

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Photos will be sourced from online official photos/requested directly from new Members

Membership: Councillor Lee Bridgeman (Chair)

Councillors Boes, Davies, Ferguson-Thorne, Hopkins, Joyce, Melbourne, Simmons and Singh

Co-opted Members: Bridgid Corr (Parent Governor Representative), Celeste Lewis (Parent Governor Representative), Carol Cobert (Church in Wales Representative), and Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative)

Youth Council: Emily Gao

Our Purpose

- We work to improve the Council's services and policies in the area of children and young people, which includes Schools; Children's Social Services; Youth Services and Justice; and relevant support services (Education and Schools support services etc.)
- We monitor the effectiveness of who the Council works with in this area, including how resources are spent;
- We ensure that key Council Policies in this area such as Cardiff 2030 Vision for Education & Learning; Century Schools Programme; Social Care Commissioning Strategy; and Corporate Parenting Strategy are developed and put in place; and
- We make recommendations to the Council's decision-makers to enhance performance and service delivery.

Our Achievements

During the past year, the Committee continued to monitor two key areas of work – Youth Justice Service and Schools/Education Pandemic Response and Recovery. In addition, the Committee prioritised several further topics for consideration, namely the Impact of Welsh Government removal of profit from Care; Engagement and Participation of Children & Young People; developments in relation to Innovations in Children's Services; the New Curriculum; and Youth Provision in Cardiff.

During 2022/23 the Committee has also undertaken the pre-decision scrutiny of a number of Cabinet reports relating to school organisational proposals (prior to the establishment of the Task & Finish Group – see below); childcare sufficiency strategy; National Adoption Agency hosting; and commitments to unpaid carers. It has considered the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report, the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Consortium Annual Report and the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

On a quarterly basis, the Committee monitors the performance of Children's Services for children who are looked after, children in need, the youth justice service and staffing. The Committee regularly seeks clarification on areas of concern and expectations for improvement, which are always responded to.

School Organisation Planning – CYPSC Members were notified that, during 2022/23, there would be a large number of School Organisation Planning (SOP) proposals coming forward as pre-decision items. CYPSC Members were given an overview of the number of SOP Items scheduled, and it was apparent that it was likely that SOP Items would dominate formal agendas, and the Committee would be limited to what they could scrutinise. The Chair agreed to look at options available for the Committee, and in consultation with CYPSC Members, the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning, the Director of School Organisation Planning and Head of Democratic Services, proposed that a rolling Task & Finish Group be established for the current year, to enable individual proposals to be considered outside of formal Committee, with monthly reports from the T&F Group being reported to the main committee. This approach has, to date, worked very successfully and will continue to run for the remainder of the municipal year

Young People who are educated other than at School (EOTAS) and what factors could lead to them becoming vulnerable to criminal exploitation Inquiry – the Committee has also commenced an in-depth Inquiry on the above issue which will take place over the next 12 – 18 months. The Inquiry includes looking at the types of young people who could be vulnerable to exploitation (e.g., those on reduced timetables; NEETS; care leavers etc); and what measures and services are in place to mitigate them being exploited (e.g., The Care Leaver Transition process; contextual safeguarding effective wraparound for children and young people AND their families; Cardiff Commitment; Into Work Services; apprenticeships etc).