

Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Minutes – 26 March 2014

Attendance

Members of the Panel

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss (Chair)
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Christine Mills
Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Pat Patten
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Lorna McGregor
Cllr Susan Constable

Other Councillors

Co-opted Members

Mrs Rosalie Watkins	Representing Roman Catholic Church (Diocesan Schools Commission)
Leanne Dack	Parent Governor Representative
Hadeel Ahmed	Parent Governor Representative
Kashmire Hawker	Youth Council Representative
Stacey Atim-Uma	Youth Council Representative
Venandah Madahni	Youth Council Representative

Employees

James McElligott

John Welsby
Tessa Johnson
Andrew Scragg

Assistant Director Education and Enterprise

Assistant Director Communities
Graduate Trainee
Youth Worker

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. Title

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

1. **Apologies**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Heap, Cllr Rowley, Cllr Brookfield and Portia Tsvangirai.
2. **Declarations of interest**
Cllr Hardacre declared an interest as a governor of Wolverhampton City college and with matters relating to Heath Park school.
3. **Minutes of the previous meetings (22 January 2014 and two sets from 28 January 2014)**
The minutes were agreed as an accurate representation of the previous meeting.
4. **Matters arising**
Venandah and Stacey clarified some points from the 6pm meeting on 28 January, page 16. Rather than £20,000 being provided for the youth council, the money is being provided for youth participation in general. Also, the youth council requested that the minutes reflect that they do not want to be based in the Epic youth café and should be consulted.
5. **New Ofsted single framework for inspecting local authority services**

John Welsby presented the report. He told the panel that it was likely an inspection would happen before September, probably at the end of April 2014. He emphasised that panel members needed to be aware of the process of inspection as Ofsted may interview them. They primarily focus on front line services but will review lines of reporting if there are cases which concern them. Cllr O'Neill enquired what the levels of grading was applied, and JW responded that the levels were outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

Cllr Hodgkiss asked what grade the authority was likely to get. JW responded that a draft self-assessment was currently underway. In 2011, 'Child in need and child protection' was graded as adequate with good prospects for improvement, which would now be 'requires improvement'. JW told the panel that they will probably be graded around 'good', as there have been improvements made, but Ofsted standards have also got more stringent. He admitted that there were areas which could be 'requires improvement' but that overall it should be graded between 'good' and 'requires improvement'.

In 2011, services for LAC and care leavers were rated as 'good' but this rating will probably drop this time due to increased pressures on services and reducing resources.

Cyril Randles asked whether scrutiny procedures would be examined. JW responded that corporate parenting board and safeguarding board would probably be examined.

Cllr Simkins asked where this self-assessment report will go and JW said it could be returned to the panel. Cllr Simkins also enquired as to how partnership working was working in the council and JW reassured the panel that the police and the medical services worked well alongside social workers.

JW suggested that a briefing on the way the inspection would work and what to expect could be presented to members if so desired.

Cllr Hardacre asked whether education services would be inspected at the same time as the children's social care services and JW responded that it would be unlikely. However he discussed how the two are very interlinked, for example, LAC were not meant to attend a school rated as less than 'good.'

Cllr O'Neil asked whether children would be moved when they become looked after if they were in a school which was underachieving. JW told the panel that usually this would not be the case, as it would disrupt the child even more – instead, additional care would be taken to fill any gaps in educational provision. If the school was persistently inadequate or if there were serious concerns about safeguarding and bullying then they may consider moving the child.

Cllr Simkins asked whether the removal of the early intervention grant would affect the results of the social care provision. JW responded that the removal of the EIG would affect services for children on the edge of care, rather than provision for the most vulnerable.

6. **Ofsted Reports**

Cllr Hodgkiss thanked Jim McElligott for the level of detail in the report and the raw data.

Cllr Mills asked how much support there was available to school needed help after restructures. JW responded that there were 7 or 8 employees in the team but further support was brokered in from trusted partners when necessary. He informed the panel that the team are moving to do more risk assessment based support, rather than a blanket approach, to deal with reducing resources.

Kashmire spoke about Heath Park's recent inspection, which was rated as 'Outstanding'.

Cllr Patten asked for more information regarding New Park special school, and JM informed the panel that it had been placed in special measures, with a new executive head and deputy put in place by the local authority. They had taken direct and immediate action

Stacey enquired whether Wednesfield High would become an academy now it has been rated as 'Inadequate'. JM informed the board that they had already been looking at becoming an academy before the inspection.

Cllr Hardacre enquired why the papers were not printed in colour. He spoke about how the local authority's school support provision had been mentioned in Ofsted reports positively.

Cllr O'Neill spoke about the importance of knowing how pupil premium is spent during Ofsted inspections and that there needed to be an in depth report on how it was spent across the city as next year's work programme.

Cllr Hodgkiss added that it was now compulsory for schools to publish what they used their pupil premium for.

Cllr Simkins asked what actions the local authority can take if an academy goes into special measures. JM responded that all the academies in the city are still in contact with the local authority, so they would speak to them and offer support. The authority would then pass their concerns onto Ofsted, and then the Department of Education if they were not resolved.

Cllr Simkins stated that the authority should ensure that all parents are well informed in the differences between academies and state controlled schools, and how their processes work.

Stacey responded that she knew of academies where the parents had been informed to a very high standard.

Leanne Dack spoke about her experience with Ofsted and that support from the LA was focussed on the chair of governors and the head. JM reiterated that it was the school's responsibility to ensure their governors are well briefed, but that the governor support function from the LA was being updated and would provide more than just a clerk service. It was reiterated by the panel that it was highly important to train governors well.

Cllr Hardacre added that local authority provision was dependent on schools buying back services, and that the local authority did not receive any funding for this support.

The panel agreed to receive the report on a regular basis.

The Chair thanked the members and the youth council members for their attendance and John Welsby for his work with the panel over the years. The Chair was thanked by the panel.

Resolved:

- For a briefing on inspection of children's social care to be provided, if so desired
- To consider pupil premium as an item for the work programme next year
- To consider the use of catch up funding as an item for the work programme next year
- To receive the Ofsted inspection report regularly