

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 8TH OCTOBER, 2009

Present – Councillors Wild (Chairman), Darvesh, Mrs. Fairclough, Hall, Hornby, Mistry, Mrs. Rothwell, Shaw, R. Silvester and Mrs. Swarbrick.

Also in attendance

Ms. S. Schofield	- Assistant Director, Environmental Services and Committee Chief Officer Support
Mr. I.D. Mulholland	- Principal Scrutiny Officer
Councillor Adia	- Executive Member for Children's Services
Councillor Murray	- Executive Member for Looked After Children and Safeguarding
Ms. M. Asquith	- Director of Children's Services
Mr. J. Livesey	- Assistant Director, Performance, Planning and Resources
Mr. A. Birch	- Assistant Director, School Effectiveness
Ms. J. Thompson	- Assistant Director Positive Contribution
Mr. A. Rigler	- Strategic Manager – Curriculum Development
Mr. J. Daly	- Assistant Director Staying Safe
Mr. S. Fazal	- Assistant Director Access and Inclusion
Mr. D. Grogan	- Assistant Director Building Schools for the Future
Mr. D. Smith	- Policy Accountant

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ashcroft, Mrs. Brierley and Rushton

Councillor Wild in the Chair.

18. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8th October, 2009 were submitted.

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

19. MONITORING OF DECISIONS

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which provided details of the progress of decisions taken at previous meetings of this Committee.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

20. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of the Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which set out details of the previously agreed Committee Work Programme for the 2009/10 Municipal Year.

Members' views were sought in relation to any further items that they wanted including in the Work Programme. The report also included information which would aid the Committee in selecting appropriate items for future consideration.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

21. BE HEALTHY OUTCOME AREA

(a) Be Healthy – Background

Mr John Livesey, Assistant Director, Performance, Planning and Resources, gave a Presentation on the background information regarding the, Be Healthy Outcome area and specifically the Council's current performance in this area.

He specifically mentioned certain strengths in terms of improvements including the take up of school lunches, obesity among primary school age children in reception year and obesity among primary school age children in year 6. With regard to areas for improvements, these included, the prevalence of breast feeding at 6-8 weeks and the under age conception rate.

Members in their discussions referred to the issue of obesity measurement. It was explained that there was a national measuring programme.

Resolved – (i) That the statistical information provided be noted.

(ii) That this committee be notified of specific details of the information and advice made available to obese individuals.

(b) Teenage Pregnancy Progress

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report on the progress of the Teenage Pregnancy strategy since the visit of the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team in 2000.

By way of background information, the report explained that the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy was developed following the 1998 Social Exclusion report. This had highlighted the poor outcomes of teenage mothers and babies.

The two main elements of the Strategy were:-

- to reduce under 18's conceptions by 50% by 2010.
- support teenage parents to ensure an increase of 50% of teenage mothers in Education, Employment and Training.

Members were advised that Bolton had a relatively slow start to addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy but since 2004 accelerated progress had been made in developing a partnership and joined up approach to the issue for the

Borough.

The Teenage Pregnancy Unit in the Department for Children, Schools and Families had confirmed that 10 work streams needed to be in place in each local area and that the work streams needed to be consistently delivering to ensure a reduction in conception rates. The National Support Team for Teenage Pregnancy visited Bolton in January 2008. The National Support Team made recommendations in relation to each of the 10 work streams. The report went on to set out the Council's response to each.

Members were advised that overall, Bolton had made some progress in the overall reduction of Under 18s conceptions, at 6.2% below the 1998 baseline. There had been small reductions in the last three years in Bolton in the context of rising national rates. However, the prediction from the new data analyst using local data was that the Bolton rate for 2008 would rise. There had been some good progress in elements of the strategy but all work streams needed to be delivering consistently to show a reduction.

Preventing teenage pregnancy was still a major issue for Bolton and strategic leads of each work stream needed to take ownership of the strategy and integrate the prevention of Teenage Pregnancy into the core business of their service. Preventing teenage pregnancy had to be everyone's business in order for the rate of teenage pregnancy to fall.

The support elements of the Teenage Pregnancy strategy had been more successful. A target was set in 1998 to increase to 50% the number of young mothers in Education, Employment and Training (EET). In Bolton, currently there were over 57% of Under 19s in EET and 28% of Under 20s in EET, placing Bolton 8th best performing Authority in the country.

A successful support strategy was important as it helped not only babies born to teenage parents but also their mothers to have improved life changes. Over a three year period only 3% of teenage parents in further education went on to have a second teenage pregnancy, which indicated how important

aspirations were in preventing teenage pregnancies.

Members in their deliberations referred to the slight overall reduction in numbers of teenage pregnancies in Bolton since 1998 and the support given to teenage parents with a low rate of second conceptions.

Resolved – (i) That the report be welcomed.

(ii) That details of neighbouring Council comparative statistical information be circulated to members of this Committee.

(iii) That ward specific data, as appropriate, be made available to members of this Committee.

(iv) That data in respect of children in care in this regard be provided to members of this Committee.

(c) Sex Education and Sexual Health Services

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the Committee on the progress on Sex Relationships Education in Bolton.

By way of background information, the report explained that as part of the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy all Boroughs needed high quality Sex and Relationships Education Programmes and a well trained workforce in order to contribute to reducing teenage conceptions.

In Bolton, work to develop Sex and Relationships Education had moved forward immensely over the last two years. Marked improvements had been made in primary and secondary schools, pupil referral units and community settings. This work had also been supported by the work of the Youth Parliament, who felt that Sex and Relationships Education should be delivered by enthusiastic, well trained staff who were able to comfortably answer questions. The local voice of young people had helped inform developments in Bolton and had helped teachers understand the barriers to good Sex and

Relationships Education. This had enabled the Sex and Relationships Education Officer to support schools more effectively with training in order to develop an understanding of the issues facing young people who want to know more than just the biology.

The report went on to set out the specific progress in primary and secondary schools in Bolton and highlight the additional training undertaken by staff in various settings.

Members were advised that overall, the provision of high quality Sex and Relationships Education in all schools remained a priority. Most primary schools had received appropriate levels of staff training and were providing good Sex and Relationships Education to their pupils. Some secondary schools provided consistently good Sex and Relationships Education, which was delivered by well trained, specialist staff. Some secondary schools were working towards having all their staff appropriately trained to deliver a consistently good programme. There were also a small number of schools who were being prioritised for training and support in the current academic year.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that good progress had been made in ensuring that Sex and Relationships Education delivery worked in tandem with the provision of health services in school. Young people needed an understanding of how their bodies worked and changed as well as information on how to keep themselves safe and on how to access local services when required. The services delivered were focused on understanding the issues facing young people and aimed to be accessible and responsive to their needs.

Members in their discussions focussed upon the targetting of advice, the parents role and partnership working.

Resolved – That the report be welcomed

22. ST. CATHERINE'S ACADEMY UPDATE

Mr. Des Grogan, Assistant Director Building Schools for the Future and Academies, advised the Committee that the St. Catherine's Academy opened on 1st September, 2009 and it was hoped that there would be a positive impact on attainment as there had been with the ESSA Academy in Bolton.

The Committee was advised that the Kier Construction had been identified as the preferred builders for both St. Catherine's and ESSA. The building programme was on target.

With regard to the Expression of Interest for the George Tomlinson School, it was explained that this had now been accepted by the civil servants for approval by Ministers and the statutory proposal was on-going regarding the closure of the school.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

23. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION TO KEY STAGE 5

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the Committee on the outcomes for Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 5.

In terms of headline information, the report set out the following:-

- In setting out the performance of Bolton against key National Indicators of performance the hard work, commitment and continued success of educators and learners in Bolton's education achievements had to be acknowledged and commended.
- Bolton once again recording best ever results at GCSE – 46% of pupils now leaving with 5A*-C including English and Mathematics and seven out of ten pupils leaving with 5 A*-C (compared with five in ten in 2006). All end of Key Stage 2 outcomes were now in line with or above the

national figure.

- A key area of improvement now focused on bringing the headline figures for 5A*-C with English and Mathematics into line with the national figure.
- Bolton's changing context should also be noted: 44 languages spoken by Reception pupils in 2008 had risen to 54 in 2009.

Members in their discussions referred to the need for a Policy Development Group to focus discussions on raising performance at GCSE level at schools in Bolton.

Resolved – That the Executive Member for Children's Services be asked to consider the issue of raising performance at GCSE level at schools in Bolton at a relevant policy development group meeting and that members of this Committee be invited to be in attendance.

24. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which set out specific details of actions undertaken by the Department in collaboration with the Executive Member following the acceptance of the findings of the Educational Attainment of Looked After Children Scrutiny Panel in 2008.

Members in their discussions referred to the use of data and the priority given to looked after children in certain posts.

Resolved – That the progress be welcomed and continued to be monitored by this committee.

25. NEETS SCRUTINY PANEL

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which set out the draft responses to the recommendations of the NEETS Scrutiny Panel by the Director of Children's Services.

Members were advised that the actions contained in the report had yet to be formally approved by the Executive Member for Children's Services.

Resolved – (i) That the initial response on the proposed actions be welcomed.

(ii) That a report be submitted to this Scrutiny Committee in six months time following Executive Member approval and to outline actions being undertaken.

26. CHILDREN'S SERVICES FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT, QUARTER ONE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided the Committee with information relating to the financial position for the Children's Services Department for the first quarter of the 2009/10 financial year.

The report advised that since the original capital programme was approved a number of changes to the programme were proposed. The proposed adjustments to the programme totalled an increase of £6,266,000. The details of each scheme and the manner in which it would be financed was outlined at Appendix C to the report

Resolved – That the position be noted.

27. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD, 2009/10

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which gave an overview of performance relating to the first quarter of 2009/10.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- the issue of school balances;

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Special Educational Needs Statements not being on target; and

- the number of missed Departmental Telephone Calls

Resolved – That the Performance Management Dashboard, Quarter One, 2009/10 and the future areas for action be noted and continued to be monitored by this committee.

28. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

- a) Executive held on 24th August, 21st and 28th September, 2009;
- b) Executive Member for Children's Services held on 28th September, 2009;
- c) BSF Policy Development Group held on 28th July, 2009;
- d) Executive Member for Looked After Children and Safeguarding held on 1st and 28th September, 2009; and
- e) BSF Policy Development Group held on 28th July, 2009.

Resolved – That the minutes of various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 4.00 p.m. and finished at 5.17 p.m.)