

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2013

PRESENT:- Councillors David Wood (Chair), Andrew Bennett, Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Cindy Matthews, Maureen Penny, James Robbins, Nadine Watts, Steve Weisinger, Alan Bishop, Claire Ellis and John Haines.

Co-opted Representatives: - Rachael Matthey (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteacher), Mrs Melanie Sancto (Swindon Association of Primary School Headteachers), Andrew Wild (Church of England Diocese) and Mr Paul Sunners (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Renard, Rex Barnett, Nick Martin, Emma Faramarzi and Rochelle Russell and Dick Mattick (National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers).

34. 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 Robbins made a personal and non-prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda item 7 (Update on the UTC (University Technical College) as he was employed by Churchfields Academy.

35. Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted for this meeting.

36. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

37. Children Services Performance Update

Sue Wald (Head of Commissioning - Children and Adults) presented a report updating members on the performance within Children's Services for the period to end of December 2012. Members noted that the report had been structured to highlight the improvements that had been made and identify areas where further work would be undertaken. She referred to the partnership work undertaken that had resulted in improved breast feeding figures, a reduction in teenage pregnancies and to the challenges addressing child obesity.

Members of the Committee enquired on the following points:

- Was there an average age at which diabetes was associated with obesity? Sue Wald confirmed that a link had been established between childhood obesity and health issues in later life and agreed to circulate further information to members of the Committee.

- How young people affected by mental health issues were treated where they were unable to live at home. Sue Wald (Head of Commissioning - Children and Adults) informed the Committee on the processes used to help young people with mental health issues. Members noted that Oxford Health was the service provider supporting young people and options included referral to an in-patient unit in Swindon. Members further noted that the cohort of young people with mental health issues was small. She further advised that young people in care with mental health issues were referred through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMS) and were usually seen within four weeks of referral.
- Children Centres – impact on service provision following restructure. Sue Wald confirmed that work was being undertaken with Children Centres to target their work around vulnerable children and that breast feeding was one on the areas currently being addressed.
- Reason why the number of Children on Child Protection Plans had increased. Sue Wald (Head of Commissioning - Children and Adults) explained that work had taken place with social workers to ensure children suffering neglect and abuse were identified early and this had led to an increase in the number of children with a child protection plan. She commented on the peer challenge undertaken by Bath & North East Somerset Councils and confirmed that information regarding thresholds would be published to provide greater clarity for partners.
- The staffing impact due to an increase in Children in Care and the subsequent court process and increased work to support children in care. The Committee noted that social workers were in the process of being recruited and that whilst the Adoption Reform Grant would soon be available, a cultural change had to be undertaken and different ways of working with the community needed to be further developed.
- Data regarding the School Sports Partnership. In response to a query regarding this partnership, the Committee was informed that funding for the partnership was no longer available. They noted that there was no minimum time requirement for physical activity in schools.

Resolved – (1) That the Head of Commissioning – Children and Adults be asked to circulate information regarding the link between diabetes and obesity in children before the next full meeting of this Committee.

(2) That the Head of Commissioning – Children and Adults be asked to circulate information regarding Mental Health issues of young people in Swindon before the next full meeting of this Committee.

(3) That further to 4.2 and 5.4 of the report and 4.1 within Appendix 1 of the report, the Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment be requested to circulate numerical data including percentages before the next full meeting of this Committee.

(4) That further to (3) the Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment be requested to include information regarding the Baccalaureate concept.

(5) That the Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment be requested to gather information from schools regarding the Schools Sports Partnership and to circulate this before the next full meeting of this Committee.

(6) That further to Appendix 1 of the report, the Head of Commissioning – Children and Adults be requested to update and circulate Table 2 (Schools and IMD score in Swindon Wards) when new data is available from Census 2011.

(7) That the performance for the period end of December 2012, be noted.

38.

Signs Of Safety

Debbie Deimert, (Principal Officer, Social Work, Children and Families), introduced a report informing the Committee of how Children Services were to implement the Signs of Safety approach to child protection and decision making that aimed to improve the involvement and buy-in from families and professionals who were linked to the child.

In response to a query regarding the optimistic approach of presenting the information, Debbie Deimert, (Principal Officer, Social Work, Children and Families) advised that the child was always the focus of work being undertaken and that solutions were found through working closely with the family.

Members enquired if the Committee was able to effectively monitor the work being undertaken. Debbie Deimert, (Principal Officer, Social Work, Children and Families) confirmed that a report on work undertaken would be available at the end of March 2013.

Resolved - (1) That the Signs of Safety report and the success of the pilot exercise, be noted.

(2) That the Principal Officer, Social Work, Children and Families be requested to circulate an updated report before the next full meeting of this Committee.

39.

Review into Opening and Closing Schools

The Chair introduced the report on the review into opening and closing of schools and recommended that due to the lateness of the report, this item be deferred to a future meeting of this Committee.

The Committee discussed the merits of postponing a decision on the recommendations of the report. The request for deferment was put to the vote and declared carried.

Resolved – (1) That this item be deferred to a future meeting of this Committee.

(2) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to set up an extraordinary meeting before the end of this Municipal Year, ideally within the next four weeks, and with the Chair of the Review present, to enable the Committee to debate this item.

40.

Update on the UTC (University Technical College) Swindon)

Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) submitted a report to update the Committee on progress made towards the planned opening of the University Technical College (UTC) in Swindon. He advised that a public consultation exercise was currently being undertaken regarding the concept of opening a UTC in Swindon and stated that the submission of the report to this Committee was part of the consultation exercise.

The Committee noted the financial support provided by the Council, that the UTC was an Academy Trust jointly sponsored by Oxford Brooke's University and Johnson Matthey Fuels Cells and that the Council, together with Swindon College were key partners. Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) elaborated on the educational provision of University Technical Colleges, the

collaborative work to establish an employer-led curriculum and advised that the UTC plan on opening in September 2014.

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

- Further to 2.13 of the report, reference to the virtual freehold donated by Network Rail. Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) advised that Network Rail had agreed to lease the site at Bristol Street to the Academy Trust managing the UTC for 124 years at a peppercorn rate.
- The possible impact on Swindon schools as 14 year old pupils transferred to the UTC and whether Swindon schools were prepared for this transition phase. Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) stated that one of the challenges would be in raising participation and ensuring the UTC concept incorporated business needs requirements or differing skill sets and capabilities of young people leaving school. This would make it the right choice for some young people while ensuring that the Swindon schools' curriculum complemented that offered at the UTC.
- Concerns on the timing of the project with regards to the impact on school administration and what would be the effect on the educational performance of pupils transferring to the UTC. Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) stated that the UTC marketing campaign was due to be launched in approximately May 2013 and any impact on schools or pupils transferring could not be reported on until UTC started recruiting and operating.
- Clarification of "technical" education. The Committee noted that this related to technical engineering skills and that the curriculum would be designed in collaboration with employers and Oxford Brookes University to respond to real time issues experienced within the engineering sector. They noted that the aim would be for pupils to be offered the opportunity to continue into apprenticeship or undertake further education. To enable pupils to develop a spread of skills, Business and Enterprise would also be covered as part of the curriculum.
- Transport for students from rural areas. Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) advised that transport funding for pupils would be dependent on decisions of the Academy Trust which may use its revenue budget or, for example, seek sponsorship from relevant local businesses. In the current economic climate, this was not currently available and therefore no transport provision was currently envisaged for the UTC.
- Pastoral care facilities. Members noted that this would be available to ensure proper support was in place for pupils to make informed choices and decisions regarding their educational paths.
- Name of the preferred builders. Members noted that this had not yet been confirmed.
- Type of qualifications students may attain. The Committee noted that these would include GCSE and technical qualifications allowing pupils to progress into apprenticeships and further and higher education.
- In response to a query regarding the make-up of students, Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) confirmed that there was a strong desire to promote opportunities available to female students wishing to undertake a technical or engineering career.

- The predicted percentage of out of borough and Swindon pupils attending the UTC. Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) advised that given the location of UTC, it was probable there would be more pupils from Swindon attending.
 - Funding for the UTC. Members noted the part of the £500,000 funding agreed at Cabinet on 11th January 2012 would be used towards the renovation of the listed water tower. Further investment would be made by the Department for Education.
 - The effect on traffic in the area following the opening of the UTC. Paddy Bradley, (Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment) referred to the detailed traffic assessment under preparation by the building project manager, with advice from the Council's Highways and Transport Department and confirmed that a comprehensive travel plan would be produced by the Academy Trust.
- Resolved – (1) That the report on the University Technical College, be noted.
 (2) That a minute of this Committee be submitted to the Department for Education as part of the formal consultation process.
 (3) That the Head of Commissioning Economy/ Attainment be requested to circulate information on the listed water tower before the next full meeting of this Committee.

41. Work Programme 2012/13

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services setting out the achievements of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the Municipal Year 2012/13.

Resolved: (1) That the report setting out the achievements by the Committee, be noted.

(2) That any additional proposals for this Committee's Work Programme be forwarded to the Council's Scrutiny Team for consideration by 1st May 2013.