

**CHILDREN'S AND CULTURE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2015

Present – Councillors Ashcroft (Chairman), Wild (Vice-Chairman), C. Burrows (as deputy for Councillor Gillies), L. Byrne (as deputy for Councillor Watters), Dean (as deputy for Councillor Hall), Haworth, Iqbal, Jones, Mistry, Richardson, Shaw, Spencer, Sherrington and Swarbrick.

Co-opted Members

Ms M. Raja – Representative of Secondary Parent Governors
Mr S. Dunne – Representative of Primary Parent Governors

Also in Attendance

Councillor McKeon	-	Executive Member for Education and Schools
Councillor J. Byrne	-	Executive Member for Culture and Youth
Mrs M Asquith	-	Director of Children's and Adult Services
Mr K. Davies	-	Director of Development and Regeneration
Mr J. Daly	-	Assistant Director of Children's and Adult Services
Mr J. Gorton	-	Partnership Manager, Leisure Trust
Mr D. Singleton	-	Chairman, Bolton Community Leisure Trust
Mr Y Islam	-	ACIS Head of Service
Mrs S. Bailey	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gililes, Hall and Watters and from Mr J. Firth (Healthwatch Bolton).

Councillor Ashcroft in the Chair.

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's and Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 26th November, 2014 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be received and signed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Iqbal in the list of attendees.

31. MONITORING OF DECISIONS

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which detailed the progress of decisions taken at previous meetings of this Committee

Resolved - That the position be noted.

32. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which set out details of the updated work programme for the Committee for the current Municipal Year, which had been formulated following the workshop session at the first meeting.

Resolved – That the updated work programme be approved.

33. UPDATE ON LEISURE TRUST PROGRAMME

Mr J. Gorton and Mr D. Singleton gave a presentation which updated the Committee on the Leisure Trust Programme.

The presentation focused on the background to Bolton Community Leisure Trust, the Governance arrangements, challenges of savings and efficiencies and the ongoing programme of rationalisation and investment.

The main changes involved a reduction in the Grant received from the Council of £1,000,000 (40% of operational fee),

reduction from 13 facilities to 7, investment in excess of £2,500,000 and increased income by £500,000.

Further savings of £300,000 were required for 2015/17 with possibly more to follow.

It was noted the current contract with Serco was due to expire in four years' time.

The presentation also highlighted the key features of the neighbourhood life initiative which aimed to support the wider objectives of the local community as well as fulfilling the objectives of the Trust, the Council and Serco. Working with partners would help to identify gaps and opportunities to align service provision with their neighbourhood priorities.

Following the presentation, members enquired about schools aiming for academy status and how this would impact on the provision of facilities and the availability to the public.

Mr Gorton advised that discussions were on-going with various schools with a view to facilities still being available for public usage.

Resolved – That Mr Gorton and Mr Singleton be thanked for their informative presentation.

34. UPDATE ON ADOPTION CAMPAIGN – ADOPT NORTH WEST

Further to Minute 38 of the meeting of this Committee held on 9th April, 2014, Mr J. Daly gave a presentation which updated members on the success to date of the adoption recruitment campaign Adopt North West which had launched in March, 2014.

Members were reminded that the Campaign had been funded collaboratively between 22 North West authorities and had run for 10 months until the end of December, 2014. It had involved an on-going digital supplemented by three high profile two week phases of intense activity. In each of the phases (March, June and September) there were television adverts, radio adverts, enhanced digital marketing and PR activity.

The Campaign had aimed to increase interest in adoption with the key objective being to assess, or begin the assessment of, an additional 150 adopters in the 10 month period. This would give a return on investment of £2,500 per adopter.

In this regard, the presentation focused on data collected over the course of the Campaign and initial results indicated that the initiative had been successful.

The presentation went on to provided various statistics including enquiries by area, by day, by source and by gender, costs per enquiry and digital costs.

In summary:

- More people used a mobile device to visit the website than a laptop;
- More than four out five enquiries were from women although men seemed to respond more at times of higher media coverage;
- The vast majority of enquirers were aged between 26 and 45;
- AdWords were a very effective way of driving enquiries with a low cost per click return, although this was susceptible to price increases; and
- Facebook proved to be the most cost effective digital platform during the campaign although it could be susceptible to over exposure in the longer term.

The key outcomes of the campaign were summarised as follows:

- huge, cost effective increase in adopter enquiries;

- more children had been adopted in the North West than in any other area of the country; and
- the campaign contributed to Bolton retaining its position as first nationally in the % of Children Leaving Care who were adopted.

The full extent of the impact of the campaign would be revealed once the conversion rates of enquiries to applications to approved adopters to adoptions figures were released later in 2015. A further report would be submitted to this Committee in September, 2015 once the final figures were known.

The presentation also provided a general update on the Bolton adoption rate compared to the England average which showed Bolton to be performing extremely well.

Resolved – That Mr Daly be thanked for his informative presentation and that a further update on the impact of the Adopt North West Campaign be submitted to this Committee in September, 2015.

35. COMMUNITY COHESION IN SCHOOLS AND INTERNATIONAL NEW ARRIVALS

Mr Y. Islam gave a presentation which outlined Bolton's Changing Context in terms of type and growth and how this was impacting on schools.

Statistics revealed that the number of live births nationally was increasing and that throughout Greater Manchester, Bolton had the largest number of live births in 2012.

Other information provided demonstrated that Bolton birth rates for primary and secondary intake were steadily increasing and that births in Bolton to mothers who were born outside the UK were also rising.

In this regard, the presentation went on to advise members on the on-going work undertaken by ACIS to support International New Arrivals (INA) and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in Bolton into education.

The presentation outlined the key issues and challenges facing ACIS and Bolton schools namely, the numbers of NIAs arriving in Bolton (680 between 1st September, 2013 and 31st August, 2014), cultural issues and complex needs and support for schools.

ACIS key roles in supporting involved:

- successful admission of INAs and Gypsy, Roma and Travellers into school;
- timely and appropriate placements;
- support of families transferring into schools;
- Ofsted – successful inspection.

There were a number of cultural issues and complex needs:

- Safeguarding and educating families regarding British law such as disciplining children and leaving children at home alone;
- Changing cultural traditions sensitively;
- Changing attitudes to learning resulting in better outcomes for families;
- Improving attendance – working with schools and EIT; and
- Support and training for school staff and teachers on learning strategies for INAs.

The presentation concluded on the difference that ACIS made to schools including:

- Safeguarding – vulnerable children were safe;
- Teaching families UK systems;
- Supporting the Home Officer with their endeavours to prevent illegal immigrants and trafficking;
- Admissions and preparation of children for school;
- Promoting the Bolton family, supporting the integration of new families into the community;
- Supporting the Prevent Agenda; and
- Community Cohesion.

Members considered the presentation and felt that the increasing numbers of children entering Bolton were placing many demands on the current education system. They acknowledged the valuable work undertaken by ACIS in addressing and supporting this.

Resolved – That Mr Islam be thanked for his informative presentation.

36. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- The Executive Cabinet Member - Deputy Leader held on 8th December, 2014 and 19th January, 2015

(The meeting started at 4.00pm and finished at 5.05 pm)

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