

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT:- Councillors Maureen Penny (Chair), Emma Faramarzi, Cindy Matthews, James Robbins, Nadine Watts, Steve Weisinger, Paul Baker, Michael Bray, Ann Richards, Mark Edwards, Alan Bishop and Mary Friend.

Co-opted Representatives: - Dick Mattick (National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers), Mrs Melanie Sancto (Swindon Association of Primary School Headteachers), Mr Paul Sunners (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) and Jackie Smith (Association of Swindon Special School Headteachers).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Colin Lovell, Rachael Matthey (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers), Andrew Wild (Church of England Diocese), Mr David Dawson (Catholic Church Diocese) and Councillor Joe Tray.

Also Present: Councillor Fionuala Foley (Cabinet Member for Children's Services).

18. Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Maureen Penny (Chair) declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 (Youth Forum Update) as she was a member of the Fostering Panel.

Councillor James Robbins declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda item 5 (Youth Forum Update) as he was a foster carer.

19. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

20. Sara Tough - Head of Children & Families

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Sara Tough, Head of Children and Families, for her support over the past years and wished her well in her new job.

Sara Tough expressed her thanks to the Committee for its support during her time within Children Services.

21. Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted for this meeting.

The Chair welcomed Claire Smith, Participation Manager, Paul Dobson, Project Manager, STEP (Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project), Grishma Ramesh, the elected Member of the Youth Parliament and her deputy, Naheda Miah to the Committee meeting.

Claire Smith referred to the contents of the report submitted by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Board Director, Commissioning updating the Committee on work undertaken by the Youth Parliament. Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment and Claire Smith referred to amendments in the report relating to Making Your Mark 2013 and Forward Swindon Ltd.

Grishma Ramesh explained about her life experiences and gave examples of how the Youth Parliament had exerted a positive influence on her. She updated Members on the Curriculum for Life Campaign concepts and advised that after attending a Swindon Association of Secondary Heads (SASH) meeting, nine schools had signed up for the campaign. She further advised a one thousand signature petition was raised. Assembly talks in schools were also undertaken and examples of work carried out at schools were given.

Naheda Miah referred to the consultation undertaken by the Youth Forum regarding sexual imagery on line. This consultation was undertaken to gauge the reaction of young people regarding sexually explicit material available through the various media.

The representatives, with the assistance of Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment and Sara Tough, Head of Children and Families, responded at the meeting to the following issues:

- The limit on the number of young people able to join the Youth Forum.
- The process involved for young people to join the Youth Forum and Youth Parliament.
- Whilst nine schools had signed up for the Curriculum for Life Campaign, Members enquired on what steps would be required to ensure head teachers remained engaged and focussed on identifying important issues.
- How the Committee could support the Youth Parliament in getting all secondary schools within Swindon involved in the Curriculum for Life Campaign.
- The adverse impact of sexually explicit material in the media on young people and the work to help them undertaken by RELATE.
- Sex and relationship education and whether young people were taking a mature approach to this subject and how schools were structuring their lessons on this subject.
- The lack of a standard in sex education across schools.
- Parental dialogue covering the area of sex education.

The Chair referred to the setting up of the sex education task group and explained that the Youth Forum or Youth Parliament may be invited to sit on the group.

Resolved: (1) That the Chair, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, be requested to send a letter of recommendation to those

schools not already part of the Curriculum for Life Campaign encouraging them to join.

(2) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to circulate the data presented by Naheda Miah, Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament, to all Committee members.

(3) That the Committee continues to support the work of the Member of Youth Parliament, Youth Forum and Chatterbox group.

(4) That, further to (3) above, the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment be requested to submit a progress report on the work of the Member of Youth Parliament, Youth Forum and Chatterbox group in the next municipal year.

(5) That Grishma Ramesh, the elected Member of the Youth Parliament and her deputy, Naheda Miah, be thanked for their contributions.

23. Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority School Improvement Functions

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment submitted a report describing the Education Improvement Strategy implemented by the Council and on the framework adopted by Ofsted from May 2013, enabling it to inspect Local Authority School Improvement Functions.

Mr Bradley referred to the key issues affecting schools and advised Members that academies were independent from the local authority and autonomous. He explained the role of the local authority and its duties towards all schools within the Borough, emphasising the importance of robust school governance in academies and schools. Members noted the importance of having a close working relationship between governors and academy and school leaders and were advised on the pivotal role played by governors to ensure high standards were maintained in academies. Members noted the support network available to schools to ensure skills, knowledge and good practice was shared.

Mr Bradley informed the Committee of the research and innovation groups, on the pupil premium and on how the groups' work supported schools by demonstrating work being undertaken to raise attainment and progress.

Mr Bradley responded to questions submitted by the Committee regarding the following issues:

- Challenges – governor / head teacher relationship. The need to ensure governors felt valued.
- The hands-on role of governors.
- Training for governors in academy schools. He advised that the Academy Trust would be responsible for ensuring that governors were sufficiently skilled and supported to carry out their responsibilities.
- The support available by the Local Authority for academies in preparation for Ofsted inspections.
- The availability of information on pupils at risk of making a poor transition to post 16 learning.
- The developing future relationship between the Local Authority and academy schools.
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee's relationship to academies
- The number of governor vacancies in schools.
- Academy protocols on the recruitment of school governors.

Resolved: (1) That the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment be requested to circulate to Members data and information on the Oakfield Project.

(2) That the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment be requested to circulate to Members data regarding the number of students who start at College and subsequently drop out before course completion.

(3) That the Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment be requested to circulate information to Members on the number of governor vacancies in schools.

(4) That the contents of the report on the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority School Improvement Functions be noted.

24. Children's Services Performance Report

Sue Wald, Head of Commissioning, Children and Adults, presented a report updating the Committee on the final performance outturn for Children's Services for the period April to September 2013. She referred to the new report structure where it now better reflected pupil movement through the education system.

Sue Wald, Head of Commissioning, Children and Adults, Paddy Bradley Head of Commissioning, Economy and Attainment and Sara Tough, Head of Children and Families responded to the Committee's queries regarding the following points:

- Reasons for the increase in the 2013/14 referral rates. The Committee enquired if this had resulted from an improvement in processes.
- The impact of increased referral rates on the referral team staff welfare.
- The audit exercise undertaken regarding children with a second and subsequent protection plan.
- Explanation of the Adoption Scorecard system.
- With regard to teenage conceptions, the relationship of Northampton as a statistical neighbour.
- Actions being undertaken to address the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).
- Past and present work undertaken regarding child obesity.
- Ways of promoting healthy eating within the community.
- How the People Premium funding was to be utilised to improve provision for children in care.
- Understanding the "Virtual School" concept for looked after children.
- Clarity on why there was a decline in breastfeeding coverage performance during August.
- Information relating to the GCSE results and funding for Looked after Children from other local authorities placed in Swindon.

Resolved: (1) That the Head of Commissioning, Children and Adults be requested to present future data in a numerical and percentage format.

(2) That, at the next meeting of this Committee, Caroline Allinson, Head of the Looked After Children Education Service, be requested to submit a report for noting which is also being presented to the Corporate Parenting Board regarding the role of the Virtual School and the service provided.

(3) That the performance for the period April to September 2013, be noted.

25. Work Programme 2013/14

The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Democratic Services detailing its updated work programme for the Municipal Year 2013/14. Sally Smith, Scrutiny Officer, referred to the changes within the programme. She

provided an update on the out of Borough placements and troubled families programme task groups that were currently operating. She stated that the task group relating to sex education in schools would be set up shortly and that she would be contacting those Members who had volunteered. She confirmed that it was planned that work on this task group would be completed by March 2014.

Resolved: (1) That the Education Health and Care Plan report be submitted to a meeting of this Committee in the next Municipal Year.

(2) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to update the work programme as agreed with the Chair.