

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 7 JULY 2014 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.30PM**

Present:- Parry Batth (Vice-Chairman), Mark Ashwell, Lindsay Ferris, Ken Miall, Bill Soane, and Bob Wyatt

Also present:- Ian Pittock, representing the Executive Member for Children's Services

Officers:

Judith Ramsden, Director of Children's Services

Alan Stubbersfield, Head of Learning Achievement,

Brian Grady, Head of Strategic Commissioning

Felicity Budgen, Head of Social Care and Intervention

Christine Buckman, Service Manager Corporate Parenting and LDD (for Item 6)

Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer

PART I

In the absence of the Chairman Pauline Helliard-Symons, the Vice Chairman, Parry Batth took the Chair.

The new members of the Committee were welcomed.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Pauline Helliard-Symons, Nicky Jerrome, Karen Knight, (Parent Governor Representative).

Lindsay Ferris had indicated that he would be 15 to 20 minutes late.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

6. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

The Committee received and considered a copy of the Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board, set out on Agenda pages 6 to 60 which gave details of the Corporate Parenting arrangements and an analysis of the key performance data for the Looked After Children. This annual report is the mechanism by which the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review into the services for Looked After Children are being monitored by the Committee.

Chris Buckman presented the report and highlighted the six priorities set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, which are:

- 1 To strengthen the Corporate Parenting role and Corporate Parenting function of the Council as a whole.
- 2 To strengthen the voice of children in our care and young people leaving care to enable their participation in the planning, reviewing and service design.
- 3 To consolidate progress and continue to improve the timeliness of permanency for looked after children across the range of permanency options.
- 4 To improve a care leaver's journey by ensuring an enhanced offer to care leavers across all areas: education; employment and training; independent living; housing options; and health.
- 5 To improve the educational outcomes for children in care and young people leaving care by including their aspirations.
- 6 To improve health provision for children in care and young people leaving care.

More detail on how these priorities will be met was set out in Section 4 of the report on Agenda pages 14 to 16, where areas for service improvement and development to improve the impact and outcomes for our looked after children were listed.

The report also included a detailed analysis on Agenda pages 9 to 14 of the 2013/14 performance data provided in the Corporate Parenting Score Card, which was set out in Appendix 1 on Agenda pages 17 to 40.

In answer to a question, Judith Ramsden confirmed that there was no policy to always appeal against court decisions on permanency, if it was felt that the decision was wrong. It was pointed out that an appeal can only be made about the process of the decision making, not the decision itself.

In answer to a question, Chris Buckman said that in the last few months, following a national promotion, there had been an upturn in the numbers of Foster Carers recruited. However, there were still not enough as the Council was not only competing with several adjoining authorities, but with the independent fostering agencies as well.

7. UPDATE ON THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014

The Committee received a presentation giving details of the latest situation in relation to the Children and Families Act 2014 and its implications. The Act requires substantive changes to the way in which services for vulnerable children/young people with special educational and disabilities will be provided from September 2014.

A copy of Brian Grady's presentation is attached to these minutes.

The key implications of the Act for Children's Services are:

- The need to involve children, young people, parents and carers in a more person centred way.
- A requirement on local authorities and health services to jointly commission services for young people and families.
- Statutory duty to meet needs of young people up to the age of 25.

- The Act applies equally to all schools including Academies and Free Schools.

Details of the progress of the various elements of the programme for implementation of the requirements of the Act were given: the Local Offer; Education Health and Care Plans; Personal Budgets; Preparing for Adulthood; Engagement of Parents and Young People.

In answer to questions, Officers clarified that:

- plans are being prepared for 'leavers', ie those young people with statements, leaving school at 18.
- Engagement is being carried out to allow working with parents and young people to get feedback on proposals/consultations on the future service provision. Parents have been interested in the prospect of joining up education and health services;
- The amount that will be given in personal budgets has not yet been agreed; costings for the various services will be set out in a policy document. Individual Budgets will be set on a case by case basis. The expectation is that only a handful of personal budgets will be in place in September – it will be a gradual process.

RESOLVED: that the update on the Children and Families Act 2014 be noted.

8. ASSESSMENT ARRANGMENTS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Committee received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 61 and 62 setting out the implications of the changes to the way that primary pupils will be assessed, from September 2014.

Alan Stubbersfield in presenting his report said that accurate assessment of pupil's progress is crucial. New national models are being developed, which do not use the National Curriculum levels; various models are being piloted, but information regarding these is not clear. Wokingham schools have been consulted and a working party to consider a Borough wide approach is being convened. Until this has been agreed, a cautious approach is being taken and schools will continue with the current system of using National Curriculum Levels to inform professional judgements. Testing will continue with the additional baseline testing at KS1.

RESOLVED: that the report on Assessment Arrangements for Primary Schools be noted.

9. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, IMPROVEMENT AND OFSTED REPORTS

The Committee received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 63 to 70, giving an analysis of the issues raised in Ofsted reports, including the impact of the changes in the new Ofsted framework for assessment, the impact on Wokingham and the Local Authority Improvement Actions.

Alan Stubbersfield presented his report which contained a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the changes, and the challenges which they have presented to schools. The Ofsted reports have become more formulaic, with focus on national policy issues, and give less specific information.

Overall Wokingham is doing well with 86% of pupils in the Borough attending good or better schools than regionally or nationally in 2013. However there are concerns that a number of schools previously judged as outstanding have recently been judged as good under the new challenging framework. This is a national trend.

There is concern around schools that have been judged as 'requiring improvement', as this category is time limited and schools that do not improve within a couple of following inspections are in danger of being given an inadequate rating. So there is a focus on looking at those schools and helping them to improve. There are no Borough schools that have been judged as inadequate.

In response to questions Alan confirmed that the quality of teaching is now a key area for Ofsted assessment and that it is good quality teaching which leads to pupils making good progress. 'Added value' is part of the pupil progress judgement, and the use and impact of the Pupil Premium is one of the key areas looked at by Ofsted in relation to ensuring that vulnerable children make appropriate progress in relation to their peers.

Narrowing the Gap in achievement/progress of vulnerable children is an important issue in the Borough, and is the main focus for school improvement. A report will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Ofsted Reports

Copies of the summaries for recently published Ofsted inspection reports for the following schools had been circulated separately:

- Winnersh Primary School – overall rating 3 'requires improvement'; previous rating 2 'good'
- Farley Hill Primary School – overall rating 3 'requires improvement'; previous rating 2 'good'
- Highwood Primary School – overall rating 2 'good'; previous rating 3 'satisfactory'
- St Sebastian's CE Aided Primary School – overall rating 2 'good'; previous rating 3 'satisfactory'

RESOLVED: That the School Performance, Improvement and Ofsted reports be noted.

10. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee received and considered the sections of the Balanced Scorecard relating to the following headings: Keeping Children Safe; Narrowing the Gap; and Opportunity for All.

It was noted that indicator 6 – *Safeguarding: % of referrals that are repeat referrals to Children's Social Care*, and the explanation given in the report was accepted.

RESOLVED: That the Children's Services Performance Indicators be noted.

11. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Chairman mentioned that there would be a training session for all Committee Members and Substitutes before the next meeting on 29 September which would include information on the new structure/organisation of Children's Services and an indication of the Service's current priorities.

The Chairman mentioned that the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee had recently considered all the scrutiny review requests that had been submitted, and one request had been referred to this Committee.

The review request was from Cllr Beth Rowland and was for

- An investigation into the future role and viability of Wokingham Borough Council as a provider of Local Education Authority statutory requirements/services, in light of the Academy programme.

The decision of the Management Committee was that a full scrutiny review would not be necessary, and that the suggestion should be referred to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for it to receive a report from Officers on the current situation and plans for the future, which would address the points raised in the scrutiny review suggestion.

Judith Ramsden indicated that there was not the capacity within Children's Services to support a full review over several months, and that Officers in Children's Services were already carrying out a piece of work around this issue and the wider issue of self-evaluation of the school improvement service which could be shared with Committee Members.

RESOLVED: That a time limited Task and Finish Group be set up, comprising all members of the Committee, meeting in private to receive a briefing report to address issues raised in the scrutiny request, on the current situation and setting out plans for the future of the service.

The Committee considered the Forward Programme of work as set out in Agenda pages 78 to 83 and agreed the following amendments:

- 29 September – move the 'Progression of 16 plus Pupils' item to November
- 29 September – add an item on 'Mid Year Review of the Effectiveness of Services to Safeguard Children'

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

If you need help in understanding this document or if you would like a copy of it in large print please contact one of our Administrators.



Children and Families Act 2014



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children and Families Act – Key Points

- The need to involve children and young people and parents and carers in a more person centred way
- A requirement on local authorities and health services to jointly commission services for young people and families
- Statutory duty to meet needs of young people up to the age of 25
- Apply equally to all schools including Academies and Free Schools



Programme - RAG Status

- Local Offer - **Green**
- Education Health and Care Plan - **Green**
- Personal Budgets - **Amber**
- Preparing for Adulthood - **Green**
- Children, Young People and Family Engagement - **Green**



Local Offer

- Duty on Local Authorities and Health services to set out clear and searchable information on services available to parents and carers, children and young people
- To cover Education, Health and Care Services



Local Offer



- We have engaged and consulted with school heads, SENCo's and service providers on our Local Offer
- Our Local Offer has been developed along with a revamp of our existing Wokingham Information Network and the site is now live.
- Local Schools and providers are currently inputting their Local Offer information which is being moderated and will be made “live” on the 1st September
- Our rate and review process is currently being worked up in consultation with young people and parents



Education Health and Care Plans

- From Sep 2014, Statements replaced with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans taking children and young people up to the age of 25.
- Existing Statements will remain in force until all children and young people have completed the transition to EHC Plans.



Education Health and Care Plans

- Input from our SEN team, Social Care team and Health colleagues and consultation with education providers has informed and shaped our integrated assessment framework and paperwork
- A number of pilots, equating to 12% of the average annual figure of new Statements of SEN, of the new EHCP are currently underway
- Each pilot will have a personal budget worked through to feed into the Personal Budget strand



Personal Budgets

- Offered alongside EHC Plans
- Not the sum of all resources available to a young person
- Does not include funding for school place
- A policy from September 2014
- Information about Personal Budgets to be included in the local offer



Personal Budgets

- Pilots are ongoing – Phase 1 of the pilot will take us to the end of December which encompasses the 8 EHCP assessment pilots and the transport pilots already identified working the number up to 30
- Phase 2 will increase the number of pilots by an additional 20 by the end of April 2015
- The Resource Allocation System for Personal Budgets is currently being worked up based on a number of examples from other authorities and with input from Strategic Commissioning



Preparing for Adulthood

- Pilots are now planned
- We have 43 leavers in July 2015 who *must* be reviewed in the autumn term
- Year 9 pupils as part of their annual review and *should* be reviewed by July 2015
- 10 complex needs cases will also form part of the pilot during the autumn term



Engagement – Parents & Young People

- **Headliner commissioned to carry out consultation planned to date**
 - Primary and Secondary sessions @ Addington.
 - Siblings group via Mencap
 - Parent focus group @ Dingley
 - Parent carer telephone interviews
- **Positive response to consultation also received from**
 - Bridges Resource Centre
 - Camp Mohawk - multi-functional day centre for children with additional needs
 - Peapods - parent-led charity providing support to families
 - REACH

