



# Scrutiny Board

## Minutes - 16 September 2014

### Attendance

#### Members of the Board

Cllr Peter O'Neill (Chair)  
Cllr Barry Findlay (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Ian Angus  
Cllr Alan Bolshaw  
Cllr Ian Brookfield  
Cllr Paula Brookfield  
Cllr Claire Darke  
Cllr Lorna McGregor  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr John Rowley  
Cllr Stephen Simkins  
Cllr Paul Singh  
Cllr Wendy Thompson

#### Employees

Adam Hadley	Scrutiny and Transparency Manager
Keith Ireland	Strategic Director, Delivery
Martyn Sargeant	Head of Democratic Services

### Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Hodgkiss and Photay, for whom Cllrs Ian Brookfield and Paul Singh attended as substitutes.
- 2 Declarations of interest**  
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting (31 July 2014)**  
Resolved:  
That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Matters arising**  
There were no matters arising.

## 5 **Information governance**

Adam Hadley introduced the information governance performance report for the first quarter of 2014/15, noting that it had been reviewed by Cabinet (Performance Management) Panel the previous evening. He drew Councillors attention to:

- Much improved performance in responses to Freedom of Information (Fol) requests – 94% within statutory timescale. He advised this placed Wolverhampton within the first quartile for council performance.
- 69% response rate within the statutory timescale for subject access requests (SARs), although there is no benchmarking or trend information available.
- The difficulties faced in responding to SARs in respect of social services cases, particularly for people formerly in care, because of the administrative burden of redacting case files that can run to thousands of pages.
- 100% completion of the protecting information training by existing employees and Councillors, and the arrangements in place to identify new employees.

Concern was expressed about the cost of handling both Fols and SARs, particularly where those requests were vexatious or spurious. Keith Ireland explained every effort was being made to minimise the workload for the Council, by:

- Identifying the most popular repeat requests and making the information part of the Council's publication scheme.
- Clarifying and tightening retention schedules.
- Securely disposing of paperwork that no longer needs to be retained.

Resolved:

To receive a second quarter update once available, to include SAR benchmarking information.

## 6 **Quarter one performance**

Keith Ireland introduced the second quarter performance report, noting again that it had been reviewed the previous evening by the Cabinet (Performance Management) Panel. He highlighted the two exception reports in respect of looked after children and employee appraisals, as well as a small number of amber indicators.

Queries were raised about the target (and principle of having a target at all) for children moving in with adoptive families. Keith advised he would ask the responsible Assistant Director to discuss this further with Councillors.

Clarification was sought in relation to the performance in respect of the number of businesses assisted. Keith advised he did not have further detail available but further detail would be provided to members of the Board in writing.

Concern was expressed about the continued poor performance in respect of the number of employees having a current appraisal. Keith assured the Board that an action plan was in place, commencing with an audit of the existing records, which he felt did not provide a complete picture. He further highlighted his concern that a more critical issue was the quality of many of the appraisals that were taking place, which were not addressing issues of poor performance. He explained that this would be a key priority over the coming two years.

Resolved:

- (1) To receive the second quarter performance update at a subsequent meeting once available, to include school performance data for 2013/14.
- (2) To receive further explanatory detail in respect of the businesses assisted target.
- (3) For individual scrutiny panels to review performance rated amber in more detail.
- (4) To receive details of the improvement plan in respect of employee appraisals.

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### **Work programme**

Adam Hadley introduced the scrutiny work programme for the coming months.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the work programme and agree the amendments put forward by the individual panels.
- (2) That the Children and Young People panel would take the lead on reviewing children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), but members of the Health Scrutiny Panel would be welcome to attend.
- (3) That a joint meeting of the Adults and Community Scrutiny Panel, Health and Wellbeing Board, and Health Scrutiny Panel would be convened in October to consider the implications of the Care Act 2014.
- (4) That the looked-after children review be drawn to a close with the separate workstreams to be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.
- (5) To receive an update on the 2014/15 scrutiny reviews at the next meeting.
- (6) To receive an update on the risk register at the next meeting.
- (7) To note that the challenging school performance review (2013/14) was on hold, pending a meeting between the Chair and the Assistant Director.