

EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel held on Monday, 22 September 2014 at 7.00 pm in Ground Floor Meeting Room 5, Civic Offices.

Present

Councillor Will Purvis (in the Chair)
Ken Ferrett
Paul Godier

Officers

Kelly Nash, Corporate Performance Manager
Richard Webb, Finance Manager
Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services

24. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lynne Stagg and Ben Dowling. Apologies were also received from education representative Mark Mitchell.

25. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Minutes of Previous Meeting - 14 July 2014 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel held on 14 July 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

27. Urgent Business (AI)

The Chair advised that under Standing Order 57 he wished to add an item of urgent business to the agenda following the publication of the Ofsted inspector's report into children's services. The report included a number of recommendations for improvement and the reason for urgency was to act promptly to these.

The Inspector had also raised concerns that the panel had not identified any topics related to children's social care in this year's work programme. Councillor Purvis advised he had been in discussion with Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services, about possible areas the panel could review, following the review into pupil premium. The panel could then put forward a further topic to the SMP to be agreed at their next meeting.

Julian Wooster advised of two areas the panel may wish to consider for detailed scrutiny. Following Ofsted's inspection report the Council were producing an improvement plan in response to the issues raised. This would

be put out to consultation once finalised. The Youth Offending Team also had produced an improvement plan which had been approved in March 2014 and it would be appropriate timing if the panel were minded to review this.

The Chair referred to point 16 of the Ofsted report that highlighted the need for elected members to be properly trained in governance and corporate parenting as a point for immediate action. He asked Mr Wooster to look into what local training for members would be appropriate to attend in addition to the training sessions offered by the LGA. **ACTION** - Mr Wooster to advise the panel on further training courses that would be useful for them to attend to allow them to properly scrutinise and challenge the work of children's social care.

The Ofsted Inspector had also suggested that regular updates by senior officers be brought to the ECYP panel (as well as the Cabinet member) on identified issues to keep panel members up to date with the current issues faced by the service and to ensure oversight and scrutiny. The Chair asked whether it would be possible for Mr Wooster to provide the panel with an update report once a quarter for discussion at panel meetings. Mr Wooster said the panel were right to request a quarterly report to ask the appropriate questions of senior managers. He advised he would have a conversation with the Cabinet member about the best way of providing this information to the panel. There were various other bodies that receive this information; the Children's Trust Board, Safeguarding Board, Corporate Parenting Board, Adoption Panel and Fostering Panel so it was important to avoid duplication. **ACTION** - Mr Wooster to provide a paper to a future meeting on the proposed way forward.

Councillor Godier asked about the support for care leavers which was another area for improvement identified by Ofsted. Mr Wooster explained that the New Belongings Project was in place to address this issue.

RESOLVED

(1) That the Youth Offending Team Improvement Plan be put forward to the Scrutiny Management Panel as an additional topic for review by the panel.

(2) That the suggested order of topics be amended to the following:

- 1. Pupil Premium.**
- 2. Youth Offending Team Improvement Plan.**
- 3. The provision of Special Educational needs in the city.**
- 4. School induction days for pupils.**

28. New Review Topic - A Review into Pupil Premium in Portsmouth City Schools (AI 4)

The panel had received the draft scoping document and briefing paper on pupil premium.

Richard Webb and Kelly Nash introduced their paper. Richard Webb advised that Pupil Premium funding for maintained schools is allocated via the Council using data provided by the Department for Education. Pupil Premium for Academies is allocated via the Education Funding Agency, except that relating to Looked After Children. Schools and Academies are accountable for how they spend this funding. For Looked After Children (LAC) the virtual school Head, Helen Thompson, determines through personal education plans (PEP) the value of funding that should be allocated to schools.

In response to a question regarding whether free school meals is still used as an indicator for pupil premium, Richard Webb advised that it was. He advised the panel of a paper that went to the last Schools Forum meeting on universal infant free school meals implementation. This advised that the introduction of UIFSM presents a risk to schools in terms of a reduction in the level of pupil premium a school might receive as parents / guardians of children in Year R, 1 and 2 will no longer have any incentive to register for free school meals. To combat this risk the Council issued a letter to all primary and infant schools to help assess the likely uptake of free school meals, but most importantly allow the Council to check for FSM eligibility and therefore claim for pupil premium funding.

In response to a question, Kelly Nash explained that Ofsted have a national interest in the effect pupil premium is having. Ofsted review how a local authority is influencing the spend of pupil premium money. The Council's education officers look at data gaps and raise concern if they need to. They are able to advise schools on areas to consider spending their pupil premium funding but cannot direct them.

Richard Webb informed the panel that in June this year he led a training session for schools with Tony Quinn, the former senior governor support officer. The training session was focused around 'school funding and assessing the impact' and included a session on the use of Pupil Premium and the governors role in ensuring it is being used effectively. This had been well attended with 12-15 governors. Financial Services have developed a training & development programme for schools. Within this programme is an all-day session related to school funding and Pupil Premium which will be taking place on 2nd October. Kelly Nash added that an engaged governing body was very important.

The recent Ofsted report identified that numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals who achieved five good GCSE passes was below the national average. In response to a question Mr Webb said that a more cohesive strategy in respect supporting schools to use Pupil Premium more effectively would be helpful. Finance officers had identified a need to for training to support schools with evaluating the effect of the use of their pupil premium funding, particularly with the increasing level of funding that schools are now receiving.

In response to a question, Mr Webb stated that the training programme is available to both maintained schools and Academies. The panel asked how many academy schools had signed up to the SLA. The officers present did

not have this information but would be happy to provide this to the panel. All schools are required to publish details of their pupil premium spending on their website. Ms Nash added that academies were part of clusters and it would be a good opportunity to obtain this information through cluster working. There is also a draft protocol for working with academies which the panel may find of use and this would be circulated to the panel. Mr Webb added that there are academy school representatives on the Schools Forum which gives the opportunity to engage with them. In response to a question, officers advised that by the end of the financial year it is likely that more than half of the secondary schools in the city would be Academies.

The panel noted that 23 of the top 25 local authority areas attaining the benchmark are London boroughs and Ms Nash advised this was largely due to the London Challenge work. Councillor Godier felt it might be useful to see whether there were any academy schools in these authorities and to investigate who the academies are and how they are working with other schools.

The panel felt there was an issue with how to engage with academies. Officers advised that Julien Kramer was advocating looking further afield to find examples of LA's with good practice.

Future witnesses

- It was suggested that a representative from ARK be invited to a future meeting for the panel to gain an understanding on how academies are using pupil premium funding.
- A selection of head teachers, possibly those who attended the pupil premium conference earlier in the year
- Fiona Calderbank, Head teacher of Milton Cross who is the lead secondary head for pupil premium.
- a selection of governors who attended the pupil premium finance training session in June.

Officers also advised that there a citywide pupil premium conference is being organised for November with the national lead for pupil premium, Sir John Dunford attending to speak. When further details are available these will be forwarded to the panel as some members may wish to attend this conference.

Scoping Document

The members examined the draft scoping document.

RESOLVED that the draft scoping document be approved, subject to amendment during the course of the review.

The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.

Councillor Will Purvis