



Children, young people and families scrutiny panel

Minutes - 8 July 2015

Attendance

Members of the Children, young people and families scrutiny panel

Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar
Cllr Christopher Haynes
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama
Cllr Peter O'Neill (Chair)
Cllr Arun Photay
Cyril Randles
Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Daniel Warren
Cllr Richard Whitehouse

In attendance

Cllr Claire Darke
Cabinet Member for Education

Employees

Carole Bourne	Acting Head of Service Children's Commissioning (also a Children's Centre Manager)
Alexandra Chilcott	Head of Standards and Vulnerable Pupils
Bill Hague	Service Manager – School Places and Transport
Kush Patel	Commissioning Officer
Earl Piggott-Smith	Scrutiny Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from the following members of the panel:

Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
R.Watkins
- 2 Declarations of Interest**

Cyril Randles declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 Primary School Organisation Strategy 2015-18

3 **Election of Vice Chair**

Councillor Photay was nominated to serve as Vice-Chair of the Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Photay be elected as vice-Chair of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel for the 2015/16 municipal year.

4 **Minutes of previous meeting (18.3.15)**

The panel approved the minutes of the meeting of 18.3.15 as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

5 **Primary School Organisation Strategy 2015-2018**

Bill Hague, Service Manager - School Places and Transport introduced the report on the Primary School Organisation Strategy 2015-2018. The Service Manager explained that this is the third draft of the strategy which had been previously considered by the panel.

The strategy has been sent out for consultation. No formal comments received. The Service Manager updated the panel on The Royal School Wolverhampton plans to convert to a free school status from September 2015. The Service Manager commented that the schools governing body had proposed an expansion of existing school places which could provide extra capacity. The Service Manager explained that the Department of Education has advised that the view of the Government is that the school should open in September 2016. The Council will need to respond quickly to any decision to expand current capacity.

The Service Manager commented on the challenges in predicting increases in demand for school places and responding to 'spikes' in numbers during the year, which will require asking schools to increase their capacity.

The Service Manager commented that surplus places estimated at 4%-5%.

The panel commented on the link between the strategy and the increase in the number of school education appeals and queried if there was work being done to look at links to the impact of new housing developments and the demand for extra places.

The Service Manager outlined the modelling work used to estimate demand for schools places and explained that the process does not take account of families outside the City moving to the area, as does not provide a reliable indicator of future plans.

The panel commented on the increase in the number of Y2 places by 65 and queried how other intelligence is used to predict the likely demand for places. The Service Manager commented that the assessment process does not take account of birth data. The panel discussed the likely implications on demand for secondary school places based on current predictions at primary school.

Alexandra Chilcott, Head of School Standards, commented that a new free school will be opening which increase capacity for places, but accepted the challenge in meeting increased demand at secondary schools in the future and creating surplus places. The Head of School Standards is waiting for details of the Royal School Wolverhampton admissions policy to be published before assessing the impact on meeting the demand for places at other schools.

The panel queried the impact of planning building work to increase capacity will have on the lessons and the concern about the disruption among children taking exams as work could not be completed during the holiday period.

The Service Manager commented on the building plans and situations where temporary classroom solutions will be considered and situations where a more permanent building would be a better solution to provide extra capacity. The Service Manager commented on the quality of temporary classrooms that will be provided at schools.

The panel discussed the potential factors that might impact on demand for school places in the future.

Resolved

The panel welcomed the report and accepted the recommendation. The panel comments on the strategy to be referred to Cabinet.

6 Role of the local authority in raising school standards of attainment

Alex Chilcott, Head of School Standards, presented a report which outlined the responsibilities of the local authority in helping to raise educational attainment standards. The Head of School Standards also outlined the work being done to hold schools to account for their educational performance.

The Head of School Standards detailed the range of specific actions aimed at supporting schools to improve and the statutory powers that can be used to intervene where schools are not improving at the required rate. The Head of School Standards gave examples of where intervention by the local authority had led to significant improvement in key stage 2 educational results in English and mathematics. The Head of School Standards explained that from September all school governing bodies will be rated to determine the level of support and or intervention needed to improve educational outcomes

The panel welcomed the report.

The panel queried the implications of the Government's proposal to intervene where a school has been assessed by OFSTED as being a 'coasting' school. The Head of School Standards explained that the Government has not yet agreed a final definition in their published guidance. Based on latest information only one of Wolverhampton schools would meet the current criteria.

The panel discussed the implications and likely response when an existing academy is assessed as a failing school. The Head of School Standards explained that the local authority would have a responsibility to find alternative school provision if parents decided that they wished to move their child to another school.

The panel discussed the findings of the Ofsted Outcomes 2013-16 predicted inspection grades and basis for the calculation.

The panel queried that the issue of children leaving school with few or no qualifications. The panel suggested that a briefing should be presented to provide data on the numbers of children and the action being taken by the local authority. The Head of School Standards explained the difficulties in collating the data and in tracking the destination of school leavers. The panel discussed the issue of children who are excluded or who are receiving home teaching and the work done to monitor their progress. The Head of School Standards explained that academies are not required to share this information with the local authority.

The Head of School Standards suggested that it would be useful to contact Rachel King to get further details and ask for a briefing to be drafted.

Resolved.

The panel supported the recommendations.

The panel requested a briefing on data on number of children leaving school with no qualifications

The panel requested that Rachel King be invited to provide details of Council's monitoring arrangement for children being educated at home.

- 7 **Wolverhampton Children, Young People and Families Plan 2015-2025**
Kush Patel, Strategic Improvement Development Officer, presented a report on the Children Young People and Families Plan 2015-25. The Strategic Improvement Development Officer explained that the plan is an update on the previous plan. The main change in the document is the inclusion of the important role of families and wanting to improve the lives of children. The Strategic Improvement Development Officer explained the key outcomes and the governance arrangements.

The Strategic Improvement Development Officer explained that while there is no statutory requirement to have a Children's Trust Board Wolverhampton has decided to maintain it. The Strategic Improvement Development Officer explained that there was agreement among the different agencies represented that no one agency could deliver the desired outcomes. An annual action plan will be produced. The plan will be overseen by the Children's Trust Board.

The panel queried that the document did not include details about the CAMHS service and considered that it should be a priority. The plan should detail how the needs of young people with mental health issues will be supported. The Strategic Improvement Development Officer outlined the current support available and the referral routes for young people to access services at either Tier 1 or Tier 2.

The panel queried that there were no details in the report about the achievements of the previous plan. The Strategic Improvement Development Officer explained that an update report had been published and agreed that a briefing paper would be shared with the panel.

The panel suggested that it would be useful to have a full annual review of progress against the improvement targets and a mid-term or quarterly review to monitor progress. The Strategic Improvement Development Officer explained that Children's Trust Board meet every quarter and will consider progress reports and challenge partners where performance has not met agreed targets.

The panel queried if issues related to female genital mutilation and radicalisation are covered by the plan. The Strategic Improvement Development Officer explained that these specific issues are part of the Safeguarding Children's Board, which has multi-agency representation. Emma Bennett Service Director, Children and Young People, commented that Wolverhampton Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2014/15 is on the agenda for the panel meeting on 20 January 2016.

The panel discussed the role of schools forum in the development of the plan.

Resolved

The panel to be sent a briefing on outcomes from the previous children, young people plan.

The panel's comments to be considered.

The meeting closed at 19:23