
CHILDRENS SERVICES, CULTURE AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND SPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 FEBRUARY 2009

Present - Councillors A. Wilkinson (Chairman), Rushton (Vice-Chairman), P. Allen, Ashcroft, Darvesh, Mrs. Fairclough, Hornby, Mrs. Ronson, Scowcroft and R. Silvester.

Also in attendance

Mr. A. Donaldson - Assistant Director Policy Improvement and Area Working and Committee Chief Officer Support; Mr. I.D. Mulholland - Scrutiny Team Leader; Councillor Adia - Executive Member for Children's Services; Mrs. J. Thompson - Assistant Director (Positive Contribution); Mr. J. Daly - Assistant Director Staying Safe; Mr. A Birch - Assistant Director School Effectiveness; Mrs. S. Crossley - Assistant Director (Adult and Community Services); Mr. S. Fazal - Assistant Director (Access and Inclusion).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mistry and Swarbrick.

Councillor A. Wilkinson in the Chair

51 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held on 4th December, 2008 were submitted.

Resolved - That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

Attached Reports:

[Minutes](#)

52 DECISION MONITORING ITEM

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report that informed members of the progress of decisions taken and issues raised by the Committee. An update in terms of the Pupil Referral Unit item was

tabled for information.

Resolved - That the action and progress outlined in the report be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Decision Monitoring item](#)

53 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report which provided members with suitable criteria to aid in the selection of topics for scrutiny and outlined the Committee's work programme.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Annual Work Programme](#)

54 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Extracts of the minutes of meetings of the Executive held on 16th December, 2008 and 12th January, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved - That the decisions of the Executive be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Executive and Executive Member Meetings](#)

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55 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SPORT

The minutes of the meetings of the Executive Member for Culture, Young People and Sport held on 15th December, 2008 and 19th January, 2009.

Resolved - That the decisions of the Executive Member be noted.

56 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The minutes of the meetings of the Executive Member for Children's Services held on 15th December, 2008 and 19th January 2009 were submitted.

Resolved - That the decisions of the Executive Member be noted.

57 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LIBRARY REVIEW POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The minutes of the meeting of the Library Review Policy Development Group held on 9th January, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved - That the minutes be noted.

58 MINUTES OF THE CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Community Services Policy Development Group held on 18th December, 2008 were submitted.

Resolved - That the minutes be noted.

59 LIBRARY PDG OUTCOME REPORT

The Director of Adult and Community Services submitted a report which set out the final report and action plan of the Library Review Policy Development Group.

By way of background information, the report brought to a conclusion the work of the Library Review Policy Development Group, which commenced work in April, 2007.

The report presented a model based on Value for Money and sustainability to ensure the future of an excellent service for the public.

A detailed action plan which contained the process of implementation was attached to the report. This had been endorsed at a recent meeting of the Executive Member for Culture, Young People and Sport.

In their deliberations, Members referred to the issue of the distance people would have to travel to a library following the cessation of the mobile service.

The Committee was informed that Bolton as a Borough was quite compact with less actual need for a mobile library than other areas. Furthermore, all users of the

mobile library had been written to.

Members of all parties also expressed their appreciation to the officers involved in the review process.

Resolved - (i) That the report be welcomed.

(ii) That an update report be submitted to this Committee in six months time.

Attached Reports:

[Library PDG Outcome Report](#)

[Library PDG Outcome Report](#)

[Library PDG Outcome Report](#)

[Library PDG Outcome Report](#)

60 STAYING SAFE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report on the current position of Children's Services against the Staying Safe Performance Indicators.

The report set out specific details of performance and the activity undertaken by Children's Social Care to ensure children were safeguarded and protected from harm.

Members were advised that all Bolton data related to the end of quarter 2, as at September, 2008.

In conclusion, the report highlighted that robust systems were in place to ensure constant monitoring of performance against that previously achieved in Bolton and other similar areas, and provided a tool for managers to ensure corrective action was taken whenever necessary.

Members in their discussions queried whether there were adequate systems in place to track children who moved between authorities. It was explained that robust checking systems were in place.

Resolved - That a further update be provided to a future meeting, when available.

Attached Reports:

[Staying Safe Performance Indicators](#)

61 UPDATES ON THREE PATH FINDER PROGRAMMES

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the Committee on the Three Stay Safe Pathfinder programmes of:-

- Disabled Children Short Break Pathfinder; - Think family

and Young Carers Pathfinders; and - Development of Service Exploration Team.

By way of background information, the report explained that in May, 2007 the Government published, Aiming High for Disabled Children: better support for families (AHDC), based on their review of services for disabled children.

The report highlighted the difficulties disabled children and their families faced including those in accessing universal provision. The vision behind, Aiming High for Disabled Children was for all families with a disabled child to be supported to live ordinary lives. Enabling families to do this challenged all service providers, town planners and transport departments to consider the way in which they delivered their service and reflected the needs of disabled children and their families.

AHDC challenged the Council to enable disabled children, young people and adults to live ordinary lives.

One of the recommended actions in Aiming High for Disabled Children, was to recognise the importance and significant benefits of short breaks both for the disabled child and their parents. AHDC sets out a core offer for short breaks which all areas would be expected to achieve. By April 2011, there would be a key Performance Indicator related to families perceptions of how well local services responded to their needs.

Bolton was one of 21 local areas financially supported until the end of March 2011, to pilot ways of transforming short breaks for disabled children.

The report went on to send out specific details of the progress of each Pathfinder Scheme.

Members in their discussions referred to the relationship the Council had with the Primary Care Trust and the accessing of joint opportunities.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Updates on Three Path Finder Programmes](#)

62 FREE SWIMMING UPDATE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the committee on the progress of the free swimming lessons and primary school swimming lessons programme.

By way of background information, the report stated that the Council in partnership with Bolton Community Leisure Trust launched free swimming lessons for under 17 year olds in July 2008 as a follow up to the successful free

swimming initiative launched in the summer of 2007. The swimming lessons were made available at all of the pools operated by the Trust during school holiday periods, namely Westhoughton, Horwich, Turton, Sharples, Ladybridge, and Farnworth. Provision was also made available at the remaining Council managed facility, the Jubilee Pool. The lessons commenced on 21st July 2008 and young people needed to book their place on a swimming lessons programme at the pool of their choice. The initiative proved to be very successful, with all pool lessons operating at near capacity.

At the Executive Member meeting on 27th October, 2008, members requested a breakdown of the above figures in terms of ethnicity, gender, age profile and post code information. This information was appended to the report in diagram format.

In 2004 Bolton was set a local PSA target of 80% of pupils leaving primary education to have achieved the Key Stage 2 swimming accreditation by 2008. In 2004 the achievement percentage was 59%. This was accepted nationally as Bolton's baseline figure and was based on the number of year 6 pupils attending education swimming lessons.

Following an interim evaluation that was carried out to support the Local PSA process, it was discovered that schools across the authority were being selective with regards to attendance at education swimming lessons i.e. different schools sent different year groups and in some cases no year groups at all.

At this point (October 2006) the Council's Internal Audit confirmed the key issues and inconsistencies that would affect the ability for Bolton to achieve the LPSA target as set in 2004.

A number of interventions were put into place at this point by the LPSA steering group which included members of the Council's Performance Management Team, The School Sports Partnership (SSP), SERCO, Sport Health and Inclusion Services and the University of Bolton.

The interventions had a positive impact on primary education swimming lessons. In 2004, Bolton's baseline for KS2 swimming attainment was recorded at 39%. In 2008 Bolton's achievement for KS2 swimming attainment was 62.24%, which was 2.76% short of the 2009 regional target, giving Bolton a performance improvement of some 55% over 3 years. This was a significant improvement on the original stretch target, which Bolton was currently using to negotiate with Government Office North West in an attempt to secure the LPSA grant.

Members referred to the reduced participation by girls

when compared with boys. The Committee was informed that this was in line with the national picture for post 16 girls.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Free Swimming Update](#)

63 YOUNG CARERS UPDATE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which set out an update on the position regarding Young Carers in Bolton.

By way of background information, the report explained that there was a widespread issue nationally surrounding identification of young carers as the majority still remained hidden. The current targets for the Action With Young Carers (AWYC) service in Bolton were to work directly with 60 young carers at any one time, and between 100-120 in a 12 month period.

In addition to direct support services with young carers and their families, the project engaged in influencing work with partner agencies in relation to a number of important issues.

The report went on to indicate that extrapolation from current national estimates suggested an unidentified cohort of approximately 1000 young carers in Bolton with a range of different support needs. Barnardo's had provided the Action With Young Carers service in Bolton since 1996. A review of the project was undertaken during 2008 as the Children's Services Department required a quicker response to referrals so that more young carers were identified, that more young carers benefited from the service and that those identified had their caring roles eliminated or reduced.

The report went onto specifically focus on the following areas:-

- Developments at Barnardo's Action with Young Carers; -
- Work in Partnerships/Multi agency working; - Schools,
- and - Adult Services.

The report concluded by stating that Bolton Council was committed to improving the outcomes for children and young people who were young carers and contributed to more than half of the core funding of the project. The change in emphasis and focus of the AWYC project to identify and work with more young carers meant that more vulnerable young carers in Bolton were supported and their needs, welfare and opportunities promoted.

Members discussed the working arrangements with Barnardos and attendance at school affected by caring responsibilities.

Resolved - (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That an update report be provided to this Committee in six months time.

Attached Reports:

[Young Carers Update](#)

64 SCHOOLS ACADEMY UPDATE - VERBAL REPORT

Members were advised that the Essa Academy opened on schedule on 1st January, 2009. The outline business case was currently being prepared against the overall capital allocation of £18 million.

The outline business case would be submitted to Partnership for Schools at the beginning of March and then procurement of a preferred developer would begin in Spring of this year with a view to appointing a preferred bidder by September, 2009.

Work was anticipated to start on the school in January, 2010, with the new build coming on stream from June/July, 2011.

In terms of the Withins Academy, the outline business case for the all-through Academy at Withins, incorporating Firwood Special School, would be submitted to the Partnership for Schools at the end of March, 2009.

The project had an overall capital value of just over £36 million and would form part of the procurement for the ESSA Academy, with build and completion scheduled for approximately 6 months after the ESSA Academy.

That the update be noted.

65 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided information to keep Members updated with the implementation of the School Improvement Framework.

The report explained that five categories of support had been identified within the School Improvement Framework. The categories were flexible and were designed to enable the Council to provide appropriate capacity building activities focused on clearly identified issues. The intention was to provide support as early as possible to a school where issues were emerging. The

School Improvement Framework described the indicators for each category which determined the levels of support given. Schools in the three, "concern" categories: focused support, intensive support and intensive intervention all received substantial support. This support was provided by a range of Educational Improvement personnel and also by commissioned services.

The numbers of schools in primary and secondary receiving different levels of support were set out in the tables at the end of the report.

That the report be noted.

Attached Reports:

[School Improvement Update](#)

66 CHILDREN'S TRUST UPDATE

The Director of Children's Services submitted report to update Members with the background and progress to the development of the Children's Trust in Bolton.

By way of background information, the report explained that the duties in section 10 of the Children Act 2004 required local authorities and their 'relevant partners' to cooperate to improve children's wellbeing, defined as the Every Child Matters five outcomes. The Act placed a duty on local agencies whose work impacted on children within the authority's area. The relevant partners had to cooperate with the authority in its making of those arrangements.

The report went on to explain that Bolton's well-established practice in joint working was, until 2007, based around the children and Young People's Partnership which in many ways echoed the requirements of the Children's Trust arrangements. In April 2007, the move from this position to that of Children's Trust was made; this was in advance of the 2008 deadline and was timed so as to take forward the new Children and Young People's Plan.

Bolton had been clear from the start that the Trust would be inclusive - not just of other agencies and partners but including young people as full members of the Trust. The inaugural meeting of the Trust on 20th April 2007 was essentially an exploration of the scope of the Trust's interest alongside some key scene-setting about the Borough and its achievements. The Trust has agreed that it would manage its business through a series of sub-groups, each focused on one of the Every Child Matters outcomes.

The Children's Trust in Bolton was still at an early stage in

its development and had yet to look formally at its role in commissioning services as identified in the Children and Young People's Plan. As one of the key partnerships for the Bolton Vision Partnership, it would need to develop its strategic relationships with other partnerships such as BeSafe.

Resolved - That the update be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Children's Trust Update](#)

67 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT LETTER

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which set out the outcome of the Annual Performance Assessment letter for Children's Services.

The report highlighted that there had been improvements to the grades for:-

- Staying Safe; - Enjoying and achieve; and - Capacity to improve.

The overall grade for Children's Service remained a, 3, which was good.

The report summarised the strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

Attached Reports:

[Annual Performance Assessment Letter](#)

[Annual Performance Assessment Letter](#)

68 CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONTH 6, MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which informed the Committee of the revenue and capital financial position for 2008/09 as at month 6.

Members in their discussions referred to the need to continue to monitor the position regarding primary school financial balances.

Resolved - That the position be noted.

(The meeting started at 4.00 p.m. and finished at 5.30 p.m.)

Attached Reports:

[Children's Services Portfolio Revenue and Capital Month](#)

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