



# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2015**

**AT**

**7.30PM**

### **AGENDA**

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**Civic Offices  
Shute End  
Wokingham  
Berkshire**

**Andy Couldrick  
Chief Executive**



## **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Our Vision**

***A great place to live, an even better place to do business***

### **Our Priorities**

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

### **The Underpinning Principles**

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

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# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**To: The Chairman and Members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

A Meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held at the Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham on **Tuesday 13 January 2015 at 7.30pm**

Andy Couldrick  
Chief Executive  
5 January 2015

**Members:-** Pauline Helliar-Symons (Chairman), Parry Batth (Vice-Chairman), Mark Ashwell, Lindsay Ferris, Ken Miall, Bill Soane, Alison Swaddle and Shahid Younis

**Substitutes:** Chris Bowring, Kay Gilder, Dee Tomlin and Bob Wyatt

**Parent Governor Representatives** – vacancy, vacancy

**Church of England Diocesan Representative** – One Vacancy

**Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative** – One Vacancy

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
39.00	None Specific	<b>MINUTES</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on 3 November 2014.	1
40.00	None Specific	<b>APOLOGIES</b> To receive any apologies for absence	
41.00		<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest	

<b>42.00</b>		<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>          To answer any public questions.          The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this Panel          Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Panel or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact Democratic Services on the numbers listed below or go to <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions">www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</a></p> <p>Explanatory leaflets are also available in the Civic Offices and Libraries.</p>	
<b>43.00</b>		<p><b>MEMBER QUESTION TIME</b>          To answer any member questions.</p>	
<b>44.00</b>	None specific	<p><b>DELIVERING EFFECTIVE SAFEGUARDING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN - UPDATE</b>          To receive and consider a report giving an update on the impact of the recruitment and retention strategy.</p>	<b>6</b>
<b>45.00</b>	None specific	<p><b>FUTURE ROLE OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL AS A PROVIDER OF STATUTORY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES</b>          To receive a verbal update from the Task &amp; Finish Group.</p>	<b>verbal</b>
<b>46.00</b>	None specific	<p><b>WOKINGHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD'S REPORT – EFFECTIVE ARRANGMENTS FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN -</b>          To receive and consider the Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board's report on arrangements for safeguarding children.</p>	<b>To follow</b>
<b>47.00</b>	<p>Hawkedon          Norreys          Bulmershe &amp; Whitegates          Emmbrook          Loddon</p>	<p><b>SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE - OFSTED REPORTS</b>          To receive and consider summaries of recent Ofsted inspection reports in respect of the following schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawkedon Primary School</li> <li>• All Saints CE (Aided) Primary School</li> <li>• Rivermead Primary School</li> <li>• Emmbrook Junior School</li> <li>• Woodley CE Primary School</li> </ul>	<b>11</b>
<b>48.00</b>	None specific	<p><b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>          To receive and consider a report giving details of the Children's Services performance indicators in the Balanced Score Card.</p>	<b>To follow</b>

<b>49.00</b>	None specific	<b>COMMITTEE'S FORWARD PROGRAMME</b> To receive the current work programme for the Committee and to consider any amendments or additions.	<b>19</b>
<b>50.00</b>		<b>ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT</b> A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading	

This is an agenda for a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2015 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.30PM**

*Present:- Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Chris Bowring (substitute for Mark Ashwell), Lindsay Ferris, Nicky Jerrome, Ken Miall, and Shahid Younis*

*Also present:-*

*Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Executive Member for Children's Services  
Ian Pittock, Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services*

*Officers:*

*Judith Ramsden, Director of Children's Services  
Alan Stubbersfield, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement, Children's Services  
Felicity Budgen, Interim Head of Social Care and Intervention, Children's Services  
Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer*

## **PART I**

### **24. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to a correction to the name in the middle paragraph of Minute 17 on page 2 'Fiona' should be 'Frances'.

### **25. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Mark Ashwell, (who was substituted by Chris Bowring), Parry Bath and Bill Soane.

### **26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Pauline Helliard-Symons declared that she was going to be doing occasional consultancy work with CfBT Education Trust, the organisation which helps to run Oakbank Secondary and Evendons Primary schools.

### **27. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

### **28. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

### **29. NARROWING THE GAP**

The Committee received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 6 to 30, giving detailed information and analysis of the 2014 pupil Narrowing the Gap outcomes, following performance assessments.

Alan Stubbersfield presented his report, which showed that:

- In Foundation stage the overall gap widened marginally, however overall the percentage of pupils reaching the expected outcomes had improved by 13%; significantly, above the national average improvement of 8%;
- Key Stage 1, the gap at level 2 widened in all subjects but at Level 3 (ie more able pupils) has either closed or remained the same.
- In Key Stage 2 at Level 4+ the gaps have closed in all subjects.
- Secondary gaps closed at GCSE.

The following points were made in response to Members' questions:

- The overall proportion of pupils receiving the Pupil Premium across the Borough is 5.6%, a small minority.
- The high improvements in the achievements of the Early Learning Goals are a result of the introduction of the new Early Years Framework, and a greater degree of confidence in making assessments since its introduction in 2013.
- It is acknowledged that the levels of achievement in writing is an issue at several key stages, and writing is now a focus of the School Improvement Officers, particularly with the Early Years Team who also work with child minders and private/voluntary/independent settings. The impact of this early intervention work will be assessed.
- The best practice approach to improve writing is to focus on basic skills to prepare the child for school; practical help is given and expectations are raised.
- School Improvement Officers identify the required improvement through the data provided, focussing on vulnerable groups, including those covered by the Pupil Premium and making preparations for Ofsted inspection.
- The Pupil Premium Champions share good practice.
- The Pupil Premium is given to schools based on the number of 'Free School Meals' (FSM) eligible children and 'Looked After Children' on roll, so the amount varies from school to school, but it should be used for a personalised approach to improve the outcomes for those children.
- The numbers involved in each school are relatively small, so the School Improvement Officers know who the children are and are able to track individual performance and act as an advocate for them.
- Headteachers have to account for how the Pupil Premium money is spent and show that it is affecting outcomes for the FSM children; this is one of the things that Ofsted look at during inspections. Schools must invest in these children.
- The ambition is to continue to work with schools and Early Years Settings to improve attainment/outcomes, particularly for the vulnerable lower achieving children. Free Schools and Academies want to maintain relationships with community schools, and are happy to work together on a professional level.

Officers were thanked for the detailed report.

**RESOLVED:** That the report giving Narrowing the Gap provisional data for 2014 be noted.

### **32. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNING BODIES – MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 31 to 43, detailing the actions taken in respect of the implementation of the 18 recommendations made following the review into the effectiveness of school governing bodies and local authority support, which was completed two years ago.

In response to a Member comment that it was difficult to judge progress, Alan Stubbersfield pointed out that details of the actions taken to implement the recommendations up to October 2014, were given in the Appendix to the report.

He highlighted the following:

- an increase in the positive comments in recent Ofsted reports and the improvements in the outcomes of the inspections reflected the improvements in governance of schools;

- the buy-in by schools to the Authority's traded Governor Services, which provides training and gives support, was a success, with all schools on the Borough, except one Academy and one Free school subscribing to the training package;
- A recent briefing for Chairs of Governors had 45 attendees which shows a high level of engagement;

Comment was made that it was not possible to have numeric measures of the outcomes of many of the recommendations, but it was suggested that the next annual monitoring report could group the measurable actions. It was noted that the Local Authority is unable to specify a time limit for Chairs of Governors' terms of office.

Those who had been involved in the original review commented that during the review they had concluded that governing bodies did not seem to appreciate/understand the fundamental change in their role; and that they needed the confidence to be able to challenge their Headteacher. It was suggested that governors could be asked for feedback after training sessions and at the governors' conference.

In relation to the level of vacancies, it was acknowledged that there were always vacancies for Local Authority nominated governors. It was pointed out that under new regulations all governing bodies must be reconstituted by September 2015, with only one LA governor appointed on each governing body.

**RESOLVED:** That the monitoring report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Review into the Effectiveness of Governing Bodies and the Local Authority Support, be noted, and that a further report be presented in 12 months, with evidence of Smarter progress measures.

### **33. FUTURE ROLE OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL AS A PROVIDER OF STATUTORY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES**

It was reported that the Task and Finish Group had met and received a briefing from Officers on the options for future provision of school improvement services. The next meeting will be on 19 November at 7.30pm when officers from other authorities which work on different models of provision will attend.

### **34. DELIVERING EFFECTIVE SAFEGUARDING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN - UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered a verbal report from Felicity Budgen giving an update on delivering effective safeguarding services of children.

Felicity Budgen said that in September the safeguarding services had been audited by an independent company who had stated "

The practice is regularly looked at, which shows that progress has been made, but there is still work to do. Things that are making an impact are:

- Strong partnerships have been developed and will be built on eg with the Police;
- An early intervention strategy is being launched this week
- The 'triage' system started in August where there is a multi-agency assessment and the appropriate care offered, building on comments from recent serious case reviews;
- Workforce - there is still a high number of agency staff work is being done to recruit newly qualified social workers and give them defined professional development. This approach over the last 18 months is coming to fruition;



- Recruitment and retention – appointments have been made to two of the Service Manager posts, and a new Head of Social Care will be in place in February. Work is being done to ensure that we are recruiting the right people to senior social work posts, and we are optimistic that we will get more permanent social workers which will lead to a more consistent approach;
- Good training programmes are in place, which continue to build on good practice;
- We are looking at ensuring that social workers are aware of attachment theory – where consistency of a main carer is important;
- These are good building blocks.

The following points were made in response to Members' questions:

- The results of the audit would not have an impact on the 'red' safeguarding performance indicator, reported in the Balanced Scorecard, because that is a recording issue, not a case load issue;
- The audit was carried out by a company called Ingson, who are well known nationally;
- There is still high turnover of social workers, with a vacancy and turnover rate of about 30% which are filled by agency staff. It is acknowledged that this is not satisfactory as it affects the consistency required in developing good relationships with children and families;
- The recruitment package on offer through the new strategy sets the salaries at middle range in the market, and it is intended to provide a more detailed report on staffing at the next meeting when the impact of the new recruitment strategy should be in evidence;
- The successful bid for involvement in the Innovations programme should help with recruitment, as it included training opportunities which enhance the career progression and training in our recruitment package;
- We are confident that we have a balanced ratio of the number of cases that each social worker has to deal with. It does depend on the experience/training and level of activity of the cases. Nationally the average is 25, but in Wokingham the aim is 15 for experienced social workers, though this may occasionally reach 18, and 8 for those who are newly qualified;
- There are 3 or 4 agencies used to provide the social workers, which have been selected as preferred providers by the procurement team;
- Initial professional registration and then reregistration checks are carried out on social workers and supervisors; managers and principal social workers monitor case work to check that the social workers are following the right procedures. Also are regular external and internal audits of procedure and practice and there are regular independent reviews of activities around children in care;
- The professional staff do follow procedures, however there is an interest in developing the balance between strictly following policy/procedure and using professional judgement. Participation in the Innovations programme will encourage review of and debate about practice to ensure that the social workers are able to use best practice;
- The perception by some that practice is different, with some social workers sticking strictly to policy/procedure and other being more flexible, but being 'brought back in to line' could be that social workers do reflect on their decisions and may have to change them if it was not the best.
- In relation to the issue of flexibility, children's social work is a very stressful job and the social workers need to work within a framework/statutory guidance, they need to understand families and determine what to do, getting the balance right;

- There are some children on child protection plans, which are dealt with in a case by case basis in conjunction with partners such as the Thames Valley Police.

The Executive Member agreed that there is a massive amount of work going on to recruit in a difficult market where people often prefer the flexibility of agency working. We need a unique selling point and are moving in the right direction.

**RESOLVED:** That the update report on delivering effective safeguarding services for children be noted, and that a more detailed report on the recruitment strategy and staffing issues be brought to the next meeting.

### **35. SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE – OFSTED REPORTS**

The Committee received copies of the summaries of recently published Ofsted inspection reports, set out on Agenda pages 44 to 51:

- Whiteknights Primary School –overall rating 2 ‘good’; previous rating 3 ‘requires improvement’
- Winnersh Primary School – outcome of the first monitoring inspection following judgement in May 2014 that the school required improvement. Effective action being taken to tackle areas requiring improvement; further actions suggested.
- Oakbank Secondary School - outcome of the first monitoring inspection following judgement in May 2014 that the school required improvement. Effective action being taken to tackle areas requiring improvement; further actions suggested

It was noted that Whiteknights Primary had improved and had now achieved a ‘good’ rating.

In relation to Winnersh Primary, which had been assessed as ‘requiring improvement’, it was noted that improvements had been made.

**RESOLVED:** That the recently published Ofsted reports be noted.

### **36. CHILDREN’S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – BALANCED SCORECARD**

The Committee received and considered the sections of the Balanced Scorecard with officer commentary relating to the following headings: Keeping Children Safe; Narrowing the Gap; and Opportunity for All as set out on Agenda pages 52 to 57.

It was noted that Indicator 6 - *Safeguarding: % of referrals that are repeat referrals to Children’s Social Care* was still red.

The explanation given in the report that this was a technical issue around reporting arrangements was accepted.

**RESOLVED:** That the Children’s Services performance indicators be noted.

### **37. COMMITTEE’S FORWARD PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the forward Programme of work set out on Agenda pages 58 to 61, and agreed to the following amendments:

- January - add the Local Safeguarding Children Board’s report on the ‘Effective arrangements to safeguard children’
- January – the safeguarding update report to focus on the impact of the recruitment and retention strategy
- March – the safeguarding update to focus on the impact of the Early Help Strategy.