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

# **Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017- 18**

**May 2018**



**Cardiff Council**

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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP



Councillor Lee Bridgeman  
(Chairperson)



Councillor Dan De'Ath



Councillor Philippa Hill-John



Councillor Heather Joyce



Councillor Linda Morgan



Councillor Jim Murphy



Councillor Mike Phillips



Councillor Kanaya Singh



Councillor Rhys Taylor

### Co-opted Members:



**Mrs P Arlotte**  
Roman Catholic  
Representative



**Carol Cobert**  
Church in Wales  
Representative



**Ms Rebecca Crump**  
Parent Governor  
Representative



**Karen Dell'Armi**  
Parent Governor  
Representative

## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

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**Councillor Lee Bridgeman**

**Chairperson of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**May 2018**

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## 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 2017-18 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 July 2017 and April 2018 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.
- **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 a Budget monitoring panel.
- **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 Reports**

- ❖ School Term Times - Response
- ❖ Female Genital Mutilation – Response
- ❖ Out of County Placements – Inquiry
- ❖ Preventing Young People's Involvement in Drug Dealing Inquiry – Joint with Community and Adult Service Scrutiny Committee

### **Committee Panels**

- ❖ Budget Monitoring
- ❖ Children's Services Performance reporting format

### **Policy Development**

- ❖ Scrutiny of Central South Education Consortium – Joint working
- ❖ Schools Admission Policy
- ❖ Schools Organisation Planning

### **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

- ❖ 2018-19 Budget Proposals
- ❖ Corporate Plan 2018- 2020
- ❖ Families First – arrangements for recommissioning
- ❖ School Organisation Planning Band B – The future development of the education estate in Cardiff
- ❖ School Admissions arrangements 2019/20
- ❖ School Organisation Planning - Band B priorities
- ❖ School organisation proposals – improving provision for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs 2018-22

- ❖ The performance of Cardiff's Schools 2016/17
- ❖ St David's College – proposed change of status
- ❖ 2018/19 Cabinet Budget proposals
- ❖ School Admissions Arrangements
- ❖ School organisation proposals – improving provision for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs 2018-22 – Consultation outcome

### **Performance Monitoring**

- ❖ Children's Services – Quarterly Performance Monitoring
- ❖ Education and Lifelong Learning – Schools Annual Report 2016/17 and quarterly performance reports
- ❖ Central South Education Consortium – Consortium's contribution to raising standards in Cardiff's Schools
- ❖ Regional Adoption Service
- ❖ Families First

### **Member Briefings**

- ❖ Signs of Safety
- ❖ School Holiday Enrichment Programme
- ❖ Youth Service

### **Public Voice**

- ❖ School Admission Arrangements 2019/20

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 July 2017. As a result of the consideration of over 32 reports, covering policy development, pre-decision scrutiny, monitoring progress and service area performance, the Scrutiny Committee Chairperson sent 22 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 9 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.

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## **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 2017/18, this Committee has received advice, comments and concerns from numerous people who have either been invited or requested attendance at Committee.

The Chairman has received requests for attendance and associated correspondence on a number of issues over the past year. All correspondence is reviewed and appraised prior to each relevant Committee meeting and Members are asked if they wish to raise any issues on behalf of the public or that the Chairman reads out the public questions at Committee to enable those attending to hear their question being asked and the resultant response from the Cabinet Member and or Director. At one Committee meeting there were over 30 people in the public gallery to observe the consideration of an issue that they were concerned about.

In November 2017, the Committee considered a draft Cabinet report on the School Admission Arrangements 2019/20 at which the Committee received evidence from Cardiff University on their research around school admission criteria and admission arrangements prior to further consultation. The Chair of the Committee received correspondence from a number of interested parties setting out a number of concerns and questions. The Chairman also welcomed a number of people to the public Gallery of the Committee meeting. During the consideration of the draft cabinet report, Members raised the concerns and asked questions proposed by the public to ensure that those present could clearly hear and understand the explanations and answers given.

In January 2018 the Committee considered a draft Cabinet report on School Organisation Proposals – Improving Provision for Children and Young people with Additional learning Needs 2018-22. The Chairman also received correspondence

from interest parties on the impact of these proposals on Meadowbank Special School. At the meeting, representative of Meadowbank Special School were present in the public gallery to hear their concerns, raised by Members, and the resultant response from the Cabinet Member and or Director.

In March 2018 the Committee received a draft Cabinet report to inform the Cabinet of responses received following public consultation on the Council's School Admission Arrangements 2019/20. The Chairman received correspondence from interest parties and particularly the Marlborough Children's Action Group on the proposed arrangements. At the meeting, representative of Marlborough and Roath Primary School were present in the public gallery to hear their concerns, raised by Members, and the resultant response from the Cabinet Member and or Director.

The outcome of each of these meetings were captured in the Chairman's' letter to the Cabinet Member for consideration at the relevant Cabinet Meeting.

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## 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 the Scrutiny Committees have implemented a range of improvement actions and incorporated in to the Council's Corporate Plan.

Arrangements to scrutinise cross-cutting issues that have been developed by this Committee, including:

- Joint meetings to scrutinise cross-cutting issues including: Social Services Reporting Framework and Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Care and Support Needs Area Plan 2018-2023.
- Joint task and finish group looking into Drugs.
- Joint scrutiny with neighbouring authorities on issues including the Regional Adoption Service and the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.

The Scrutiny of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act - The Council's Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee has formal responsibility for scrutinising the Cardiff Public Services Board. However, each of the other Council scrutiny committees can scrutinise specific Public Services Board issues falling under its terms of reference.

In November 2017 The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee undertook a strategic overview of Cardiff's Draft Well-being Plan to enable the Committee's comments, observations, or concerns about Cardiff's draft Well-being Plan into the Public Services Board consultation.

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. Throughout this municipal year the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee has had a full Membership.

Webcasting facilities are in place in County Hall and in the City Hall Chamber, allowing some Scrutiny committee 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, as from May 2018 any scrutiny Committee considering an issue of public interest and held in Committee Room 4 of County Hall will be webcast.

In addition the Scrutiny Committee have developed and implemented a performance indicator "The number of external contributors to Scrutiny meetings" to highlight the breadth and depth of evidence heard by scrutiny members. As at the 31 March 2018 scrutiny committees have received evidence directly from over 250 external witnesses.

## Committee Member Development – Better Decisions

Scrutiny is a Member-led function whose success is closely linked to the capacity and development of the Members that 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.

In May 2017 new elections were held for the whole Council which resulted in a considerable number of new Councillors. To aid the new Councillor in an initial understanding of the scrutiny service and support provide by the Council, the service provided a scrutiny stall at the induction session for all Members in May 2017.

Following Council's approval of the Chairmanship and Membership of each of the five scrutiny Committee's, Scrutiny services organised a programme of training events to enable the new Scrutiny members to gain an overview and understanding of their roles, activities and scrutiny processes. This included:

- Introduction to Scrutiny – June 2017
- Charing Skills – June 2017
- Questioning Skills – July 2017
- Budget Training – February 2018
- Education Consortium - May 2018

In addition, the Members attend 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 can also 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.

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## Highlights from the Committee's work during 2017/18

This section of the Annual Report presents highlights of the Committee's activities during 2017 -18. 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.

### Out of County Placements

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This inquiry was requested by three Cabinet Members, the Committee Chairman and supported by all Committee Members at the work programme forum meeting.

The terms of reference of the Inquiry was agreed as:

- To review the provision of out of county placements, the types of provision, cost and impact on resources
- To identify gaps in local provision, social services, and education that result in the need to place children out of county.
- To identify the barriers to providing additional support in Cardiff and the impact on looked after children in being placed outside Cardiff.

- To consider plans and proposals to provide improved provision and determine the effectiveness of these improvement in addressing Cardiff high levels of out of county provision.
- To report the findings of the Committee to the Cabinet.

Members agreed to hold a number of meetings and to receive the following information:

- Overview and background – to set the context of the Inquiry and gain an understanding of the policies, plans, proposals and challenges around the placement of Children who are looked after by Cardiff Council.
- The members received evidence from The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Children’s Services Senior and Social Workers. The inquiry also heard from Voices from Care, Fostering Network the Children’s Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C’s), and the Chairman of the Welsh Government “Outcome for Children Ministerial Advisory Group”.
- Members also reviewed a number of documents which had been identified as relevant to the work of this Inquiry.

The Members have completed their evidence gathering sessions and identified a number of key findings which identified areas for potential improvement. A report has been drafted for the Committee to consider which highlights a number of recommendations for the Cabinet to consider.

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

## **Preventing Young People’s Involvement in Drug Dealing – Joint Task Group with Community and Adult Services**

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In response to a letter (dated 27 June 2017) from Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, Cllr Lynda Thorne, a joint CYPSC/ CASSC Task Group has been holding Task and Finish inquiries into drug dealing in Cardiff. The scope of the inquiry called for close examination of the situation in the Butetown and



Grangetown areas in particular. The first meeting took place on 17 October, 2017 and the Task Group is chaired by Cllr. Saeed Ebrahim.

The group has been working closely with the Community Safety Manager and Safer & Cohesive Communities Board partners. During the evidence gathering sessions, thus far, Members have heard opinions from South Wales Police, the Youth Service, the Third Sector, Schools, a former drug dealer, the Probation Service, Housing Officers and Community Groups. Scrutiny Services are in the process of analysing over 400 responses to an online survey which was heavily promoted on Cardiff Council's social media platforms.

The Task Group is expected to write its final report by summer 2018.

## **School Term Times**

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The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 27 September 2016 to undertake an inquiry into amending school term times in line with the request by Council on 28 July 2016. 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 its consideration.

The report was subsequently presented to Cabinet on 6 July 2017, which included two recommendations for the Cabinet to respond to:

- Decides whether it should undertake formal consultation with the view to seeking the Welsh Government's approval to change the School Term Dates for Cardiff's Schools .
- Inform Schools Governing Bodies that they may wish to amend their Inset days to link with Eid al-Adha and Diwali

The Committee received the Cabinet's response to its report on 14 November 2017, namely:

Recommendation 1 Response: This recommendation is NOT Accepted.

The Cabinet is recommended to refer the issue on changes to term times to Welsh Government for their consideration, as to whether they would wish to undertake a coordinated national consultation on this matter.

In responding to the first part of the recommendation from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, it is clear that the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary statement from June 2017 is an important point of reference. Welsh Government expect to see a high degree of harmonisation across Wales on term dates. Cardiff acting independently and undertaking its own consultation on significant changes works against this expectation.

Any significant amendment to term dates would need to align closely with nationally agreed schedules for examinations and tests in schools, together with nationally agreed conditions of service for school based staff, including teachers.

Recommendation 2 - Inform Schools Governing Bodies that they may wish to amend their Inset days to link with Eid al- Adha and Diwali – The recommendation is ACCEPTED.

A number of factors should be considered by schools in determining their inset days. Where schools in a network or cluster align inset days they can provide important opportunities for collaborative professional development. Consideration of religious festivals is also an important factor in some school communities. However it should be borne in mind that the scheduling of inset days on such religious festivals would also impact on staff who themselves may be wishing to celebrate the festivals.

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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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?

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, and was subsequently presented to Cabinet on 6 July 2017. The report included two recommendation for the Cabinet to respond to. The Cabinet response stated that one recommendation was partially accepted and the second was fully accepted. The third recommendation was directed to the Crown Prosecution Services and BAWSO, was supported by the Council, the fourth recommendation was that the Committee wrote to the University Heath Board to support for a FGM Clinic.

The Scrutiny Service was informed, in August 2017, that a pilot FGM clinic, for Cardiff & Vale patients, has been set up, which will hopefully move to an All Wales approach in the future. In addition Education Secretary Kirsty Williams wrote in July 2017, to all schools in Wales to raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

## **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 a large number of key policies, prior to their consideration by Cabinet:

- ❖ Families First Recommissioning
- ❖ Schools Admissions
  - Arrangements
  - Criteria
- ❖ School Organisation Planning
  - Band B Future Developments
  - Priorities
  - ALN
  - ALN consultation
- ❖ St David's Collage
- ❖ 2018 – 2019 Budget Proposals
- ❖ Corporate Plan 2018 - 2021

### **Families First – Arrangements for Recommissioning**

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The Committee received the draft Cabinet report at its July 2017 meeting. The report of the Director of Social Services recommended that Cabinet:

- i. Agree the proposed phased approach to the recommissioning of the next Families First Programme grant funded services as set out in the body of the report;

- ii. Subject to recommendation 3, to delegate authority to the Director of Social Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Early Years Children and Families and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance, and Section 151 and the Director of Governance and Legal Services for all aspects of commissioning (including the award of contracts) and any associated arrangements which may be required in relation to the next Programme.
- iii). Agree that, subject to all contracts and arrangements being made to include appropriate provisions in relation to the availability of grant funding, the term of such agreements and arrangements will be not go beyond 31st March 2022.

The Committee considered the contents of the draft report and agreed to receive further briefings on the progress being made in recommissioning Families First, covering the draft Communication Strategy for Families First; that future options appraisals are transparent and independently assessed; and to provide regular progress reports throughout the 4 years on outcomes from Families First.

## **Schools Admissions Arrangements**

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In accordance with statutory requirements, Admission Authorities are required to review their School Admission Arrangements annually. In November 2017 the Committee received a report for pre-cabinet scrutiny, which explained that following an analysis of a number of responses to the 2018/19 consultation Cabinet had resolved, in March 2017, to “authorise officers to consider further the admissions arrangements including wider research into alternative options and the impact of each, in advance of consultation on the Council’s School Admission Policy 2019/20.

The draft Cabinet report highlighted a number of issues, including:

- ❖ Catchment area changes and the 21st Century Schools programme;
- ❖ Cardiff Council Admissions Criteria – research report
- ❖ Appraisal of the research reports recommendations.

❖ Admissions Arrangements for 2018/19,

The report recommended that Cabinet:

- authorise officers to consult on the revised admissions oversubscription criteria for admission to nursery, primary and secondary education t;
- note that Cabinet will receive a report in Spring 2018 on the outcome of the consultation to support determination of the Admission Arrangements for 2019/20;
- authorise officers to give further consideration to the potential for admission arrangements to reduce segregation in the intake of schools in Cardiff, and
- note that revisions to school catchment areas will follow the confirmation, following consultation, on proposed changes to the existing pattern of school provision arising from the 21st Century School Band B programme.

There was considerable public interest in this report and the Chairman received correspondence from people expressing concerns and posing questions, in addition a number of people attended to observe the meeting.

Following its consideration of the draft report the Committee wrote to the Cabinet Member, prior to the Cabinet meeting, stating that it could not commend the report to Cabinet. The letter also included an explanation of the reasons for its concerns together with some suggestions on the Admissions booklet. Cabinet subsequently approved all the recommendations without any changes.

In accordance with the statutory procedure a further draft Cabinet report on School Admission Arrangements 2019/20 was considered by Committee in March 2018. This report provided the Committee and subsequently Cabinet with the outcome of the consultation undertaken between 12 December 2017 and 30 January 2018, and recommends that the Cabinet:

- ❖ determine the attached Council's draft School Admission Arrangements 2019/2020 as set out in the Admission Policy 2019/2020.
- ❖ note that the School Admission Arrangements 2019/2020 implement Option A for admission to secondary education, as set out in the Admissions Arrangements Consultation Document.

- ❖ note that Cabinet will receive a subsequent report on revisions to school catchment areas for 2020/2021.

There was considerable public interest in this report and the Chairman received correspondence from people expressing concerns and posing questions, in addition a number of people attended to observe the meeting.

Following its consideration of the draft report the Committee wrote to the Cabinet Member, prior to the Cabinet meeting, stating that the Committee recommended to Cabinet that the consideration of the report be delayed to enable the Directorate to undertake a further equality impact assessment, to assess the impact of Option A on the present cohort of pupils. Cabinet subsequently approved all the recommendations at its meeting on 15 March 2018 without amendment.

## **School Organisation Planning**

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### **Band A**

The Committee has continued its scrutiny of the Band A proposals during this year. In November 2017 the Committee considered a draft Cabinet report on the Provision of English-medium primary school places in the Adamsdown and Splott Ward schools. The Committee noted that Cabinet had been informed in November 2016 to defer increasing the Capacity of Moorland Primary School, and authorise officers to review pupil projections and demand.

The draft Cabinet report provided an updated pupil projection which indicated that the total demand for Moorland Primary Schools would fall and that the vacant Ysgol Glan Morfa site would not now be needed for any increased capacity.

The Committee reviewed the information in the draft Cabinet report and agreed to commend the report to Cabinet.

## Band B

The Welsh Government sought submissions from Local Authorities which reflect the outcome of the processes which are highlighted as being priorities for development between April 2019 to March 2024 as part of the 21st Century Schools Band B investment programme. The Band B phase of the 21st Century Schools Programme will commence in April 2019 and is scheduled to run until 2024.

The sufficiency, suitability and condition issues in Cardiff outlined in the report are the basis for the request for funding from Cardiff to Welsh Government under the Band B programme. Funding is required to enable the Council to:-

- Remove “D” condition, end of life, school properties;
- Address the 8 form of entry sufficiency issue in the English medium secondary sector in the central area of the City;
- Address the sufficiency, condition and suitability issues in the Special Sector, in both primary & secondary settings;
- Address local sufficiency issues in Welsh medium primary schools in the East & West of the City;
- Address local sufficiency issues in English medium primary schools in Cardiff Bay & West of the City.

The report recommended to Cabinet that it notes the matters outlined in this report and to receive for subsequent decision further Cabinet reports in the following areas:

- Proposed schemes for Cardiff under the Band B phase of the C21 schools programme in light of budget allocations from Welsh Government;
- Proposals for the adaptation and enhancement of Additional Learning Needs provision in Cardiff.

The Committee commended the report to Cabinet and also requested that the Committee be fully involved in the development and drafting of all future reports on the Education Estate.



The Committee received the next report, 21<sup>st</sup> century Schools Band B Priorities, at its meeting in December 2017. This report included the announcement by the Welsh Government of their approval in principal of £284M strategic outline case submitted by the Council. The report set out the prioritisation matrix to identify those schools in the most need of investment, and listed which schools had been identified.

The Committee commended the report to Cabinet

The Committee, in January 2018, considered a draft Cabinet report on “Improving Provision for Children & Young People with Additional Learning Needs 2018-20. The report explained the implications of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act, set out the projected growth in demand for specialist resource base and special school provision, sought approval of the Cardiff ALN Strategic Priorities 2018-22, and sought the Cabinet’s authority to consult on a range of proposed schemes, to extend and re-align special school and specialist resource base places.

The Committee welcomed this report and commended it to cabinet.

## **2017-18 Budget Proposals and draft Corporate Plan**

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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 2018 -19, including their detailed savings proposals and Capital Programme at its meeting in February 2018. 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 13 February 2018 and to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 15 February 2018.

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.

## **St David's Collage**

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The Committee at its meeting in 18 January received a verbal briefing on a proposed report on Proposed Change of Status of St David's Catholic Sixth Form College - Implications for the Local Authority. The briefing explained that St David's Sixth Form Catholic Sixth Form College is considering its strategic options for the future and, more particularly, a closer connection with the Council.

Following consideration of the verbal briefing, the Committee wished to express its support for proposals when they are considered by Cabinet.

## 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

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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**

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During 2017/18 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.

The Committee recently discussed a review of the format and focus of future performance reports and agreed to set up a performance panel to help develop a more appropriate performance report for the Committee.

## **Performance Reports – Education and Lifelong Learning**

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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 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**

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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.

## **Central South Consortium Scrutiny Panel**

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The Chairman met with the Managing Director of the South Central Education Consortium together with the Chairs and officers from the five Local Authority's Scrutiny Committees (Bridgend, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil and the Valle of Glamorgan) to discuss the potential for a joint scrutiny panel to meet termly to scrutinise the work of the Consortium.

The statutory responsibility for the performance of schools resides in individual Local Authorities together with the associated Consortium's performance, with Consortium staff in attendance, however the scrutiny of the Consortium itself, is also essential and an appropriate scrutiny structure needs to be put in place to

consider the performance of the region, share best practice and information across all five Scrutiny Committees’.

At the meeting the group agreed that, subject to the approval of the Consortiums Joint Committee, a Joint Panel of Scrutiny Chairs and Scrutiny Officers would be established to scrutinise the work of the Consortium. The panel would consist of the Chairmen of the Education Scrutiny Committees in each of the Local Authorities (or a nominated representative of the Scrutiny Committee) supported by a nominated Scrutiny Officer. The Panel meet three times a year with meetings scheduled shortly after each meeting of the Consortium’s Joint Committee.

The Working Group's terms of reference would consider standing items such as:

- The Consortium's progress against its three-year Business Plan on a regional basis;
- Regional performance trends;
- The sharing of best scrutiny practice across the region;
- The Group to also report annually to the relevant Scrutiny Committee in each Local Authority and/or feedback to the next meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Committee in each Local Authority;
- To share a note of its meetings with the Joint Committee and to receive a response to these from the Joint Committee.

This panel has agreed its work programme and has already held two meetings.

## 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:

- ❖ Signs of Safety
- ❖ Youth Service
- ❖ School Holiday Enrichment Programme.

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..

## Suggested Items for 2018/19 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. Should the Committee consider a new work programme for 2018/19 municipal year, this Committee would like to recommend the following items to be considered for inclusion in its work programme:

- ❖ 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

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 2018. It is also suggested that the Committee continues to receive the regular progress and performance reports on:

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



DRAFT REPORT

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