

CHILDREN'S HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 6 JULY 2016

PRESENT:- Councillors Gemma McCracken (Chair), Malcolm Davies, Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Carol Shelley, Nadine Watts and Steve Weisinger.

Alison Paul (Swindon Association of Special Schools Headteachers), Steve Colledge (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers), Gary Evans (Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers), Paul Dobson (Project Manager, Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project), Chloe Townsend, Miss Dani Wells and Mr Jacob Patterson (Members of the Youth Parliament), Mark Edwards (Healthwatch).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barbara Parry, Teresa Page, and Gary Sumner and from Karen Reeve (Director of Children's Services), Liz Townend (Bristol Diocese), Michelle Howard (Equalities Advisory Forum), Claire Smith (Participation Manager).

Also Present: Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Sarah Merritt and Kevin McNamara (Great Western Hospital), Peter Nathan (Head of Education), Maria Young (Interim Head of Children, Families and Community Health) and Cherry Jones (Director of Public Health).

1. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Colin Lovell be Vice Chair of the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Carol Shelley declared personal and non-prejudicial interest in her capacity as governor of Swindon Academy.

3. Minutes

Resolved -That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4. Public Question Time

The following questions were asked in accordance with Standing Order 28 –

Mr Paul Sunners, SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) asked why SACRE would no longer be represented on the Committee.

The Chair thanked Mr Sunners for his questions and comments and responded at the meeting.

Mr Sunners asked supplementary questions relating to (a) the closure of the Borough Council's Children Centre, (b) whether Councillors and Officers were able to qualify what school holiday support was available to children, young people and families, and (c) where this information would be made available for parents.

The Chair thanked Mr Sunners for his questions and comments and advised that a written response would be provided.

5. Appointment of Co-optees

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report concerning the appointment of co-optees to the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17. It was noted that the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee is permitted by the Council's Constitution to appoint parent governor and diocese representatives to its membership and may choose to appoint additional co-opted members.

Resolved - (1) That this Committee confirms the appointment of the following voting co-opted representatives:

- (a) Liz Townsend as the Church of England Diocese representative.
 - (b) The appointment of a Catholic Church Diocese representative (to be advised).
 - (c) The appointment of 2 Parent Governor representatives (to be advised).
- (2) That the appointment of the following non-voting representatives be confirmed:

- (a) Alison Paul (Swindon Association of Special School Headteachers).
- (b) Gary Evans (Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers).
- (c) Steve Colledge (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers).
- (d) Michelle Howard (Equalities Advisory Forum).
- (e) Mark Edwards (Swindon Healthwatch).

6. Children's Services Performance Report

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report providing an update on the performance within all service commissioning for the first quarter to July 2016.

Mrs Maria Young, Interim Head of Children, Families and Community Health, introduced the report and explained that it had been structured to highlight the improvements that had been made and areas where further actions would be required. She referred to the areas covered that included information on the improved recruitment figures for social workers, work being undertaken on the Quality Assurance Framework, better timelines when dealing with child protection cases and the number of Early Help Record Plans completed, reflecting that young people accessed support early.

She highlighted the challenges faced by the department, including the number of young people entering the care system and the processes in place to support them. Mrs Young updated the Committee on work being undertaken to

identify young people who were not in education, employment or training

Mrs Young and Mr Peter Nathan, Head of Education, responded to the Committee members' questions and comments in respect of the following:

- The reasons for the delay in completing statutory assessments and whether this was due to the system used by the department.
- Confirmation that the data cleansing exercise relating to statutory assessments would be complete in the next quarter.
- Whether social workers' long term sickness was stress related and how this was being managed by the department.
- The timeframe to upload all Early Help Record and Plans onto the IT system, ensuring stakeholders involved in supporting young people had easier access to records.
- The reasons for the reduction in the number of Early Help Record and Plans issued and confirmation that the need for special resource provision in Swindon was high.
- An update on the physical and emotional support offered to refugee children and young people arriving in Swindon.
- The reasons for the decrease in the Post 16 in-learning rate. These were due to the number of courses being offered in the Sixth Form, the change in academic accreditation and the number young people changing courses during the year.
- The formatting of the report to reflect comparative data necessary to enable accurate comparisons as not all areas provide national statistics.
- How Early Years Health and Targeted Mental Health for young people data compared to national statistics.
- The transition process following the closure of Children Centres.
- The actions being undertaken to address disabled young people who were not in employment, education or training.
- The reasons why some young people had a second or subsequent Child Protection Plan and if these were being terminated prematurely.
- The reason for an increase in legal costs as reflected in the Financial and Procurement Implications section of the report.
- The reason why only 65.8% of children on Child protections plans were visited within timescales and work being undertaken to address this. Members noted that this figure primarily reflected a delay in recording the data as visits were undertaken in a timely manner.
- The possible impact of the Court of Appeal's decision regarding "in term" holiday absences.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Interim Head of Children, Families and Community Health be requested to circulate an update on the new Family Service Provision coming into effect in September 2016.

7. Progress Update of Youth Participation

The Chair welcomed Mr Paul Dobson, Project Manager, STEP (Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project), Miss Chloe Townsend, Miss Dani Wells and Mr Jacob Patterson, elected Members of the Youth Parliament to the Committee meeting.

Mr Dobson referred to the contents of the report submitted by the Director of Children's Services, highlighting the important work undertaken by the Youth Parliament. These included the Youth Parliament election process, the committed participation by school, the national Youth Parliament campaign, "Don't Hate – Educate", the re-instatement of young inspectors, the additional funding received from the Council, the Youth Parliament's focus on disability and how the new Participation Manager was undertaking outreach work with Councillors. The Committee further noted that a "rap" song was created by Westrop and Nythe Schools, the results from "Tell Us Survey" following the introduction of the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) reforms indicated that young people had felt services and opportunities had improved in the last 12 months and that goals were achievable.

The Youth Parliament representatives referred to their experiences, their reasons for wanting to be elected to the Youth Parliament and explained the work they envisaged undertaking during their time in office.

Following the presentation of the report, the representatives, together with Mr Dobson, responded to members' and representatives' questions and comments on the following issues:

- The review undertaken by the Youth Parliament of the Great Western Hospital website.
- How the Committee could support the Youth Parliament in their work.
- How the Young Inspectors scrutinize and review.
- The continued robust engagement between Youth Parliament members and schools.

Resolved - (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Committee expresses its continued support for the work of the Youth Parliament.

(3) That Miss Chloe Townsend, Miss Dani Wells and Mr Jacob Patterson, the elected Members of the Youth Parliament, be thanked for their contributions.

(4) That the elected members of the Youth Parliament meet with the Cabinet Member, Children Services, Chair of the Committee, Cllr Carol Shelley and Mrs Maria Young, Service Manager, Children's Social Work Teams to discuss ways of bringing forward the Youth Parliaments' work programme and how the Committee could support them.

(5) That the Project Manager, STEP liaises with Councillor Weisinger regarding the opportunity of the Youth Parliament Members briefing the Highworth Town Council on their work and to look at ways of how the Town Council could support their work.

(6) That the Project Manager, STEP liaises with Kevin McNamara, Director of Strategy, Great Western Hospital to organise a visit to the Great Western Hospital for the Youth Parliament members.

(7) That members of the Committee be encouraged to engage with School Councils to promote the work being undertaken by the Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project team.

8.

Work Programme

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services on the results of the 2016/17 Overview and Scrutiny work programme consultation and on details regarding the priorities for Children's Services.

Resolved – (1) That the work programme be noted and further revised to incorporate changes agreed at this meeting.

(2) That Councillors, Members and stakeholders submitting areas for consideration under this Committee's Work Programme for the Municipal Year, 2016/17, be thanked.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings of the Committee during the Municipal Year 2016/17 be held on:

Wednesday, 14th September 2016, 6.00 pm in Committee Room 6.

Wednesday, 9th November 2016, 6.00 pm in Committee Room 6.

Wednesday, 18th January 2017, at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 6.

Wednesday, 29th March 2017, at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 6.