

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 NOVEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),
Councillors Cunnah, Joyce, Morgan, Naughton, Parkhill, Phillips and
Singh

Co-opted Members: Carol Cobert (Church in Wales Representative),
Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor Representative) and
Matthew Richards (Parent Governor Representative)

Connor Clarke (Youth Council Representative)

9 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rhys Taylor, and Patricia Arlotte (Church Representative). Councillor Kanaya Singh indicated that he would be late in attending the meeting.

10 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lee Bridgeman declared a personal interest in item 8, on the basis that he is employed by Action for Children.

11 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24 September were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson subject to an amendment of the resolution in Min No: 35

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the report; and
- (ii) To note that all future correspondence is to be circulated to all Committee Members and not reported to Committee.

12 : 'PREVENTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG DEALING' - FURTHER RESPONSE AND PROGRESS

Members were advised that this item enables the Committee to review and assess the progress being made as well as any future actions in implementing the recommendations from the joint inquiry.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Linda Thorne (Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities) for this item and invited her to make a statement in which she highlighted the importance of the information and recommendations provided as a result of the inquiry, and that it had been acknowledged by the commitments made in the Corporate Plan.

The Chairperson welcomed Sarah McGill (Corporate Director, People and Communities), Alison Jones (Interim Community Safety Manager) and Phillip Norton

(Achievement Leader Targeted Education) to the meeting. Members were provided with a [presentation](#) outlining the responses to the recommendations provided as a result of the inquiry.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members referenced the hard to access services areas, and queried whether there would be any provision for satellite services. Particularly where currently there is not a Hub. Members noted the need to make best use of the assets available, it's important to be able to identify gaps and needs and where there are groups who are prepared to provide activities. In the currently climate there is no more finance available.
- Members discussed EOTA's, exclusions and the role of Governors. Members were advised that there was a governor training programme for those involved in exclusions. It is important to ensure that any moves are well managed, as there is only a small number of schools who are undersubscribed and it is important to ensure that excluded pupils do not end up in the same schools.
- Members queried whether the Youth Service sits within the correct Directorate, and were advised that it was felt that it should sit with Education and that there are obviously different elements, a joint approach between Housing, Communities, Education and Children's Services is essential. Concern was raised about the nature of the support being provided particularly after school hours and during school holidays. Members discussed the possible use of volunteers. There needs to be engagement within the adult and youth system.
- Members noted that it was important to consider the geographic gaps across when considering a locality based approach and to make sure that there is a commitment to providing additional resources in areas where there are gap, and that those resources integrate as effectively as possible, particularly where there is genuine enthusiasm and commitment from the community. There are areas which are flooded with facilities and organisations dealing with drug, drink and homeless issues. Where young people witness anti-social behaviour associated with those issues on a daily basis. Consideration also needs to be given to where those resources/facilities are placed.

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

13 : CARDIFF CHILD FRIENDLY CITY - PROGRESS REPORT

Members were advised that this item enables the Committee to review and assess the progress being made in developing the programme to make Cardiff a globally recognised Child Friendly City, outlined in the Briefing Report provided.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Employment, Education and Skills) for this item and invited her to make a statement in which she thanked the Committee for the support given in respect of this policy.

The Chairperson welcomed Mike Tate (Assistant Director, Education and Lifelong Learning), Lee Patterson and Suzanne Scarlett to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members welcomed the information contained in the progress report, and provided positive feedback in relation to the training that had been provided.
- Members expressed that in the spirit of the policy young people should be represented on all scrutiny committees, certainly they have provided added value to this committee.
- Members discussed the access of children and young people to a high quality education, the curriculum for life and the view that it is necessary to move towards what children need to prepare for life. It should be embedded in the learning in the education environment.
It was noted that it is important that parents need to understand the need and be involved in the need for a curriculum for life. Parental understanding will be an important.
- Members raised the level of resource in different areas; the provision of music tuition or the ability of families to provide the necessary kit or equipment to be in a position to utilise sporting facilities. The Cabinet Member advised that Cardiff 2030 provides that every child should have the opportunity to have a range of experiences, but noted that different schools need different resources, for example in some cases resources are required just to get some of those children ready to learn when the school days start.

In relation to sport we have to make sure that children living in those areas have the chance to access facilities outside of school and not just during the day. It was noted that Cardiff Met allows access to children in southern arc of Cardiff to use the facilities in the Cardiff Met sporting campus. As a Council we have to become more creative and to use support of partner networks to assist young people. It is not just the responsibility of schools.

- Members discussed pollution in the city and noted that 20 mph zones were being extended, and queried whether anti-idling zones could be considered. The Cabinet Member advised that Highways are currently reviewing the position. There will be exclusion zones but they are starting with schools, particularly those with difficult locations and access. Hamadryad School is an example of a school which has taken responsibilities seriously about having a proper transport plan. It is difficult to change parental mind-set but it is possible. One of the best ways is to get the young people involved as they will be better at policing parents.
- Members discussed the financial impact of the programme; what is the spend and what have we got from it? The purpose of the Child Friendly programme is actually to ensure that we are respecting Children's rights and put in a framework to challenge colleagues - Are you genuinely respecting their rights and what it means? Some people do not have the depth of understanding. That is now question is now being tested as is whether or not we have a robust process in place. It has to be sustainable. We will be judged in due course as to whether or not the changes that have been made are sustainable.

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

14 : REVIEW OF FOSTERING - PROGRESS REPORT

Members were advised that the item provided Members with the opportunity to be informed of the progress being made in reviewing fostering, including the work being undertaken across Kinship Care and the Fostering National Framework and Regional Plan.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children and Families) for this item and invited him to make a statement in which he advised that Fostering is a corporate responsibility. A large number of events have been arranged and fostering has been pushed throughout the City.

The Chairperson welcomed Claire Marchant (Director, Social Services), and Kate Hustler (Operational Manager, Substitute Family Care) to the meeting. Members were provided with a presentation which outlined the following:

Progress to date – Fostering Project Lead

- Reviewed 'Cardiff Offer'
- Increase in fee element of payment
- Raised allowance elements to at least national minimum rates
- 54 weekly payments per year
- Payments for birthdays, holidays and religious holidays
- Introduced performance monitoring

Progress to date – Recruitment

- Introduction of significant online activity
- Review of website
- Social media campaign with paid ads on Facebook & Google, plus regular features on Council Facebook and Twitter pages
- Commitment from PSB to promote via their online platforms
- Registered Social Landlords promoting via online platforms
- Banners in parks throughout the City
- Fostering referrals from Hubs and Into Work Services
- Adverts in Tenants Times and UHB magazine
- Briefing for Councillors to share online
- Attendance at events throughout the City ie, Cardiff Castle, Ikea and Community Events
- Developed links with Pride UK, commitment to share info via online
- Supported by Corporate Comms Officer
- Impact – 28 new in house applications in progress, approved 7 new foster carers since January 2019, further 6 new in house foster carers due at Panel before Christmas.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed in-house fostering and the rates provided. It was noted that Cardiff has 20% in-house and 80% independent fostering agencies (IFA;s), but that across Wales the higher figures was in-house. Members were advised that to be able to compete with the IFA's the authority has to be able to market itself and operate as a business. Any rates that are paid have to be competitive, although overall what is being provided to in-house foster carers is not much different.

The in-house team is currently trying to be more business-like in its approach to new applicants. Approaches made by carers are being responded to in a proactive manor. There are now targets which mean any contact is to be made by the team within 24 hours.

The assessment time is currently 6 – 8 months, the team is currently operating from two different venues. This will change shortly and when the teams are together there will be a review of the admin involved to ensure that the application is being moved forward in as timely a manor as possible.

- In relation to the number of children and young people with IFA's Members queried the percentage that were out of county, that information could not be accurately provided, but it was understood that the majority were within the city. It was explained that some would be out of the city because they have to be for safety reasons.

- Members raised the fact that there have been difficulties in recruitment for a long period of time. The Cabinet Member advised that the difficulties were outlined to the Committee at least 2 years ago, however there are now some 28 ongoing assessments being undertaken and there is more investment currently than in previous years. The Committee previously raised issues with performance targets and these have been changed. There is currently a £3.9m funding gap in Social Services, there has to be further investment in the service and Welsh Government are contacted about it on a regular basis.

A new OM has been appointed and has been in post since September of last year. In terms of marketing there is a lot happening, a review is still ongoing, dealing particularly with whether or not the marketing is focussed and whether the message is right. There is a need to tidy up and validate the number of foster carers and placements available. There is a commitment to ensuring that there are foster placements available.

- Members discussed the number of placements that had broken down. It would appear that there were 10 in house placements and 87 external placements that broke down during the course of the last year. Everything possible is being done to prevent that happening.

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

15 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

Councillor Bridgeman declared a personal interest in this item on the basis that he works for Action for Children who were involved in the purchase of a children's home, it was never opened and is being sold.

The Chair certified this item as urgent as it is due to be considered by Cabinet on the 21 November 2019 following the implementation of the Pre-Election Period and that its consideration by the Scrutiny Committee is considered as essential in the decision making process. The item was unavailable prior to the publication of the Committee agenda.

Members were advised that the item enables the Committee to review and assess the Directorates 3 year Strategic Plan to deliver excellent outcomes for children, and to review how the Council and its partners will develop prevention, improve practice, support and develop the work force and improve services and performance.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey, Claire Marchant (Director, Social Services), and Angela Bourge (Operational Manager, Strategy Performance and Resources) to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation which outlined the Children Services Strategy (2019-2022) and the commissioning priorities for 2019-2022:

- Reshape Early Help and Support to Families;
- Our children and young people closer to Cardiff;
- Therapeutic and Mental Health and Well-being support;
- Reshape Short Breaks;
- Improve the Local Fostering Service;
- Increase the availability of local placements through collaborative market engagement;
- Increase local residential provision including emergency provision;
- Adolescent Provision; and
- Needs analysis

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed the need to increase residential capacity in Cardiff, but were concerned to ensure, bearing in mind the recent high profile cases, that they are fit for purpose and are in suitable areas. It was noted that if we are supposed to be a Child Friendly City, it is not fitting if residents are against a Childrens Home being operated in the area in which they live.

Members were advised that it was homes for children that were required, not just more homes like Crosslands, there needs to be more short term assessments beds as well. The whole range of provision is required. It is the point of the strategy which is a key document moving forward. Crosslands provides a superb quality of care, it is hoped that in due course this will be replicated with Ty Storrie.

- Members were advised that a deep analysis of the needs we are trying to meet has been undertaken, the strategy has been developed to look at the whole system. There is an ongoing and detailed analysis of each of the priorities.

Members discussed Social Worker retention and were advised that things are improving, however there is an issue with the salary that is available to Social Workers in Cardiff. We are trying to 'grow our own' Social Workers and have currently seconded 10 members of staff on to a course. Conversations are going with Welsh Government about the recruitment and retention of Social Workers across Wales.

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

16 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Committee is to be confirmed.

The meeting terminated at 8.45 pm