



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

## **Annual Report 2019 – 2020**

### **September 2020**



**City and County of Cardiff**

## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP



Councillor Lee Bridgeman  
(Chairperson)



Councillor Stephen Cunnah



Councillor Heather Joyce



Councillor Sian Elin  
Melbourne



Councillor Dan Naughton



Councillor Mike Phillips



Councillor Mia Rees



Councillor Kanaya Singh



Councillor Rhys Taylor

### Co-opted Members:



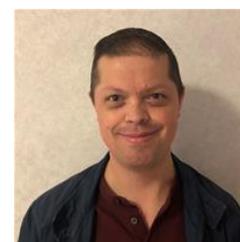
**Patricia Arlotte**  
Roman Catholic  
Representative



**Carol Cobert**  
Church in Wales  
Representative



**Karen Dell'Armi**  
Parent Governor  
Representative



**Matthew Richards**  
Parent Governor  
Representative

**Note:** The following Members and co-optees also served on this Committee during this period: Councillors P Hill-John (June – Sept 2019); Morgan (June 19 – Jan 20); Parkhill (Sept 19 – Jan 20); and Rebecca Crump, Parent Governor Rep (June 19 – Sept 19)

## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am delighted to present the Committee's annual report for 2019/2020. Firstly, I would like to thank both Members and co-opted members of the Committee for their hard work, knowledge, and understanding of the issues; and the support they have given me, which has made my job as Chair a whole lot easier. I would also like to thank the scrutiny officers, who offer an amazing amount of support not only for myself but for the whole of the Committee; I would particularly like to thank Martyn Hutchings, who supported myself and this Committee until his retirement earlier this year. I would also like to thank the witnesses who have spoken to the Committee, giving up their valuable free time, especially in the task and finish inquiries.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Nick Batchelar and Claire Marchant who will both be leaving Cardiff Council very soon. I would like to commend them for their open, transparent and honest dealings with this Scrutiny Committee. Their recognition and understanding of the importance of scrutiny has been very much appreciated. It has been a pleasure working with you both, and I wish you very best wishes for the future.

I have been proud to chair this vital Committee; new Members joined the Committee this year, and I am delighted that the Committee continues to have a full quota of councillors and co-opted members this year, and I know that there are other members who would like to participate in the Committee, if a vacancy came about. This just shows me how important this Committee is within the structure of scrutiny.

As you will see from reading this report, the Committee has been involved in scrutinising some very important decisions that affect the everyday lives of young people who live in the city. As Chair, I am keen to give young people a voice. In 2018, I invited a representative of the Youth Council to attend all future Committee meetings, and the Youth Council has continued to provide a

crucial role in the work of this Committee in attending meetings, seeking advice, challenging decisions and holding decision makers to account.

The report below highlights the key work that we have undertaken from June 2019 to March 2020, where we had to stand down our work due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As ever, during the time we active, the Committee was very busy and I believe there are many fine examples of great scrutiny work within this report and I would like to think that you all agree. I look forward to chairing the Committee again in 2020/21 because, as I have previously stated, this is a vitally important scrutiny Committee, which, most importantly, looks at the decisions made by this council and how they affect the lives of our children in our beautiful city.



**Councillor Lee Bridgeman**

**Chairperson - Cardiff's Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee**

## 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 2019-20 and uses wherever 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 June 2019 and March 2020 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.

### **Inquiries Reports**

- ❖ Joint with CASSC - Preventing young people's involvement in drug dealing - Cabinet Response **(26th June 2019)**
- ❖ 'Preventing Young People's Involvement in Drug Dealing' - Further response and progress **(12th November 2019)**
- ❖ Child Mental Health - Draft Inquiry Report **(21st January 2020)**
- ❖ Out of County Placements - Inquiry Report - Progress Briefing **(10th March 2020)**

### **Committee Panels**

- ❖ Children's Services Performance reporting format - completed

### **Policy Development**

- ❖ Children's Services Directorate Delivery Plan **(11th June 2019)**
- ❖ Education Directorate Delivery Plan **(11th June 2019)**
- ❖ Central South Consortium's contribution to raising standards in Cardiff **(21st January 2020)**
- ❖ Education Strategy - Cardiff 2030 **(9th July 2019)**

### **Pre-decision Scrutiny**

- ❖ 21st Century Schools Band B - Redevelopment of Cantonian, Riverbank and Woodlands Schools **(11th June 2019)**
- ❖ Cardiff Children's Services Strategy **(9th July 2019)**
- ❖ 21st Century Schools Band B: Early Years, Primary and Secondary provision to serve Adamsdown and Splott **(9th July 2019)**

- ❖ Education Strategy - Cardiff **(8th October 2019)**
- ❖ SOP 21st Century - Early Years Primary and Secondary School Provision to serve Adamsdown and Splott **(21st January 2020)**
- ❖ SOP 21st Century - New Primary School provision to serve parts of Radyr, Morganstown, Creigiau, St Fagans and Fairwater **(21st January 2020)**
- ❖ SOP 21st Century - New school provision to serve parts of Pontprennau and Old St Mellons **(21st January 2020)**
- ❖ Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023 and Draft Proposals 2020-2021 **(18th February 2020)**

### **Performance Monitoring**

- ❖ Children's Services Quarter 4 Performance Report **(11th June 2019)**
- ❖ Joint with CASSC - Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2018-19 **(26th June 2019)**
- ❖ Wales Audit Office report - review of corporate arrangements for safeguarding of children **(24th September)**
- ❖ Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board Annual Report - 2018-2019 **(24th September)**
- ❖ Children's Services Quarter 1 Performance Report - 24th September
- ❖ Signs of Safety **(24th September 2019)**
- ❖ Provisional Performance of Cardiff's Schools 2018/2019 **(8th October 2019)**
- ❖ New Curriculum **(8th October 2019)**
- ❖ Cardiff Child Friendly City - Progress Report **(12th November 2019)**
- ❖ Review of Fostering - Progress Report **(12th November 2019)**
- ❖ Early Help and Prevention Briefing **(17th December 2019)**
- ❖ Regional Adoption Service Annual Report **(17th December 2019)**
- ❖ Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Annual Report 2018-19 **(17th December 2019)**
- ❖ Young Offenders Progress Report **(17th December 2019)**
- ❖ Children's Services Quarter Two Performance Report **(17th December 2019)**
- ❖ Cardiff School's Annual Report **(21st January 2020)**
- ❖ SOP - Update Report **(10th March 2020)**

❖ Children's Services Quarter 3 Performance **(10th March 2020)**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has held 9 full Committee meetings, and one joint meeting with Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee since June 2019. As a result of the consideration of over 35 reports, covering policy development, pre-decision scrutiny, monitoring progress and service area performance, the Scrutiny Committee Chairperson sent 27 letters to the Cabinet and officers, which included requests for additional information, comments, and observations on items considered at the Committee Meetings. A number of meetings were webcast during the year, and these attracted 112 viewers.

## INQUIRIES

### **Joint with CASSC – Preventing Young People's Involvement in Drug Dealing - Cabinet Response (26th June & 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019)**

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The meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Cabinet response to the joint task & finish report titled 'Preventing Young People's Involvement in Drug Dealing'.

The Joint Committee presented its Inquiry report into Preventing Young People's Involvement in Drug Dealing to Cabinet on 15 November 2018, and a full response to the report was approved by Cabinet on 18 April 2019.

The Inquiry report included 19 recommendations, from which the Cabinet response partially accepted six recommendations, fully accepted twelve recommendations, with one recommendation response outstanding.

The Committee felt that the Cabinet provided a very positive response to the report, accepted the response and asked that the Cabinet provide a future action plan in the autumn setting out timescales and details of exactly how the recommendations would be addressed.

Following on from the scrutiny of the Cabinet response on the 26<sup>th</sup> June, the Committee received an action plan at its meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019. This item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities and officers from the People & Communities Directorate, and provided a more detailed response to each of the recommendations set out in the report. During the way forward Members made the following comments on the action plan:

- The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the progress being made in implementing the recommendations arising from the Inquiry report, and were pleased with the amount of work already undertaken.

- Members noted that several Hubs were already offering groups the opportunity to open the facilities on an out of hour / weekend basis, however, they commented that the Hubs did not cover all areas of the City. The Committee suggested that additional venues should be investigated to widen access to support to more areas of the City.
- Members asked for clarification on the number of young people who were engaged in the Make Your Mark ballot, as it was felt that 5000 was a lower number than expected.

## Child Mental Health - Draft Inquiry Report (21st January 2020)

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The meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 gave Members the opportunity to review, potentially amend and approve the draft inquiry report titled 'Child Mental Health'. The Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry into "Child Mental Health Support and Services" in September 2018 and worked to the terms of reference set out below:

- *To identify procedures in to help support Education staff and Pupils who feel they have Mental Health and wellbeing concerns and reduce the number of children & young people accessing the CAHMS services.*
- *To work in partnership with the Education Directorate, Children's Services, Youth Council and the University Health Board (CAHMS)*
- *To receive evidence from stakeholders and young people on the key aspects of the policy.*
- *To present the Policy to the Cabinet, University Health Board, Youth Council and key stakeholders.*

In carrying out its work the task group received evidence from a number of witnesses, including:

- Chairman of the Welsh Government Children & Young People and Education Committee;
- Welsh Government Education Staff
- The Children's Commissioner & Policy Officer;
- The Police & Crime Commissioner and Staff Officer;
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service Staff;
- Representatives from Action for Children;
- Samaritans;
- Wales Mental Health Foundation;
- A Cardiff University Researcher;
- The Former Deputy Head at Monmouth Comprehensive School;
- A Parents Group representative;
- Representatives from the Cardiff Youth Council.

The report made a series of key findings and 7 recommendations designed to support Child Mental Health in Cardiff. Recommendations from the report included:

- *The Cardiff Public Services Board must prioritise the strategic overview of services and support for child mental health and well-being, to ensure the effective coordination of provision across Cardiff. The strategy must deliver an integrated approach to children and young people's emotional and mental health support. The Strategic overview must also map all services and support for child mental health to identify any gaps or duplication in provision.*
- *The Public Services Board must ensure that all partners co-ordinate effective early intervention and support, as a graduated response, to provide resilience in young people for later life. The intervention and support must be effective and sustainable and made available to all schools to ensure that all pupils are able to access the preventative and intervention support they need. In addition the Board must review and investigate the capacity of the school nurses service and access to resilience workers.*
- *The Education Well-being and Resilience Strategy being developed by the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate must ensure that schools have appropriate capacity and resources to support the management and operation of the various mental health and well-being initiatives and programmes and to fully engage with all training and initiatives.*

## **Out of County Placements - Inquiry Report - Progress Briefing (10th March 2020)**

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The meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 gave Members the opportunity to receive a progress briefing on the inquiry report titled 'Out of County Placements. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Families & Children, and officers from the Social Services Directorate. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the Cabinet response to its inquiry "Out of County Placements" at its meeting on 11 December 2018, and this item provided a progress report on the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Families & Communities that included the following points:

- With regard to fostering and the differences between Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) and in-house fostering, Members noted the past differences in approaches toward fostering by the authority and private companies and commended the work undertaken in addressing the disparity within this area. Members agreed with comments made that support for foster carers still required further development and was a crucial component in further addressing the disparity. In order to better understand the challenges, Members asked for a briefing note to detail the specific changes to packages for in-house Foster Carers and alliance of profits; a further breakdown of the comparative costs between IFA's and In-house fostering; and clarity on the recruitment target for foster carers over a 12 month period.
- In terms of a possible alliance with not for profit foster care providers, Members asked that this should be an avenue for further consideration, they asked for further information in terms of possible timescales and perceived benefits from such partnership working.

- In terms of the recruitment and retention of social workers, Members welcomed the comments with regard to this Committee undertaking a Task and Finish inquiry in this area, and asked for a breakdown of the known barriers within this field.
  
- With regard to Care Homes, Members noted and welcomed the comments made about the ongoing work, particularly around the development of an assessment unit which provides detailed multi agency assessment.

## COMMITTEE PANELS

### Central South Consortium Scrutiny Panel

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A Central South Consortium Scrutiny panel was set up in 2017 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). 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'.

The Panel met twice during 2019/20 with meetings scheduled shortly after each meeting of the Consortium's Joint Committee. In following its terms of reference the Panel considered the following items:

- CSC work in helping to support and advise schools on the design and implementation of the new curriculum - Verbal Briefing (**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019**)
- The work of CSC and approaches to IT and keeping learners safer on line (**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019**)
- Update on the ISOS review and way forward - Verbal Briefing (**3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019**)
- ALN – implementation of the new ACT (**4<sup>th</sup> October 2019**)
- Wider Impact of Technology (**4<sup>th</sup> October 2019**)
- Review of Scrutiny Panel : to review the role and status of the panel to ensure that it is fit for purpose (**4<sup>th</sup> October 2019**)

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### **Children's Services Directorate Delivery Plan (11th June 2019)**

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The meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on the Children's Services Directorate Delivery Plan 2019/20. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Families & Children, and the Interim Assistant Director for Children's Services. The purposed of the report was to consider the plans for the service during 2019/20 and review its performance during 2018/19.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Families & Communities that included the following points:

- Members asked for a copy of the recent letter sent to the First Minister to be sent to the Chairman;
- The Committee asked for details of children who had Sensory problems, along with details on how they were supported to attend the school of their choice;
- Members asked for a briefing papers on the outcome from the follow-up calls made to potential foster, and the development of the Young Carers strategy/plan.

## Education Directorate Delivery Plan (11th June 2019)

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The meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on the Education Directorate Delivery Plan – 2019/20. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, and officers from the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate. The purposed of the report was to consider the plans for the service during 2019/20 and review its performance during 2018/19.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following suggestions for the Directorate Delivery Plan:

- Included a measure and target for ethnic minority groups, as set out in the annual report;
- That the Directorate Delivery Plan did not include the measures and targets on the attendance of Looked after children.

In addition, the Committee identified some areas that they wished to scrutinise in more detail, and agreed to request briefing papers and reports on:

- Children & young people who are ‘Educated Other than at School’ (EOTAS), to include the definition, their attainment, makeup, numbers and number of Children being looked after.
- Work to being undertaken to help the recruitment of teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh.

## **Central South Consortium's contribution to raising standards in Cardiff (21st January 2020)**

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The meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Central South Consortium's contribution to raising standards in Cardiff'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Director for Education & Lifelong Learning and the Senior Challenge Advisers. The item allowed Members to receive a report on the impact of work in the Central South Consortium's business plan on the region, and to consider the implications that this had on Cardiff.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the report on the performance of Cardiff's school and the positive picture that the performance indicated across all schools. The Members were pleased to see the continued improvement in results across almost all areas.
- The Members expressed concern around particular areas of disappointing performance, which the Committee thought had been addressed. They requested a detailed report on the actions and programmes put in place to address the performance in: 1) the outcomes for children being looked after, children educated other than at school and Elected Home Education; 2) the attendance levels at Primary Schools; 3) the impact of changes to funding from the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant on the support for Ethnic Minorities and Gypsy Roma Travellers.

## **Education Strategy - Cardiff 2030 (9th July 2019)**

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The meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Education Strategy - Cardiff 2030'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Director for Education & Lifelong Learning and other officers from the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate. The purposed of the report was for the Committee to receive a verbal briefing on the development of the Education Strategy – Cardiff 2030, and allow Members an opportunity to help in the continued development of the Strategy.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- The Members welcomed the opportunity to continue to be involved in the development of the Strategy. They also appreciated the discussions that followed the presentation, the exchange of views and ideas.
- The Committee agreed that they wished to continue to be involved in the development of a new vision for education and learning in the City, "Cardiff 2030".

## PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

### **21st Century Schools Band B - Redevelopment of Cantonian, Riverbank & Woodlands Schools (11th June 2019)**

The meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled '21st Century Schools Band B - Redevelopment of Cantonian, Riverbank and Woodlands Schools'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, and the Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme. The purposed of the item was to provide Members with the opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the report due to be received by Cabinet on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- The Committee agreed to commend the report to Cabinet, however, Members did note that Cabinet were due to receive a subsequent report on further proposals to increase the number of special school places for primary age children with complex learning needs.
- The Committee considered that the consultation undertaken for the proposals was excellent and thanked officers for all the work that they had done to make the consultation a success.
- Members asked for assurance that the proposals for the three schools would
- provide sufficient capacity for the foreseeable future, and requested that the Cabinet ensured that the Special Schools would provide as wider scope of provision as possible.

- Members requested that the Cabinet identified the future use of the vacated school sites, as Members considered that they should continue to be of benefit to the Local Community.

## Cardiff Children's Services Strategy (9th July 2019)

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The meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Cardiff Children's Services Strategy'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families, the Director for Social Services and the Interim Assistant Director for Children's Services. The purpose of the item was to receive and scrutinise a copy of the draft cabinet report entitled 'Strategic Plan to Deliver Excellent Outcomes for all our Children' prior to its consideration by Cabinet on the 11<sup>th</sup> July.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families that included the following points:

- Following the Members consideration of the report and answers to questions the Committee agreed to commend the report to Cabinet.
- The Committee wished to remind the Directorate that it is important at all times to ensure that young people are aware of their rights.
- The Committee was aware that Scotland had a different model for Children's Services, and the Members suggested that officers should work together to organise a fact finding mission to a Scottish Local Authority to gain an understanding of their operational models.
- The Committee requested a briefing paper for Members on the proposals for a fostering finding fee once the Directorate has completed its market research.

## **21st Century Schools Band B: Early Years, Primary and Secondary provision to serve Adamsdown & Splott (9th July 2019)**

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The meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> July gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled '21st Century Schools Band B: Early Years, Primary and Secondary provision to serve Adamsdown and Splott'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and the Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme. The purposed of the report was to consider

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Employment that included the following point:

- Following the Members consideration of the report and answers to questions the Committee agreed to commend the report to Cabinet. Members, however, did note that Cabinet would receive a subsequent report on the outcome of the consultation, which the Committee wanted to consider.

## **Education Strategy – Cardiff 2030 (8th October 2019)**

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The meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Education Strategy – Cardiff 2030'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Director for Education & Lifelong Learning, and the Assistant Director of Education & Lifelong Learning. The purpose of the report was to receive and scrutinise a copy of the draft cabinet report entitled 'Education Strategy – Cardiff 2030' prior to it being presented to Cabinet on the 10<sup>th</sup> October.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the long-term vision for education in Cardiff (Cardiff 2030), as set out in the draft cabinet report, and acknowledged that the vision would be further developed through future Directorate delivery plans and updated policies and plans. The Committee requested that any updated policy or plans relating to the vision, were presented to Committee as early as possible to enable Members to influence their development in enhancing the vision.
- The Committee, during the way forward section of the meeting, did highlight a number of areas that Members felt should be reviewed, as early as possible, so that they form part of the future development of Cardiff 2030, namely: bullying in schools; use of Technology in education; and post 16 education.

## **SOP 21st Century - Early Years Primary and Secondary School Provision to serve Adamsdown and Splott (21st January 2020)**

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The meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'SOP 21st Century - Early Years Primary and Secondary School Provision to serve Adamsdown & Splott'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and the Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with the opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals contained within the Cabinet report prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 23 January 2020. The report informed Cabinet of the responses received following consultation on proposals for early years, primary school, secondary school and post-16 provision to serve Adamsdown and Splott.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Employment that included the following points:

- The Committee commend the report to Cabinet on 23 January 2020.
- The Committee noted that St Albans RC Primary School would not be discontinued, and a further report would be presented to Cabinet addressing the matter. The Committee recommended that the further report should include an assessment of the environmental impact of the proposals, together with proposals for the provision of appropriate parkland for the Community.

## **SOP 21st Century - New Primary School provision to serve parts of Radyr, Morganstown, Creigiau, St Fagans & Fairwater (21st January 2020)**

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The meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'SOP 21st Century - New Primary School provision to serve parts of Radyr, Morganstown, Creigiau, St Fagans & Fairwater'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and the Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with the opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals contained within the Cabinet report prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 23 January 2020. The report informed Cabinet of the responses received following consultation on proposals for early years, primary school, secondary school and post-16 provision to serve Radyr, Morganstown, Creigiau, St Fagans & Fairwater'.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Employment that included the following points:

- The Committee commended the report to Cabinet on 23 January 2020.
- The Committee noted that prior to the implementation of the proposals a further report would be provided to Cabinet on the matter. The Committee asked for this report to be made available for pre decision scrutiny.
- The Committee asked that, i) the Governing Board for the school should clearly reflect the whole school; ii) the Committee was concerned at the recruitment of staff for the School, and requested that regular updates were provided to Members on the progress being made in recruiting school staff.

## **SOP 21st Century - New school provision to serve parts of Pontprennau & Old St Mellons (21st January 2020)**

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The meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'SOP 21st Century - New school provision to serve parts of Pontprennau & Old St Mellons'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and the Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with the opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals contained within the Cabinet report prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 23 January 2020. The report informed Cabinet of the responses received following consultation on proposals for early years, primary school, secondary school and post-16 provision to serve Pontprennau & Old St Mellons'.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Employment that included the following points:

- The Committee commended the report to Cabinet on 23 January 2020.

## **Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023 & Draft Proposals 2020-2021 (18th February 2020)**

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The meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on the 'Draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023 and Draft Proposals 2020-2021'. The Cabinet Members for Finance, Modernisation & Performance; Children & Families; and Education, Employment & Skills attended the meeting and were supported by officers from the Resources; Social Services and Education & Lifelong Learning Directorates. The purposed of the item was to provide Members with context for the scrutiny of the sections of the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2020 – 23, and draft Cabinet 2020/21 Budget Proposals that relate to Directorates falling within the remit of the Committee.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance that included the following points:

- **Reliance on Grant Funding** – A Member expressed concern at the amount of grant funding that the Council relies upon to deliver vital services. His concern was what might happen if some of the grants that we currently rely on stopped. The Committee asked for assurance that contingency planning was in place to cover the running of services which are currently grant funded.
  
- ❖ **Children & Families Portfolio - Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21**
  - **New Build Council Housing / Acquisitions** – It was noted during the Corporate Overview presentation that the Council has allocated £255.5 million into the capital programme for '*New Build Council Housing / Acquisitions*' over the next five years. One of the barriers that prevents more accommodation being created for looked after children in Cardiff is the price of property. As the Council is making a substantial new investment into social housing, the Committee suggested that it should look to allocate a small part of the '*New Build Council Housing /*

*Acquisitions'* budget towards accommodation for looked after children. Given the large amount of money spent on housing children and young people in out of county placements, Members felt that this would be a sensible investment for the Council.

- **Budget Line S1 – Strength Based Practice & Commissioning Saving**
  - The £900,000 budget line S1 represented 90% of the savings target for Children’s Services. Members emphasised that this had been scrutinised and relevant suggestions had been provided on how savings might be achieved in this area. Members agreed to monitor this savings proposal during 2020/21, and look forward to receiving regular updates as the year progresses. As a starting point, they asked for further detail on how the parts of this very large saving would be achieved.
  
- **Foster Care Information** – After the discussion about foster care numbers at the meeting, Members asked for confirmation on:
  - The current number of foster carers working for the Council, along with the number of additional foster carers that the Council is currently trying to recruit;
  - The target number of foster carers that the Council is currently looking to employ;
  - The number of children currently in foster care placements with the Council, and the number of children placed under foster care with other agencies;
  - For 2019/20, the total number of foster carers applying to work with the Council, and the number that the Council actually recruited;
  - The average length of time from initial application to actual recruitment for a Council foster carer in 2019/20;
  - Agree to include the details listed above in the bespoke quarterly monitoring report that is provided to the members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee.
  
- **Looked After Children Placement Target** – The Council is currently working towards a Welsh Government target of placing 75% of looked

after children within a 20 mile radius of the local authority boundary. In relation to this target Members asked for details on the following:

- The total number of placements currently made by the Council;
  - The number of placements made by the Council within the 20 mile radius of Cardiff's boundary;
  - The number of placements made by the Council outside of Cardiff's boundary, but within the 20-mile radius;
  - The categories of placements made by the Council outside of Cardiff's boundary and within the 20-mile radius - to include costs per placement category, provider type and the local authority area within which they are located;
  - The number of placements made outside of Cardiff's boundaries, and which are necessary for the safety of the child / young person.
- 
- **Budget Risk Ratings & Contingency Funding** – The presentation highlighted that £2.17 million has been put aside in the budget as a contingency for growth in placements. This was in addition to the £4.85 million budget realignment, and £400,000 for the short stay assessment centre that had been added to the Children's Services revenue budget. At the same time the service has been asked to find £1 million in savings; £900,000 of which was risk rated 'red / amber' in terms of achievability. Given that Children's Services had struggled to achieve its savings in previous years, the Committee asked for clarification as to why a contingency has been allocated; given the risks and challenges involved Members felt that it should probably have been allocated directly into the base budget as a financial pressure for 2020/21.
  
  - **Social Worker Market Supplement** – It was noted that £1.106 million had been allocated within the Financial Resilience Mechanism to fund a number of temporary initiatives, including the '*Children's Social Worker market supplement*'. Members were aware that the Council had been looking at options to retain and increase the number of social workers in Children's Services, as the current shortages were contributing to workload and financial pressures within the service. The Committee

understood that social workers in neighbouring local authority areas were paid more, and that a market supplement would be a good way to bridge the financial gap, improve morale and help retain and recruit staff. The Committee emphasised that shortage of social workers was not a new problem, and Members felt that it required a longer term fix. With this in mind, the Committee asked:

- For details on how the Council planned to introduce and allocate the one-year supplement, for example, who would qualify; how many social workers would receive the payment; how much they would receive, the total value of the one year supplement; and what would happen at the end of the one year period.
- If the Council would consider making the supplement a long term arrangement by building the increase into the revenue budget for Children's Services.

#### ❖ **Education, Employment & Skills Portfolio - Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21**

- **Bus Passes Charge Increase** – Members were concerned about the 6.25% increase in the cost of a bus pass which would apply to those who live within three miles of the school and wish to take the bus to school instead of using other modes of transport. They felt that the increase contradicted other Council priorities, for example, improving air quality, active travel and the Councils modal shift targets and, along with an increase in school meal costs, placed additional financial pressure on parents – particularly for those with more than one child in school. The Cabinet Member and officers explained that the cost of the bus pass was already subsidised, and that the price increase was due to inflationary costs passed on by the bus companies. The Committee asked for a breakdown of costs for providing a bus pass, to include details of the subsidy that is applied.
- **New Youth Worker Posts** – The Committee was pleased that seven new youth worker posts had been created in the budget. A Member asked

where the new posts would be based, what they would be doing. She was told that they would be permanent, but due to the late confirmation of funding the exact roles had yet to be determined. The Committee asked for confirmation of the specific roles and responsibilities of the new posts as soon as they are agreed.

- **Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) Performance Indicator** – During the meeting concern was expressed that the Council had a wide range of indicators to measure the performance of education in Cardiff, however, it did not have an indicator to measure the progress and achievements of children who were EOTAS. The Director for Education was able to see both the challenges and benefits of such an indicator, so the Committee asked the service area to draft options that could be used to measure this area, and provide feedback in the early part of the next municipal year.

## PERFORMANCE MONITORING

### Children's Services Quarter 4 Performance Report (11th June 2019)

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The meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Children's Services Quarter 4 Performance Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and the Interim Assistant Director for Children's Services. The purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise the Children's Services Quarter 4 Performance Report, which in turn enabled the Committee to assess the progress being made in improving outcomes for children in need and children being looked after.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families that included the following points:

- Members asked for a copy of the letter sent to the First Minister to be provided to the Committee Chairperson.
- Members asked for details of children who have sensory problems, information on how they are supported to attend the school of their choice.
- Members asked for a briefing paper on the outcome from the follow-up calls made to potential foster carers.
- Members asked for a briefing paper on the development of the Young Carers strategy/plan.

## **Joint with CASSC - Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2018-19 (26th June 2019)**

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The meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019 gave Members the opportunity to undertake joint scrutiny with the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee on an item titled 'Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2018-19'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Wellbeing, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Director for Social Services. The purposed of the item was to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the draft Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2018/19, prior to it being received by Cabinet.

Following discussion, questions and comments, the Committee sent a letter to the supporting Cabinet Members that included the following points:

- Members were pleased with the progress outlined in the Annual Report and agreed to commend the report to Cabinet and Council. The Joint Committee's considered that the report clearly referenced many of the issues, concerns and progress that both committees have identified throughout the year, and agreed that the report was an accurate reflection of the Directorate.
- Members noted that the format of the report is nationally prescribed, however, reiterated that some areas were repetitive. They felt the report would benefit from refinement, which in turn would improve its impact and deliver messages.

### **Children's Services**

- Members asked for the following information to be included with the response letter:
  - ❖ An assessment of the reasons for the low response rate for 18+ (page 24);
  - ❖ A briefing on Families First identifying its impact on families over the last year (page 85).

- Given the increasing demand pressures, the report clearly sets out the future budget as a key challenge for the Directorate. The Members agreed that they would be requesting a briefing paper on the financial planning proposals, together with an update on the transformational bid proposals and further bids and transformation grant.
- Members noted that the Directorate was undertaking a review the Corporate Parenting Strategy by December 2019, and the Committee wished to be actively involved in the review.
- Members requested a briefing report to cover the alignment of the 'preventative' and early help services; governance for the Welsh Government; Families First Programme alignment with Supporting People, Flying Start and other preventative grant funding streams; as well as the impact and outcome from the work of the Early Help service, to a future meeting of the Committee.
- The Committee welcomed the a briefing to members on the implementation and success of the signs of safety model that was now being implemented across children's services together with the work to embed the Strength Based model in Adult Services.
- At the meeting questions were raised about the complaint statistics, with particular reference to the sharp increase of complaints in Children's Services. Members were advised that although the numbers for children service stage one complaints had risen, they are resolved at any early stage. Members were pleased with the effective resolution rate, however, they requested a briefing note to provide a breakdown of the complaints received during 2018/19.
- With regard to the recruitment and retention of social workers, which was identified as a recurring area of concern across both Committees, Members emphasised the importance and possible connection of the cultural change within the workforce and staff retention. Members stated that achieving cultural change would require an intent focus and

continuous monitoring. The Committee requested an assessment on how the cultural changes being brought in are impacting on the retention of staff.

## **Wales Audit Office Report - Review of Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding of Children (24th September)**

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The meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Wales Audit Office Report - Review of Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding of Children'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance, the Director of Social Services and Audit Manager. The purposed of the item was to scrutinise the inspection report that resulted from a follow-up review of corporate arrangements for the safeguarding of children during April 2019 by the Wales Audit Office.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the progress being made in addressing the proposals for improvement as set out in the Audit Report, in particular that the Council had over the past year made significant progress on all of the recommendations from the audit reviews undertaken in 2014 and 2015.
- The Committee requested clarification that commissioning arrangements were now fully in place to ensure that external providers are compliant with their duty to safeguard and in particular the need for DBS checks and training to help minimise the risks to service users.
- The Members considered that an action plan should be produced to address all the 2014, 2015 recommendations and 2019 proposals for improvement, with clear timescales, targets and monitoring arrangements. The Committee asked for biannual monitored reports covering; training by Members, training by Officers, an update on the corporate safeguarding self-assessment, and a copy of the Annual Safeguarding Staff Awareness Survey.

## **Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board Annual Report - 2018-2019 (24th September)**

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The meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board Annual Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Performance, the Director for Social Services and Business Manager for the Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board. The purpose of the item was to receive and scrutinise the draft Corporate Safeguarding Board's Annual report 2018/19 covering all of Social Services, prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Performance that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the opportunity to receive and review the draft annual report and noted that the Board's key priorities for 2018-19 were: 1. Effectiveness of Child protection system; 2. Children on the edge of the child protection system; 3. Service user engagement; and 4. Learning lessons from reviews.
- The Committee was concerned that the Annual Report did not clearly set out a judgement on the effectiveness of the corporate safeguarding arrangements. The Members noted that the Board was producing a multi-agency performance framework that would allow the Board to monitor areas for improvement and best practice.
- The Committee recommended that future reports should include a section highlighting the outcome from its work and well as an analysis of the effectiveness of the Corporate Safeguarding arrangement across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- The Members also noted the work being undertaken to safeguard children on the edge of the Child Protection System. The Committee felt that the

Board was expecting it's staff to support a large number of activities and suggested that the Board should focus its work on actions that impact on its strategic outcomes.

- The Members were surprised to see the low attendance of certain stakeholders at meetings of the Children's Board. Their failure to attend these meetings could call into question the effectiveness of the work of the Children's Board. The Committee recommended that the Business Unit reviewed its monitoring of attendance to ensure that any gaps are addressed immediately.
- The Committee discussed the information around Child Protection Reviews and agreed that the Committee should receive a briefing on the process together with an analysis of how lessons learnt from each review are put into practice, as part of the response to the letter.

## Children's Services Quarter 1 Performance Report (24th September)

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The meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> September gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Children's Services Quarter 1 Performance Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Performance, the Director for Social Services and the Interim Assistant Director for Children's Services. The purpose of the item was to provide the Committee with an opportunity to assess the progress being made in improving outcomes for children in need, and children being looked after.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Performance that included the following points:

- Members welcomed the views of the Interim Assistant Director on the recent restructuring of Children's Services into a more locality based format.
- Members asked for an update and information on:
  - ❖ The implementation of the recommendations from the Committee's inquiry into out of county placements that was presented to Cabinet in July 2018.
  - ❖ Details of the turnover of Social Worker posts, and the length of time in a post for this year and the last five years to be included with the response to the letter.
  - ❖ A briefing paper to Committee later this year, on the Domiciliary Care Project.

- ❖ An update on the work being undertaken to address the lack of provision in the market to secure services for Child Mental Health & Disability Team.

## Signs of Safety (24th September 2019)

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The meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Signs of Safety – Progress Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Performance, the Director of Social Services and the Interim Assistant Director for Social Services. The purposed of the report was to receive a briefing report on the continuing implementation with key partners of the "Signs of Safety" model, a strength based whole-service methodology for working with children and families in need of care and support.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Performance that included the following points:

- A key aspect for the embedding of signs of safety across the Directorate is effective training and awareness raising for all staff. The Members noted that there was concern around the limited funding for ongoing training. As a result, the Committee recommended that sufficient funding for training is made available until an assessment is made that the Signs of Safety is full embedded. It was recommended that the training should be a significant part of the induction of any new social worker and agency social worker.
- The Committee understood that it was difficult to assess the impact and outcome from the signs of safety approach, however, the Committee considered that it was essential that a framework of impact assessment was developed, along with appropriate performance monitoring using robust qualitative and quantitative data.

## **Provisional Performance of Cardiff's Schools 2018/2019 (8th October 2019)**

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The meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Provisional Performance of Cardiff's Schools 2018/2019'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills and officers from the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate. The purpose of the scrutiny was to review and provide feedback on the information provided to the Committee, including the provisional school results briefing paper.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- The Committee noted the comments on performance across all stages, however, understood that as there had been significant changes in the assessment and reporting arrangements during the year. The Directorate was unable to provide details of progress at each stage, as in previous years.
- The Committee, during the way forward section of the meeting, agreed to request that the Scrutiny Officer work with education and consortium staff to develop a training session for the Members of the Committee so that they better understood the new assessment and reporting arrangements, and how best future performance reports should be presented to Committee.

## **New Curriculum (8th October 2019)**

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The meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> October gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'New Curriculum'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills and officers from the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate. The purposed of the report was is to enable Committee to review, assess and challenge the progress being made in the implementation of the new curriculum through to 2022.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- Members noted the considerable amount of work that has to be undertaken across the nine different reforms, and also recognised that strong leadership and good teaching were fundamental to the successful implementation of all the reforms, especially the New Curriculum.
- The Committee welcomed the suggestion to provide a more focussed report, in March 2020, following the publication of the Curriculum for Wales guidance, on the progress being made in the development and implementation of the New Curriculum. The Committee further suggested that a Head Teacher from a Pioneer School should also attend to provide feedback on the new curriculums and associated reform's impact on the school.

## Cardiff Child Friendly City - Progress Report (12th November 2019)

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The meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> November gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Cardiff Child Friendly City - Progress Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, the Assistant Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and other officers from the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate. The purpose of the item was to receive progress reports on the development of a programme for Cardiff to be globally recognised as a Child Friendly City, through participation in the Unicef UK Child Friendly City and Communities Programme.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the briefing on the progress being made in making Cardiff a Child Friendly City. The Members were very pleased with the improvements made to date against each of the five goals set out in the Strategy.
- During the way forward the Committee highlighted that:
  - i. It was concerned to hear that some Directorates were not fully embedding Children's Rights into their decision-making processes. They asked that further efforts be made to ensure that all Directorates were fully engaged.
  - ii. Members suggested that the Children and Young People's Advisory Board should investigate the introduction of School Exclusion Zones around schools, to help reduce children's exposure to air pollution.

- iii. Members requested that a further progress report be presented to Committee next November to enable it to review the implementation of the strategy and monitor progress.

## **Review of Fostering - Progress Report (12th November 2019)**

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The meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> November gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Review of Fostering – Progress Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families, the Director of Social Services and the Interim Assistant Director for Children's Services. The purposed of the report was to receive a briefing on the progress being made in the redesign of the local fostering service in order to increase the number of internal foster carers, and ensure the placement policy is fit for purpose.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families that included the following points:

- Members made reference to the Committee's inquiry report in to "Out Of County Placements" and its 19 recommendations, which they had previously referred to during the presentation of the fostering briefing and draft Cabinet report. The Committee noted the Draft Strategy, together with the nine commissioning priorities, were a clear step in the Directorates programme to address some of the 19 recommendations. The Members were advised that this was only the first report addressing the recommendations. The Committee subsequently agreed to request a full progress report, providing a detailed update to each of the inquiries recommendations, to be presented to Committee, at its meeting on 10 March.

## **Early Help and Prevention Briefing (17th December 2019)**

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The meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> December gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Early Help & Prevention'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families, the Interim Assistant Director for Children's Services and the Operational Manager for Early Help. The purposed of the item was to receive a report on the a review of the Headline Actions set out in the Directorate Delivery Plan 2019/20, with particular reference to the new delivery model for an integrated early help and prevention service for families, children and young people.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families that included the following points:

- The Committee commented that they looked forward to seeing the impact of the work of the Early Help Service on the number referrals being made to Children's Service in future months, and asked that a progress report be presented to Committee in the summer of 2020, to include performance information on the quality and effectiveness of the service's work.

## **Regional Adoption Service Annual Report (17th December 2019)**

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The meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> December gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Regional Adoption Service Annual Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families, the Regional Adoption Manager and the Interim Assistant Director for Children's Services. The purposed of the report was to provide the Committee with a copy of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative's Annual Report 2018/19 so that they could undertake scrutiny of the document. The report set out key information about the Regional services, together with monthly and quarterly performance information for the period 2018/2019.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the report and agreed to commend it to the Management Board and Joint Committee for their approval.
- During the way forward the Members requested that in future there is a need to better engage with both Faith and BME sections of society.

## **Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Annual Report 2018-19 (17th December 2019)**

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The meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> December gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Annual Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families, the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills and officers from the Social Services Directorate. The purposed of the report was provide Members with an opportunity to review the Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee for 2018/19.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Members which welcomed the report and agreed to commend it to both Cabinet and Council.

## **Young Offenders Progress Report (17th December 2019)**

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The meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> December gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Young Offenders Progress Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and officers from Social Services Directorate. The purpose of the item was to receive a briefing report on the service review of the Youth Offending service.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the update on the work of the services and performance information, however, the Members did suggest that in future it may be more useful to compare against Core City across the UK and not just Welsh Local Authorities.
- The Committee also noted that an Adolescent Strategy was being developed and Members requested that a draft of the strategy be presented to this Committee prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

## **Children's Services Quarter Two Performance Report (17th December 2019)**

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The meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise the performance of Children's Services for Quarter 2 of 2019/20. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and officers from the Social Services Directorate. The purposed of the report was to enable the Committee to assess the progress being made in improving outcomes for children in need and children being looked after. The scrutiny of the performance of Children's Services is undertaken on a quarterly basis.

Following discussion of the Quarter 2 performance the Committee was satisfied by the information provided, and the responses to the questioned raised, therefore, no letter was submitted to the Cabinet Member on this matter.

## Cardiff School's Annual Report (21st January 2020)

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The meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'Cardiff School's Annual Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills, and officers from the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate. The purposed of the report was to review and assess the draft copy of the Cabinet report "The Performance of Cardiff Schools in 2018 / 19", that was due to be considered by Cabinet on 23 January 2020. The publication of the Schools Annual Report is considered best practice and is produced to help inform the public, elected Members, schools and school governors on the progress being made to improve performance across all schools in Cardiff.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- The Committee welcomed the report on the performance of Cardiff's schools and the positive picture that the performance indicated across all schools. The Members were pleased to see the continued improvement in results across almost all areas and the Committee agreed to Commend the Schools Annual Report to Cabinet.
- Members expressed some concern around particular areas of disappointing performance, which the Committee thought were being addressed. The Committee therefore requested a further more detailed report, later in the year, on the actions and programmes put in place to address the performance in:
  - The outcomes for children being looked after, children educated other than at school and Elected Home Education;
  - Attendance levels at Primary Schools;

- The impact of changes to funding from the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant on the support for Ethnic Minorities and Gypsy Roma Travellers.

## School Organisation Programme - Update Report (10th March 2020)

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The meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on an item titled 'School Organisation Programme - Update Report'. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills and officers from the Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate. The purpose of the item was to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet on the School Organisation Programme, that was due to be considered at the Cabinet at its meeting on the 19th March. The report included aspects on developing the Council's education estate in Cardiff, including the delivery of new provision under the 21st Century Schools programme in relation to the Local Development Plan (LDP), and the enhanced asset maintenance programme in relation to the existing estate.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills that included the following points:

- Members stated that they were very pleased with progress made to date on the School Organisation Programme.
- The Committee asked for further information on how many properties sat in the 'urgent need' category for repairs, and requested further information on the additional £25 million of funding via capital receipts into the programme.
- The Committee were concerned to hear that under the current arrangements of the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) the authority had less control over building specifications and the possible implications this could have in terms of community availability.

## Children's Services Quarter 3 Performance (10th March 2020)

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The meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> March gave Members the opportunity to scrutinise the performance of Children's Services for Quarter 3 of 2019/20. The item was supported by the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and officers from the Social Services Directorate. The purpose of the report was to enable the Committee to assess the progress being made in improving outcomes for children in need and children being looked after. The scrutiny of the performance of Children's Services is undertaken on a quarterly basis.

Following discussion, questions and comments the Committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families that included the following points:

- With regard to fostering and the differences between Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) and in-house fostering, Members noted the past differences in approaches toward fostering by the authority and private companies and commend the work that the Council had undertaken to address the disparity within this area. Members agreed that support for foster carers still required further development and was a crucial component in further addressing the disparity.
- Members suggested that a possible alliance with not for profit foster care providers be considered, and asked for further information on the possible timescales and perceived benefits of such partnership working.
- Members welcomed the comments with regard to the Committee undertaking a Task and Finish inquiry into the recruitment and retention of Social Workers, and asked for further information to help scope this piece of work.
- With regard to Care Homes, Members noted and welcomed the comments made about the ongoing work, particularly around the development of an assessment unit which provides detailed multi agency assessment.

## WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020- 21

Members of the Committee will be invited to consider items for possible inclusion in the Committee's work programme during 2020-21. Work is currently in progress to draw together issues for the Committee to consider. A draft work programme will then be developed and brought to Committee for approval and implementation.

At Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020, a report was approved to restart the five standing scrutiny committees, as part of the Covid-19 restart period. It was agreed that Scrutiny Committees would undertake the following:

- Pre-decision scrutiny of all Cabinet decisions, where appropriate and proportionate to do so;
- Scrutinise any issues which are time critical and/or may have a significant adverse reputational impact on the Council; and
- Develop priorities for potential scrutiny consideration during 2020/21, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member/s and Directors.

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:

- ❖ Capital Ambition
- ❖ Cardiff 2030 Strategy
- ❖ Corporate Plan and Budget
- ❖ Directorate Delivery Plans
- ❖ Cardiff Child Friendly City – update
- ❖ Corporate Safeguarding Board – progress briefing

The Committee will be identifying further issues for consideration during the autumn of 2020. 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
- ❖ Out of County report recommendation monitoring
- ❖ Youth Justice Service Inspection
- ❖ Fostering

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