

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2013**

**PRESENT:-** Councillors David Wood (Chair), Nick Martin (Vice-Chair), Andrew Bennett, Emma Faramarzi, Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Cindy Matthews, James Robbins, Rochelle Russell and Nadine Watts.

**Co-opted Representatives:** - Dick Mattick (National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers) and Rachael Matthey (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteacher).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rex Barnett, Maureen Penny and David Renard, Mrs Melanie Sancto (Swindon Association of Primary School Headteachers) and Andrew Wild (Church of England Diocese).

### **23. 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 James Robins made a personal and non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of item 8 (Minutes of Local Safeguarding Children's Board) as he was a foster carer in Swindon and Item 9 (Update on Academies Conversions) as he was employed by Churchfields Academy.

### **24. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012 at STEPS, Nythe Centre, The Drive, Nythe, Swindon, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **25. Public Question Time**

Mrs Kareen Boyd, Hesketh Crescent, Old Town, put a series of questions relating to the Council's processes, the Task Group Review into the opening and closing of schools within the Borough and School Place Planning in Old Town and the Town Centre.

The Chair responded to Mrs Boyd's questions at the meeting and agreed to provide her with a fuller response in respect of her questions regarding (i) the report on the processes of opening and closing of schools and (ii) information provided in the School Place Planning report.

Mrs Carole Bent, Old Town, asked questions on Council processes, leaflets circulated by the Liberal Democratic Party and sought clarity as to the author of the report regarding processes of the opening and closure of schools.

The Chair and Scrutiny Officer responded to Mrs Bent's questions at the meeting and agreed to provide her with a fuller response in respect of her question regarding the leaflets circulated by the Liberal Democratic Party.

Resolved: That a response to the above questions be circulated to the Committee.

## **26. Co-optees Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Director Law and Democratic Services regarding the appointment of a new co-optee to this Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2012/13.

Resolved – (1) That the appointment of Paul Sunners as a non-voting representative for the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education be confirmed.

(2) That Penny Summers be thanked for her work and contributions to the Committee over the past years.

## **27. Children's Services Performance Report**

Sara Tough, Head of Children and Families, presented a report updating Members of the Committee on the performance within Children Services for the period to September 2012. She referred to the performance in educational attainment of children in care.

The Committee welcomed the report and commented on the following points:

- “Virtual School”. In response to a query regarding the on-line accessibility of the “virtual school”, Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning Economy/Attainment confirmed that this was not a virtual school in IT terms but was a means of tracking the performance and progress of children in care attending Swindon and Out of Borough schools.

- Reasons why the performance of children in care had improved and the feasibility of this work being extended to cover young carers. Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment advised that various factors affected data relating to the small number of children in care and whilst this had improved, further work would be required to enhance attainment. The Committee noted that similar work could be undertaken with young carers once they were suitably identified.

- English Baccalaureate in Swindon schools. The Committee were informed that not all schools offered this qualification.

- The number of children placed in foster care. Sara Tough, Head of Children and Families, referred to the successful campaign programme of placing children in foster care and advised that this was positively commented upon during the Ofsted inspection undertaken in November 2012. Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning Economy/Attainment commented on the network available to support children in care.

- That the academic route to the workplace was not ideal for all young people and that apprenticeships were to be offered.

Resolved –That the performance data for the period end of September 2012, be noted.

## **28. Children's Services Revenue Budget Monitoring Position 2012/13**

Steve Haley, Head of Finance, Education and Innovation presented the latest projected outturn position on Core funded, Dedicated Schools Grant funded and Section 75 PCT funded Children Services 2012/13 revenue budgets.

Mr Haley advised that all budget responsibilities had been transferred to the Commissioning and Delivery Pillars in accordance with the Stronger Together model. He commented on the report and informed the Committee on high-risk areas and other variances that affected the budget. He referred to the budget underspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant and the Committee noted that the main issues affecting the budget were the delay of the academy conversion programme and the Value for Pupil Funding to be transferred from the Department for Education.

The Committee welcomed the report and commented on the following issues:

- In response to a query regarding the Early Years Single Funding Formula Payments, the Committee were advised that childcare was considered expensive and places were available but take-up was low.
- Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) - The Committee noted that with effect from April 2013, DSG funding would be allocated directly to schools and these included the Academies.
- Funding Out of Borough Placements –Chris Wilson, Head of Finance, Adults and Children referred to reasons attributed by Sara Tough, Head of Children and Families, for the budget overspend and advised that pressure on Council's social care budgets was a national issue.

Resolved: That the projected outturn position on Core, Dedicated Schools Grant and Section 75 Primary Care Trust Funding, be noted.

## **29. Minutes of Local Safeguarding Children's Board**

Mike Howard, Chair, Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board, presented a summary of the Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report for 2011/12. He referred to the main points arising from the report and the Committee noted the role of the Board and the benefits that diverse membership and interagency participation would bring.

The Committee welcomed the report and noted Mr Howard's comments on what difference the Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board made. In response to a query regarding the involvement of the new Police Commissioner, Mr Howard confirmed that a meeting had been held with Mr McPherson and that safeguarding would continue to be part of his agenda.

Resolved – That the Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2011/1, be noted.

## **30. Update on Academies Conversions**

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning Economy/Attainment, introduced a report regarding the number of maintained schools that had converted to academies or those that were planning to do so in 2013 and on the financial impact to budgets as a result of the move to academy status. He referred to the different types of academies and commented on the academy programme in Swindon.

The Committee were informed of proposed changes within the funding distribution allocated by the Department of Education, how this affected schools

converting to academies and the impact of service provision by the Local Authority.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

### **31. School Place Planning**

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning Economy/Attainment, presented a report to inform the Committee of the forecast increase in school places in both primary and secondary provision and to advise on plans to address the shortage of school places.

He referred to the extended process in school place planning and explained how financial implications of capital borrowing could be offset by utilising identified under capacity in schools outside of the local area.

Mr Gareth Cheal, Strategic Planning Manager, explained that a feasibility study had been commissioned to identify suitable sites to meet the increase in primary age pupils moving through the education system. He confirmed that public consultation would be undertaken when sites were identified.

Members of the Committee noted the report and discussed the following issues:

- Scale of population growth and if this had been reflected in school place planning. Paddy Bradley confirmed that national data was gathered through the Census available from the Office of National Statistics. He explained that school population data was provided through Primary Care Trust Live Birth information and these were incorporated into school place planning.
- Possible transport issues if pupils were unable to attend a local school.
- Further property development within the Northern Sector of Swindon and how this would affect school placement in that area.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

### **32. Standards and Provision**

The Committee received a report from the Board Director, Commission and the Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment summarising the aggregate 2012 pupil performance data for Swindon school students and identifying key indicators of the overall quality of provision in schools. The report also outlined the successes, areas for development and issues that need to be tackled to ensure every school in Swindon is successful for all its students.

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment, informed the Committee that the report reflected outcomes of statutory assessment which were undertaken during the previous academic year and preliminary results had indicated that pupils assessed at ages 5, 7 and 11 were at or above the national average, with pupils at ages 16 and 19 were below the national average. He referred to the strategies being implemented to raise achievement at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

The Committee welcomed the improvements seen in 2012 and discussed following points:

- Why the level of attainment fell between the different Key Stages. Paddy Bradley confirmed that various factors may affect a pupil's progress such as

- quality of teaching, family re-location and change of personal circumstances.
- The percentage drop in Mathematics. The Committee noted the variations in teaching maths within Swindon schools and that Maths was a difficult subject to recruit teachers in.

Resolved – (1) That the report on the performance and standards in maintained schools and academies across Swindon, be noted.

### **33. Work Programme 2012/13**

The Committee received a report detailing its updated work programme for the Municipal Year 2012/13. The Council's Scrutiny Officer advised:

- That further to 3.3 in the report (Review into Young Carers Standard Mark) a working group would not be required as the request for support by young carers had been withdrawn.
- That the report by the independent review panel on school openings and closures would be presented in March 2013.

Resolved: (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the report on school openings and closures be circulated to the Committee when completed.

(3) That the report be made publicly available when completed.