

s c r u t i n y



**A Report of:
Children & Young People Scrutiny
Committee**

Annual Report 2016 – 2017

March 2017



The City and County of Cardiff

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP



Councillor Richard Cook
(Chairperson)



Councillor Paul Chaundy



Councillor Joe Boyle



Councillor Iona Gordon



Councillor Heather Joyce



Councillor Jim Murphy



Councillor Dianne Rees



Councillor Lynda Thorne

Co-opted Members:



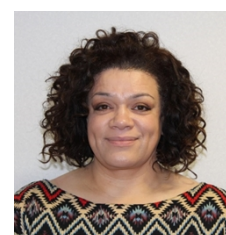
Mrs Patricia Arlotte
Roman Catholic
Representative



Carol Cobert
Church in Wales
Representative



Karen Dell'Armi
Parent Governor
Representative



Mrs Hayley Smith
Parent Governor
Representative

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

.



Councillor Richard Cook

Chairperson of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

March 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee plays an important role in assessing service performance and informing service and policy development across a range of Council services, including all aspects of Education, Social Care for Children, Children's Play and the Youth Service.

This report presents the Committee's main activities during 2016-17 and uses where ever possible the National Welsh Characteristics of Good Scrutiny to ensure that there are:

- Better outcomes - Democratic accountability drives improvement in public service.
- Better decisions - Democratic decision making is accountable, inclusive and robust.
- Better engagement – The public is engaged in democratic debate about current and future delivery of public services.

Between May 2016 and February 2017 the Committee Members have undertaken training in performance information and budgeting, and visited front line services. The Committee has scrutinised a wide range of topics contributing to the development and improvement of services for children and young people, a list of which is set out below under the following headings:

- **Inquiries** – Where the Committee has undertaken an examination of a topic over a period of time, resulting in a formal report to the Cabinet. The Committee has also undertaken a number of short one day investigations.
- **Policy Development** – Where the Committee has contributed to the Council's policy development processes by considering draft policy documents.
- **Pre-decision** - Where the Committee has evaluated and commented on policy proposals before they go to the Cabinet, giving the Cabinet the opportunity to know Scrutiny Members' views prior to making their decision.

- **Monitoring** - Where the Committee has undertaken monitoring of the Council's performance and progress in implementing actions previously agreed. The Committee has also set up two Monitoring Panels, one for Budget monitoring and the other for Performance monitoring
- **Call-In** - Where a Member has invoked the Call-in procedure under the Council's constitution, to review a Cabinet decision prior to its implementation.

Inquiries

- ❖ Child Health and Disability – Progress Report
- ❖ Child Sexual Exploitation - Cabinet Response
- ❖ Effectiveness of School Governors – Progress Report
- ❖ School Term Times - Inquiry
- ❖ Female Genital Mutilation - Inquiry

Committee Panels

- ❖ Budget Monitoring

Policy Development

- ❖ Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- ❖ Scrutiny of Central South Education Consortium – Joint working
- ❖ Schools Admission Policy
- ❖ Welsh in Education Strategy

Pre-decision Scrutiny

- ❖ 2017-18 Budget Proposals
- ❖ Corporate Plan 2017- 2019
- ❖ Cardiff 2020 Strategy – Aiming for Excellence
- ❖ Specialist Provision for Primary Aged Pupils
- ❖ Families First transitions arrangements
- ❖ Direct Payments

Performance Monitoring

- ❖ ESTYN Inspection monitoring
- ❖ Children's Services – Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- ❖ Education and Lifelong Learning – Schools Annual Report 2015/16 and quarterly performance reports
- ❖ Central South Education Consortium – Estyn Report update & Consortium's contribution to raising standards in Cardiff's Schools
- ❖ Safeguarding Board Annual report - Primary Aged Pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties and with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

Member Briefings

- ❖ Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- ❖ Youth Service
- ❖ Maintenance issues at Cardiff's Schools

Call-in

- ❖ School Catchment Area Consultation – Cabinet Decision CAB/15/84

Public Voice

- ❖ Specialist Provision for Primary Aged Pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties and with behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has held 10 full Committee meetings, and one joint meeting with Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee since May 2016. As a result of the consideration of over 46 reports, covering policy development, pre-decision scrutiny, monitoring progress and service area performance, the Scrutiny Committee Chairperson sent 35 letters to the Cabinet and officers, which included requests for additional information, comments, and observations on items considered at the Committee Meetings.

Also as a result of these meetings the Committee agreed to write to the relevant Cabinet Member identifying 11 recommendations for the Cabinet and officers to consider. The Committee received timely responses from the Cabinet to all letters that requested a response. In addition officers have provided information where

requested and agreed to amend future reports in response to the Committee's requests.

Summary for this Administration 2012 - 2017

During the last 5 years, this Committee has held 58 full Committee meetings, including joint meeting with Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee. As a result of the consideration of over 190 reports, covering policy development, pre-decision scrutiny, monitoring progress and service area performance, the Scrutiny Committee Chairperson sent 134 letters to the Cabinet and officers, which included requests for additional information, comments, and observations.

Also resulting from the consideration of these issues at meetings of the Committee, Members agreed to write to the relevant Cabinet Member identifying 53 specific recommendations for the Cabinet and officers to consider. The Committee received timely responses from the Cabinet to all letters that requested a response. In addition, officers have provided information where requested and agreed to amend future reports in response to the Committee's requests. The Committee also undertook up to 18 separate inquiries and held five special call-in Committee meetings.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO SCRUTINY – BETTER ENGAGEMENT

The Council's five scrutiny committees regularly invite citizens and representatives of community and third sector organisations to provide evidence at committee meetings and Task & Finish inquiries. During 2016/17, this Committee has received advice, comments and concerns from numerous people who have either been invited or requested attendance at Committee.

In May 2016, the Chair of the Committee received correspondence from a number of citizens, who requested the opportunity to address the Committee. They wish to present their views, comments and advice to Committee on proposals to review the provision of Specialist Provision for Primary Aged Pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties, and with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties. In addition they wanted the Members to be aware of the impact they feel the closure of Meadowbank would have on the lives of children with a Speech and Language Impairment in Cardiff who receive at first hand the experience of the staff, pupils and the environment in which they work in.

The Chair agreed to invite these members of the public to address the Committee. A copy of the documentation, which some citizens had sent to Scrutiny Services for Member's consideration, was also circulated prior to the meeting.

The Committee heard some very passionate comments about the education and support provided by the school, and how these proposals could impact on the future outcome of pupils with speech and language difficulties and with behavioural emotional and social difficulties. The Committee was fully aware that the consultation period had ended, however having read and considered the information in the Cabinet report and reflected on the information provided by the parents, staff and governors the Members agreed to provide the Cabinet with its comments, concern and recommendations in respect of the policy and service development proposed in the Cabinet report.

The Cabinet subsequently resolved that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education be authorised to:

- Carry out a further review of speech and language support in Cardiff with the aim of bringing forward revised proposals;
- Undertake further engagement with schools and other stakeholders in relation to early intervention for children with behavioural emotional and social needs;
- 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.

The Cabinet subsequently considered a report on School Organisation Planning: Specialist provision for primary aged pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties and with Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties at its meeting on 14 July 2016 and RESOLVED; that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education be authorised to;

- Carry out a further review of speech and language support in Cardiff with the aim of bringing forward revised proposals;
- Undertake further engagement with schools and other stakeholders in relation to early intervention for children with behavioural emotional and social needs;
- 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.

Scrutiny Review – Better Decisions

Wales Audit Office (WAO)'s February 2016 inspection report included the following recommendations, which impacted on Scrutiny in Cardiff:

- Develop an approach to cross-cutting scrutiny (given the increasing nature of collaborative service delivery and governance, and the Wellbeing of Future Generations agenda).
- Consider scrutiny's role in addressing the strategic challenges facing the Council at this point in time.
- Ensure that any vacancies on scrutiny committees are filled quickly.
- Consider webcasting scrutiny committees.

In response to the recommendations in WAO's previous 2014 Corporate Assessment report, the scrutiny committee chairs had already jointly commissioned the Council's Improving Scrutiny report, which had reported in September 2015, proposing a range of improvement actions that were currently being implemented.

In response to WAO's further recommendations, the Cabinet at its meeting on 21 March agreed a statement of actions. These included a Review of Scrutiny, which has been undertaken, with recommendations to be implemented from the start of the next political term. The Review engaged Members, officers and external stakeholders, and the resultant report was reported to Constitution Committee on 2 March 2017.

Arrangements to scrutinise cross-cutting issues have been developed by the Council, including:

- Joint meetings to scrutinise cross-cutting issues including: Social Services Reporting Framework; Community Hubs; Alternative Delivery Mechanisms; and Human Trafficking.

- Joint task and finish groups, for example to consider Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Joint scrutiny with neighbouring authorities on issues including Regulatory Services and the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.
- In September 2015 it was agreed that the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee would take lead overview role for scrutinising the work of Cardiff Partnership Board, with the other four Committees undertaking detailed scrutiny of Partnership Board work streams. The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the What Matters strategy in January 2016.

Vacancies are allocated to political groups under political proportionality rules, and are discussed on a monthly basis with Party Group Whips. Vacancies that have been unable to be filled by a particular political group have been offered to other political groups and independent councillors. Appointments to vacancies on committees have been considered as a standing item on all Full Council meeting agendas. As a short-term measure, Full Council in July 2016 decided to reduce the number of members on scrutiny committees down to eight for the remainder of this Administration. The 2016 Member Survey also explored the challenges that Members faced in filling vacant Committee places. It found a range of challenges, including other Council duties, family and work pressures to be key factors.

Webcasting facilities are in place in County Hall and in the City Hall Chamber, allowing some Scrutiny committee meetings and Full Council meetings to be webcast. The Management Statement of Action directed the introduction of webcasting of committee meetings to include one scrutiny committee meeting per month from December 2016. Committees piloted webcasting between November and December, and Economy & Culture scrutiny committee held the first live scrutiny webcast in December 2016.

Committee Member Development – Better Decisions

Scrutiny is a Member-led function whose success is closely linked to the capacity and development of the Members who sit on Scrutiny Committees. The Scrutiny Team therefore worked closely with colleagues across the Council to provide a continuous range of opportunities for Members to build or refresh their Scrutiny skills, and to extend their knowledge and insight into a range of issues relevant to their Scrutiny role.

The Members hold pre-Committee meetings to discuss, analyse and understand the issues being considered, and where necessary ask for further clarification of information. From this, the Members established a number of lines of inquiry for the meeting.

The Members continued with the operation of a Budget Monitoring Panel to better focus the work of the Members on monitoring Directorate spend and implementation of savings proposals, and to reduce the number of items considered at Committee meetings. Members received briefings and guidance on various aspects of expenditure, performance and operation.

Highlights from the Committee's work during 2016/17

This section of the Annual Report presents highlights of the Committee's activities during 2016-17. The report identifies what the scrutiny committee was trying to achieve in each piece of scrutiny, and what it actually achieved.

Task & Finish Group Inquiries – Better outcomes

A key part of the Committee's work is the identification and investigation of key areas of concern, to enable better outcomes for public services and drive improvement in service provision. These can often be areas which a Directorate is not actively working on, or which are cross cutting in nature, involving several Directorate and partner organisations. The outputs from these investigations are reported back to the lead Cabinet Member for consideration, and – where appropriate – the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

School Term Times

A request to look into the timing of school holidays was agreed by a Full Council meeting of Cardiff Council on 28 July 2016, at which the following motion was agreed:

- The disproportionately expensive cost of holidays during the traditional school holiday period, and the impact these costs have on families in our city;
- That families want to observe designated school holiday periods, but that the excessive cost of taking breaks during these periods can prove prohibitive – meaning families often have to choose between taking no holiday at all, or taking pupils out of school during term time;
- Moves by other councils in the UK to examine existing school term arrangements with a view to shortening the summer break in order to

create an additional week's holiday elsewhere during the school calendar when families can take holidays at a cheaper rate.

- The Council resolves to ask the Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider, as part of their future work planning, whether they wish to undertake a detailed analysis of the issue.

The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 27 September to undertake an inquiry into amending school term times in line with the request by Council on 28 July. The first meeting of the task group was held on 14 November 2016.

Members of the committee initially agreed that prior to providing any response to the Cabinet, it would be prudent to seek the views of Head Teachers, Teachers, and School Governing Bodies, firstly on whether or not to investigate the possibility of amending school term dates, and then to provide a robust evidence base on which to consider their decision.

The results of this survey were subsequently reviewed by the Task Group and indicated that a majority of schools responding to the inquiry wish to have the summer holiday shortened by one week. The survey did not, however, clearly indicate which other holiday the week should move to. The outcome of the survey was reported to Cabinet in March 2017 for Cabinet to consider.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This item was raised as part of the discussions around issues for consideration in the Committee's work programme in July 2016 and was subsequently approved at Committee on 27 September 2016. The Members identified a number of concerns particularly around:

- Is it happening in Cardiff?
- How are community leaders responding to the practice?
- What work is being undertaken in schools and communities?

- Have there been any prosecutions?

At the first meeting of the Task Group the members considered a paving report on FGM which included:

- A definition of FGM, covering the four Types of FGM
- The legislation relating to FGM, in particular the Children's Act 2004, The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, section 73, Serious Crime Act 2015.
- All Wales Child Protection Procedures - ALL WALES PROTOCOL 2011.
- The level of FGM in Wales.
- FGM Policies and Guidance.
- Third Sector support (BAWSO).
- The present process in place in Cardiff for FGM.
- Training for professionals.
- Awareness raising in communities.

The Task group also held two round table discussions with numerous stakeholders involved in FGM. These discussion identified a number of key issues which the task group reported to Committee for consideration by Cabinet, the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and other partners.

The findings of the Inquiry will be reported to Cabinet in March 2017.

The Appointment and Effectiveness of Local Authority School Governors

Committee undertook this Inquiry as part of their 2015/16 work programme. The resultant report capturing the key findings and recommendations was published in July 2015 and reported to Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Education responded to the Committee's inquiry report letter on 19 October 2015. The response letter reported that the Cabinet Member

was pleased to note that the report's overall findings and recommendations reflected her own views, and that strengthening school governance is a priority for Education. The response report stated that all 10 of the Committee's recommendations had been accepted.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate also developed an action plan, dated June 2015, for the implementation of the recommendations, which provided a detailed explanation of how each recommendation was being addressed, together with an anticipated implementation date.

In December 2016 the Committee requested and received a progress report. The progress report gave a detailed explanation of the work undertaken since the receipt of the Committee's inquiry report letter, as well as the work in further developing the effectiveness of school governors in improving the educational attainment of their pupils. The report demonstrated the progress across the 10 recommendations as well as explaining the next steps in the continuous improvement of school governing bodies.

The Committee was very pleased to see that all the inquiry report's recommendations had been addressed. Members did, however, feel that although the progress report explained in some detail what was being done, some of the comments in the report didn't reflect the reality of what was happening in individual school governing bodies.

Schools Causing Concern

The Committee agreed to refocus the second phase of the inquiry to visit schools which had experienced unexpected recent dips in pupil performance. They visited three schools and were particularly interested to find out what had cause the dip in performance, what actions had been put in place, and what support and advice the schools had received.

Following consideration of a visit outcome report to Committee in May 2016 the Members agreed to write to the Cabinet Member with the observations that they

had made during their visits. These visits had been arranged to enable the Members to explore the factors challenging the performance of schools which had shown an unexpected drop in pupil performance last year.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The Committee agreed to undertake a Task & Finish Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Cardiff, as concerns had been raised during last year's inquiry into Human Trafficking. The Director of Social Services also highlighted it as an issue of concern. The Members organised the inquiry to assess the robustness of the CSE strategy, the preventative measures in place and the level of the Council's and partner organisations response to incidents of CSE. It agreed to explore partnership working and resource allocation associated with managing CSE in Cardiff. Members were also interested in assessing the scale of CSE in some communities.

The Task Group heard from third sector organisations, the Police, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, Probation, Youth Offending Service, Education, Welsh Government and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The Members have also considered the All Wales Protocol and best practice examples from other local authorities.

The report was presented to Cabinet on 27 July 2016, and Cabinet agreed a full response on 13 October 2016. The Cabinet response confirmed that all of the report's 13 recommendations had been accepted. In addition as well as detailing the Cabinet's response to each of the recommendations, the response contained a copy of Cardiff's newly developed Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention Strategy. This sets out the commitment of partners in Cardiff to do everything possible to prevent child sexual exploitation, protect and support those affected by CSE and tackle perpetrators. It is important to note that for now, this is a Cardiff only strategy. The Council is continuing to work with colleagues in the Vale of Glamorgan with an aim to develop a regional strategy.

A coordinated, proactive, multi-agency approach is essential to fulfil the overarching outcomes of the strategy and those of the National Plan, namely:

- Prepare children, families, communities and professionals to spot children at risk.
- Prevent harm.
- Protect victims.
- Pursue, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.

The strategy and implementation plan demonstrates how partners in Cardiff are determined to do all they can to work together to find CSE wherever it takes place and limit the impact on children and families.

Additional funding for a CSE team was also included in the budget for 2017/18.

Policy Development & Pre-Decision Scrutiny – Better Decisions

A key part of the Committee's work is the review and assessment of effectiveness of the Council's policies which will impact of the lives of Children & Young People in Cardiff. The Committee always ensures that its work programme enables the scrutiny of any policy development and the pre-decision of any Cabinet report seeking approval for a strategy or policy affecting Children & Young People.

The Committee has during the past year undertaken pre-decision scrutiny of the following key policies:

- ❖ Cardiff 2020 Strategy – Aiming for Excellence
- ❖ Specialist Provision for Primary Aged Pupils
- ❖ Families First transitions arrangements
- ❖ Direct Payments
- ❖ Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- ❖ Schools Admissions Policy

Cardiff 2020 Strategy – Aiming for Excellence

The Committee received the strategy at its June 2016 meeting. The report set out the long term improvement strategy for education and learning in Cardiff that secures the commitment of all key stakeholders to a clear set of goals and desired outcomes. The report also details the following aspects of the strategy's vision that "All children and young people in Cardiff attend a great school and develop the knowledge, skills and characteristics that lead them to become personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens".

The Committee noted that this is a very high level strategic document which focusses on the key aspirations for education over the next five years. Members were informed that there were operational plans which will deliver the success

measures along with actions, performance measures and milestones. The Members understood that at this stage these operational plans were not fully drafted and asked that the strategy with operational plans, be presented to the Committee at its December 2016 meeting, which was duly provided.

Members expressed some concern around the governance arrangements for the implementation and assessment of the Cardiff 2020 – Aiming for Excellence Strategy, which will be undertaken by the Council’s Education Development Board. The Committee was subsequently informed of the Strategies governance arrangements..

The Committee agreed to include the review and monitoring of the implementation of the strategy in its future work programme.

Families First Transition Arrangements

The Committee considered the Families First Annual Review report for 2015/2016 at its meeting on 18 October 2016. Members heard that Cardiff had not yet set any transitional arrangements for the end of the contract in March 2017. Members expressed concern that there may be a risk that Families First will not be in a position to continue to help families in need in light of the underspend on staff and the number of staff leaving. Members agreed that they wished to consider the draft Cabinet report as soon as it was available to ensure that it is considered by Cabinet in a timely manner.

The Committee received the draft Cabinet report at its December 2016 meeting. The report set out the proposed interim arrangements for the transition period, which includes varying some existing contracts in order to extend their initial contract terms, decommissioning some of the services and potentially commissioning pilot/alternative arrangements during the transition period.

The report also set out a timetable for the governance arrangements to ensure a smooth progression to new arrangements for service users together with equality

impact assessments which were used to inform the proposals for the interim arrangements.

The Committee subsequently wrote to indicate that it was pleased with the draft Cabinet report and considered it to be a positive response to the concerns raised around the transitions arrangements by Committee in October. The Members reviewed the plans for the interim arrangements and the next Families First programme.

The Committee recommended that all appropriate providers must be considered as part of the tendering process, both large and small organisations, and that the draft Cabinet report should be brought back to this Committee prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

Direct Payments

In 2005 the Council appointed the Cardiff & Vale Coalition for Disabled People (CVCDP) (now Diverse Cymru) to provide a service which was responsible for supporting the service user to recruit a Personal Care Assistant (P.A.) or to establish a contract with an Agency.

Diverse Cymru has continued to provide the Direct Payment Support Service. The value of the service equates to annual payments of circa £700,000. During the last 11 years service user numbers have increased, and currently 621 adults and 151 children are in receipt of a Direct Payment, with 40 adults and 16 children 'working towards' a Direct Payment with Diverse Cymru (figures as of November 2016).

There was a need to recommission the Direct Payments support service to comply with procurement requirements, and also to ensure that the service integrates effectively with current models of social care prevention and support. In addition, Full Council on 25 February 2016 included a saving of £200,000 from a review of the administrative arrangements for Direct Payments, including 'the current contract with a support provider. Consideration to be given to alternative service

delivery focussing on quality and best use of resources whilst continuing to maintain existing service user support to those receiving a direct payment'.

The draft Cabinet report set out the proposals to recommission the service. The report indicated that the preferred model would be one organisation delivering the Support and Managed Accounts Service across the City. It was proposed that the contract for Direct Payments will be delivered as a whole package by tendering to the market for providers to deliver services which meet the outcomes of individuals as set out in their support plans, offering individuals more choice, control and independence in their lives.

The Committee wrote expressing some concern around the governance and dispute resolution processes within the current system and recommended that the new contract must set out clearly the governance and responsibility arrangements for all parties as well as including a comprehensive dispute resolution process. The Committee also expressed concern that the current contract currently offered two separate hourly rates, which did not meet the current Foundation living wage. The Committee therefore recommended that the Cabinet must be provided with the option to ensure that all people employed through the Direct Payments system received the Foundation living wage of £8.45 per hour, as set out in Council Policy. Finally, the Committee requested that a progress report on the implementation of the contract and operation of the new Direct Payments support service for children and young people be provided to the committee one year after the contract had been signed.

2017-18 Budget Proposals

The Council's Constitution allows for scrutiny committees to consider the draft Cabinet budget proposals prior to their consideration by the Cabinet and Full Council. The Committee considered the Council's draft Corporate Plan and draft budgetary proposals for 2017 -18, including their detailed savings proposals and Capital Programme at its meeting in February 2017. It reviewed the draft

Corporate Plan and budget savings proposals, and tested their impact on the outcomes for children and young people.

The Committee identified a number of issues across the Corporate Plan, Corporate Budget and Directorate Budget reports. These concerns were included in a letter, sent to the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee for it to take into consideration when it reviewed the overall Corporate Plan, Consultation and Budget proposals on 15 February 2017 and to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 16 February 2017.

The Committee's letter was considered by Cabinet and Council during their deliberations on the proposals. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance also responded to the letter providing a full explanation on the specific budget savings points raised by the Committee.

School Admission Arrangements and Welsh in Education Strategy

The Committee is due to consider the pre-decision scrutiny of the School Admission Arrangements and Welsh in Education Strategy at its final meeting in March 2017. The outcome of this will be sent to the Cabinet in time for its meeting on 17 March 2017.

Performance Monitoring – Better Outcomes

The Committee has a clearly defined role in the Council's improvement and governance arrangements, and its work programme includes a high level of the monitoring and review of Directorate performance, resource management, target setting and improvement management.

This year the Committee reviewed the level of Member involvement in monitoring performance and budget, particularly at Committee. The Committee agreed to set up a Budget Monitoring Panel to free up some time at Committee and better focus the Members' analysis of information through an ongoing informal panel that reports back to the Full Committee.

Budget Monitoring Panel

The Committee agreed to create a Budget Monitoring Panel to more effectively investigate each Directorate's progress in achieving the Council's agreed savings proposals, and in managing any potential expenditure overspends during the year.

The Panel agreed a programme of meetings to review the Cabinet Budget Monitoring reports as and when they are published. The Panel has met twice this year and has reviewed the Month 4 and Month 6 Cabinet budget monitoring reports. The outcome of each panel meeting was reported (where appropriate) to Committee and letters sent to Directors (if required), seeking clarification on savings programme, details of funding calculations and a commitment to undertake a detailed investigation.

All requests for information were responded to promptly, and reported to Members at their next Panel meeting.

Quarterly Performance Reports – Children’s Services

During 2016/17 the Committee noted generally improving performance across many indicators; however they expressed their concern at a few indicators showing reduction in performance. The Committee has reviewed each quarterly corporate performance report together with a catalogue of local indicators which the Members have requested to regularly monitor.

The Committee has reviewed all of the local performance indicator reports in detail, following which the Committee has written if they had concern about areas where performance was either reducing slowly, or which had experienced a sudden dip in performance. Members have also written passing on their appreciation of the work officers had made in those areas where performance has improved.

Performance Reports – Education and Lifelong Learning

The Committee continued its new approach to the scrutiny of educational performance by scheduling throughout the year examination of particular aspects of performance, in addition to an overview of annual performance in January. The meetings have focused on the development and implementation of the Cardiff 2020 strategy together with the Education Corporate Performance reports.

The performance monitoring reports enable Committee to review, assess and challenge the implementation of all actions and thereby the delivery of high quality education and improved outcomes for children and young people in Cardiff’s Schools.

The Committee has regularly written to the Cabinet Member seeking clarification on actions and recommended improvements in performance.

Central South Consortium – Annual Performance Report

The Committee considered the Consortium's business plan as part of its consideration of the Education Business Plan. The Committee's key task was to ensure that the two business plans fitted together in ensuring the improvement of outcomes of Cardiff's pupils.

The Committee also reviewed the monitoring and assessment of the work of the Consortium in Cardiff together with a briefing paper setting out how the Consortium contributed to raising standards in Cardiff's schools. The Members also discussed how the scrutiny committees of the five local authorities participating in the Consortium could best scrutinise the strategic direction and output of the Consortium. They agreed that the chairpersons and scrutiny officers from all five scrutiny committees would meet as a collaborative scrutiny panel to undertake a more strategic overview.

Committee Briefing Reports – Better Outcomes

The Committee agreed to receive briefing papers outside the normal Committee agenda so that they could be more effectively reviewed. The Committee agreed to receive these briefings as and when they were available.

Subjects covered included:

- ❖ Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
- ❖ Youth Service
- ❖ Maintenance issues at three of Cardiff's Secondary Schools.

The outcome from the Members' review of the briefings has been reported to Committee and appropriate letters sent to Directors. All requests for information have been responded to promptly and reported to Members..

Call-in of Cabinet Decision 15/CAB/84 (Welsh Medium Schools Catchment Areas) – Better Decisions

The Council's Call-In Procedure provides that any non-Executive Member may request to call-in a decision of which notice has been given in writing to the Operational Manager (Scrutiny Services). The Committee received a request for a call in on Cabinet Decision CAB/15/84 on Welsh Medium Schools Catchment Areas. The Call-in was held on 17 May and the outcome of the meeting was to not to refer the decision back to Cabinet.

Suggested Items for 2017/18 Work Programme

The Committee receives regular work programme updates at which Members have the opportunity to consider items suggested by members of the public, young people, organisations, Council Members and other scrutiny committees, for inclusion on the work programme. Committee Members can also suggest any new issues which may be of interest to the Committee.

Following the May 2017 Council elections the new Administration may agree at Council to continue with a Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. Should the Committee consider a new work programme for 2017/18 municipal year, this Committee would like to recommend the following items to be considered for inclusion in its work programme:

- ❖ Youth Service inquiry
- ❖ The monitoring and reduction of young people who are not in education, employment or training
- ❖ Cardiff 2020 Strategy
- ❖ Consortium performance
- ❖ Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- ❖ Play Service

The Council is responsible for co-ordinating the production of the main strategies and plans covering service development and provision across a range of services and agencies. The Committee's future work programme could include:

- ❖ Children's Services Improvement Plan
- ❖ Corporate Plan and Budget
- ❖ Integrated Family Support Team

The Committee has undertaken a number of task group inquiries during the year and will be identifying further issues for consideration during June/July 2017.

It is suggested that the Committee continues to receive the regular progress and performance reports on:

- ❖ Children's Services performance
- ❖ School performance
- ❖ Budget proposals and monitoring