

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 5 June 2017.

PRESENT

Dr. P. Bremner CC
Mr. G. Hirst
Mr. Max Hunt CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC
Mr. J. Kaufman CC
Mrs. C. Lewis

Mrs. R. Page CC
Mrs H. L. Richardson CC
Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mrs D. Taylor CC
Mr. G. Welsh CC

In attendance.

Mr Ould CC,
Mr Pendleton CC.

1. Appointment of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Mrs A Wright CC as Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2018 be noted.

2. Election of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mrs H. L. Richardson be elected Deputy Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2018.

Mrs H. L. Richardson – in the Chair.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2017.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2017 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive confirmed that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mrs B Seaton CC declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda as an Assistant Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and School Governor.

Mr G Welsh CC declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda as a School Governor and as two members of his family were teachers, one of whom worked at the South Leicestershire Autistic Unit.

Mrs D Taylor CC declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda as her step grandson was subject to care services in Leicester City.

8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

10. Quarter 4 2016/17 Performance Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the Children and Family Services performance at the end of quarter 4 of 2016/17. A copy of the report, marked Agenda Item 10, is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) Concern was expressed regarding the allocation of school places, particularly in Oadby where it was felt that children living in the local area were not always able to attend local schools and that the catchment areas for some schools now included Leicester City residents. A related concern was raised regarding the cost of transporting pupils who were not able to get a place at their local school to schools elsewhere in the County. Members also queried the number of school appeals that were taking place and the success rate of those appeals. The Director undertook to provide a written response. It was also noted that District-based meetings would be organised for members to discuss demographic trends with regard to schools.
- ii) Members welcomed improvements in performance for children and social care indicators, in particular the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation. It was explained that the rigorous process of collecting and checking the data, including monthly analysis of the position for each young person, had led to improvements in data quality. In addition, closer working with housing colleagues

and other partners, as well as with the young people themselves, had led to improvements in performance.

- iii) In terms of how the data was presented, it was noted that the performance report contained both national and local data, and detailed which of those was performing 'better/worse' than previous quarters. It was also explained that the system for recording the data for the performance report was different to that employed by Adult Social Care, given the different local and national targets for the two areas;
- iv) The data for the indicator '% of children in care with up to date immunisations' was not yet available as immunisation data needed to be confirmed with Health colleagues. Data would be available for the next meeting of the Committee;
- v) That data for the local response to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities appeals for 2015/16 was detailed in the performance report. New data had been received recently for 2016/17; this would be circulated to members, along with details of whether appeals were upheld or dismissed and the reasons why;
- vi) Pupils' progress during KS2 was currently affected by the transition to a new school between years 5 and 6. It was expected that, once all age-range issues for schools were resolved, performance would improve.
- vii) Across all key stages, some vulnerable groups were not performing as well as expected. The lessons for this had been examined in depth, working with schools. More detail on the outcome of this investigation would be included in the next performance report to the Committee.

RESOLVED:-

- (a) That the Children and Families Service performance at the end of quarter 4 2016/17 be noted;
- (b) That officers be requested to provide the Committee with details regarding the allocation of school places and related appeals;
- (c) That officers be requested to provide the Committee with details of the local response to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities appeals; and
- (d) That future performance reports submitted to the Committee include commentary highlighting significant changes in performance.

11. Young Carers.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the work taking place to identify, assess and support young carers across Leicestershire. A copy of the report, marked at Agenda Item 11, is filed with these minutes.

Members were advised that, following an assessment, young carers could be offered respite from their caring responsibilities. This could be to enable them to do particular activities or could be more intensive. An intensive six month support package was provided by Barnardo's. A holistic assessment was undertaken and the outcome star was used. By way of example, a case study was given. This referred to a 13 year old who was

socially isolated, had poor attendance at school, was subject to racism and bullying and was difficult at home. The intensive support received by that young carer included one-to-one sessions to build self-esteem, working with the school on issues relating to bullying and racism, attending a young carer group and dancing class for respite; and referring the parents to adult social care.

Replying to questions from members, the Director advised:-

- i) A young carers' voice event would be held at the National Space Centre, Leicester, on Monday 12 June 2017 to identify the level of support required by young carers, including in the longer term. An invitation had been sent to all young carers and their families. Members recognised this as a new approach in engaging with young people and a positive step forward.
- ii) Identifying and reaching young carers remained a challenge, as it was recognised that many young people who cared for a relative would not admit to being a young carer due to fears about being taken away from their families or placed in care. There was a reliance on schools to identify young carers. The Local Authority was also beginning to work with GPs in this area.
- iii) Quarterly monitoring meetings were held with Barnardo's to ensure it was delivering against contract. The Committee was pleased to note that Barnardo's was performing well and was undertaking more assessments that it was contracted to do.
- iv) The educational achievements of young carers were not currently monitored as they did not form a statutory vulnerable group. It was felt that it might be difficult to do this as the County Council was not often engaged with young carers in the long term; the requirement was to undertake an assessment.

Members recognised the progress made over the last four years in working with and supporting young carers, especially in engaging Barnardo's in providing that support.

RESOLVED:-

That the work taking place to identify, assess and support young carers across Leicestershire be noted.

12. Extended Free Childcare Entitlement.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the progress made in delivering the implementation of the extended free childcare entitlement as required under the Childcare Act 2016. A copy of the report, marked Agenda Item 12, is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions and comments made by the members of the Committee, the Director advised as follows:

- i) The criteria for the Department for Education's capital funding programme enabled six bids for funding to be submitted for consideration. The areas of Charnwood, Hinckley, Oadby and Wigston were chosen based on various criteria including waiting lists held for available places, occupancy rates, the number of 2 and 3 year olds already accessing care and the census data showing the levels of working

parents in the area. The providers had to fund 25 per cent of the service; the remainder was provided by the department for education.

- ii) The selected providers were encouraged to work with other partners, for example out of school clubs and other child care providers, to support the offer to parents of up to 30 hours of childcare. This was especially important during the busy summer period when occupancy rates were high. It was expected that more childcare places would be available in September, when the extended childcare offer would be available nationally.
- iii) The extended offer related to an additional 15 hours of childcare over and above the universal offer of 15 hours. Eligibility for the extended offer was determined by the online eligibility checker on the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs website which parents were asked to use. They would have the option of choosing how many additional hours they needed, up to the maximum of 30.
- iv) The funding model for the extended childcare entitlement was based on participation and was therefore paid a school term in arrears. This was a sustainable model which would not leave the County Council in deficit.

RESOLVED:-

That the progress made by the Early Learning and Childcare Service in delivering the implementation of the extended free childcare entitlement as required under the Childcare Act 2016 be noted.

13. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 11 September 2017 at 2pm.

14.30-15.30
5 June 2017

Chairman