

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 JULY 2019

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

Co-opted Members: Carol Cobert (Church in Wales representative)
and Rebecca Crump (Parent Governor Representative)

The Chairperson thanked Rebecca Crump for her service to the Committee as a Parent Governor Representative and noted that her views and experience have benefited the Committee greatly.

15 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mike Phillips, Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic Representative) and Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor Representative).

16 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were made in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

17 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chairperson.

18 : CARDIFF CHILDREN'S SERVICES STRATEGY

The Chairperson welcomed Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member, Children & Families), Claire Marchant (Director, Social Services) and Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services) to the meeting.

The Interim Assistant Director provided Members with a [presentation](#) during which she emphasised the reshaping and restructuring of the service delivery model.

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

- Members discussed the Unicef Child Friendly City strategy; what was being done to ensure that children are aware of their rights and that their voices will be heard and the training that will be rolled out to staff, initially to Managers at the end of the month, by Unicef.
- Members referred to the commitment to recruit more local authority foster carers and how that was to be achieved. Members were advised that there are 4 elements involved in the recruitment drive for new foster carers; the first is to encourage people to have a conversation about becoming a foster carer which is being managed

by marketing and communication taking place in the Council, Ikea, Tweets and Google adds for example; the second is to consider the payment received by foster carers, it has been necessary to revise the fee structure to consolidate the fees; thirdly it has been necessary to look at the operating model to ensure that any prospective foster carers receive a professional response to their enquiry which is both timely and informative to ensure that the information received is of the same standard as that provided by independent fostering agencies (IFAs); and finally that there is training provided and ongoing support throughout the process.

Members also noted that there were currently 10 assessments ongoing at the present time and further events planned for the coming weeks with current foster carers to discuss matters such as supported lodgings and finders fees. In relation to finders fees, something used by IFA's, any fee would have to be competitive.

- Members queried whether consideration should be given to accessing bigger organisations, for example, academic institutions such as universities as an opportunity to recruit new foster carers.
- Members discussed the foster care model in Scotland, whilst Scotland still use IFAs, they are not for profit IFAs. Members were keen to examine the Scottish model more closely but noted that it was to be raised through the Core Cities network.
- Members queried the low rates of Kinship Care in Wales and the reasons for that. Members were advised that significant improvements have been made in relation to the number of Kinship carers, the figure has increased by at least 20 recently. It is necessary to ensure that the right support is in place for those carers. Members noted that more parental responsibility was given to those who become Special Guardians rather than Kinship Carers, however, it is still important to ensure that there is ongoing support to the family which has been the reason for the breakdowns occurring previously.
- Members were pleased to note that the Out of County Placement Inquiry was incredibly helpful in informing the strategy and had an impact at every level.
- Members noted that the strategy appears to focus on children who are looked after, and queried what it meant to children out of the care system who were also experiencing stresses and strains. The Director advised that it is about all children and young people. It is necessary to look through the lenses of all children. Whilst the strategy is sets out a number of priorities, it is also about building on current strengths.
- Members asked whether current staffing levels were adequate and were advised that the levels of staffing is constantly reviewed. Whilst it is accepted that Social Workers are important, it is also necessary

to ensure that there is a good skill mix within the teams. The currently operating model is being reviewed together with senior management arrangements, and recruitment is taking place at the present time. Obviously the increase in number of Children Looked After (CLA) does have an impact on resource requirement.

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

19 : 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS BAND B: EARLY YEARS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PROVISION TO SERVE ADAMSDOWN AND SPLOTT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member, Education, Employment and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director, Education and Lifelong Learning) and Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Programme) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Merry to make a statement in which she advised that it was a sufficiency of school places in that area and the condition of the buildings that necessitated the proposals contained within the report; in particular that Willows High School becomes an 8 form entry school and transfers to Tremorfa Park; St Albans Catholic Primary School closes; and the capacity at Baden Powell Primary School is increased and the school is also transferred to Tremorfa Park.

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

- Members sought information as to how many pupils were currently at St Albans Catholic Primary School and where was it envisaged they would go. The Programme Director advised that there were currently 172 pupils on role, it was anticipated that the majority of pupils would go to Baden Powell Primary School however, the Diocese has indicated that there will be places in St Peters and St Johns. It is anticipated that 29 pupils will transfer to another faith school.
- In relation to the significantly enhanced community facilities to be located on the new school site Members were keen to be assured that lessons had been learned from mistakes made at other schools. Officers accepted that the need to consider best practice and learning from previous situations was paramount. It was noted that there needs to be consistency across the City. Where significant public investment is being made communities should have equality of access and it should not be for the school to decide when the community can access the facilities.

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

20 : EDUCATION STRATEGY - CARDIFF 2030

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member, Education, Employment and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director, Education and Lifelong Learning) and Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Programme) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Merry to make a statement in which she referred to the change in Cardiff's schools position moving from 17th place to 3rd place over the last few years and wished to thank the hard work undertaken by all but that it was now necessary to move forward again with Cardiff 2030 being the new 10 year vision.

Members were provided with a [presentation](#) which took Members through the plans for the development of the ten year vision for education in Cardiff together with the stakeholder engagement undertaken so far.

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

- Members queried impact of the new curriculum and the role of the consortium on the vision for 2030. The Director advised that the consortium delivers training and development functions through various grants; they work largely with teachers, however, half of the workforce in schools are not teachers and it is important that the consortium services local authorities well.

The consortium is an important vehicle for Cardiff to realise its ambitions in relation to Education, whilst it is the remit of this Committee to scrutinise the authority, it is also necessary to scrutinise and call other providers to account.

- Members discussed Welsh Government funding for the new curriculum which appears to concentrate on funding for the training of staff and were advised that there may be some funding from Welsh Government for ICT, infrastructure and equipment. Cardiff will require significant investment for that and it will need to be across the whole school estate. There will need to be an audit very soon.
- Members sought clarification about the university style education for some years being proposed and were advised that the point of the debate about 2030 is to challenge what education may look like. Schools have not fundamentally changed in their organisation over the last 150 years. The traditional class room setting is not necessarily the answer for the future. The Open University model of remote learning has been in existence for some time and could be applied in creative ways, for example learners who are not able to be in school for health reasons.
- Members discussed the impact of Qualification Wales on the Cardiff 2030 vision and the new curriculum. It was noted that they were closely involved, assessment is an important part of the process.

There has to be an appropriate fit between the approach to learning that is being developed and the assessment at 16. Consideration is also being given to post 16 learning, it is not wise to have a radical approach to learning and assessment up to 16 and then revert back to the old system in relation to further education.

- Members expressed concerned about the mental health and well-being of pupils particularly on the basis of the increase in the use of tutors. It is a pressure on pupils. Officers were also concerned that if there is a proliferation of tutors serving communities, the tutoring could be compensating for mediocre teaching.
- Members discussed post school learning and adult education. It was noted that Cardiff 2020 focussed on statutory schooling and for some secondary school was not always fruitful. It is important to have pathways to re-enter learning, the Council have been working with a group of young people to support them back into training or employment. Some of the pathways are not a priority in terms of funding, however, the Council has a responsibility to use some government funding to adult learning.
- Members discussed the engagement with parents for Cardiff 2020 and noted that there is now much wider engagement with young people and parents.
- Members were advised that work is being done with ISOS, who provide advice in relation to education, to formulate the thinking for Cardiff 2030.
- Members discussed where the comparators and should be, and whether they should be local or global. Officers indicated that England and Wales are vastly different; the reality is that we should be pushing ourselves as far as we can. Given that Cardiff is the capital city there are a large number of opportunities.
- Members discussed the importance of governance. The governance framework is not going to change in the near future and that new ways of governance should be developed within the existing legislative framework for example ensuring that good strong Governors are appointment to the Governing Body and that that Body is representative of the community.

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

21 : CORRESPONDENCE UPDATE

AGREED – To note the correspondence report.

22 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

AGREED – To note the content of the updated Forward Work Programme

23 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled.

24 : WAY FORWARD

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

25 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED – To note the next scheduled meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee as the 24 September 2019 at 4.30 pm.

The meeting terminated at 7.15 pm