.

10 : CORRESPONDENCE

RESOLVED: To note the correspondence report.

11 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: To note the content of the updated Forward Work Programme

12 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

RESOLVED:

(i) To certify consideration of the draft annual report as an urgent item on the basis that the annual report is due to be received at full council on 20 June 2019

(ii) To approve the annual report 2018-19

13 : 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.

14 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is on Tuesday 9 July 2019 at 4.30 pm

The meeting terminated at 7.30 pm

