

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 27TH AUGUST, 2009

Present – Councillors Wild (Chairman), Rushton (Vice-Chairman), Ashcroft, D. Brierley, Burrows (as deputy for Councillor Mistry), Hall, Hornby, Iqbal (as deputy for Councillor Darvesh), R. Silvester, Mrs. Swarbrick, White and D.A. Wilkinson (as deputy for Councillor Mrs. Rothwell).

### Lay Member

Ms. F. Hill - UNISON

### Also in attendance

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. D. Luczka	- Head of Connexions
Ms. C. Greer	- Strategic Manager, Early Start
Ms. S. Poole-Sutherland	- Project Development Officer
Ms. C. Anderson	- Inclusion and Development Manager
Mr. M. Coleman	- YOT Manager
Mrs. C. Binks	- Policy Accountant

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Darvesh, Mistry and Mrs. Rothwell.

Councillor Wild in the Chair.

## **11. URGENT ITEM**

The Chairman reported that at the meeting of the Executive held on 24th August, 2009, that decisions in respect of George Tomlinson School had been "called in" for consideration at this Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee were advised of the urgency in terms of the timescales involved.

Resolved – That the item be considered as an urgent item.

## **12. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29th July, 2009 were submitted.

Resolved – That, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Hall in the attendance list, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

## **13. BSF AND ACADEMIES – CALL IN OF DECISIONS IN RESPECT OF GEORGE TOMLINSON SCHOOL**

Further to minute 11 above, Members were advised that the decisions taken by the Executive at a meeting held on 24th August, 2009 in relation to George Tomlinson School had been called in by Councillor Hayes, in accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution – The Council's Rules and Procedures: Section E, Paragraph 7.

A copy of the report and the relevant minute of the Executive had been circulated.

Members in their deliberations discussed, inter alia, the following points:-

- use of education expertise within the Council;
- alternative uses of BSF monies;
- use of sponsors for academies;
- the need for a good local school in each area;
- existing academy results;
- views of the Governing Body; and
- action needed in areas of poor levels of attainment.

Members were reminded of the options open to the Committee in determining the matter, viz:-

- a) To note the decisions of the Executive;
- b) To refer the matter back to the Executive, with or without comment; or
- c) To refer the decision to Council, with or without comment, with a motion in the name of the Chair or a nominee of the Committee.

Members went on to discuss what action to take and debated two motions one in terms of referral to full Council and the other to note the decisions taken by the Executive.

Resolved – That the decisions of the Executive be noted.

#### **14. 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.

### **15(a) 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.

### **15(b) NEETS SCRUTINY PANEL**

Councillor Richard Silvester, Chairman of the Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) Scrutiny Panel, referred to the previously circulated report on the outcome of the work of the Panel.

Members were reminded that the Panel was established to examine the number of young people in Bolton currently not in education, employment or training and the level and range of services offered in Bolton to meet their needs.

Members were advised that Section 4 of the report set out details of the investigations that took place and the recommendations that flowed from these.

Resolved – (i) That the report and recommendations be approved.

(ii) That the Executive Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services be asked to present their responses to the next meeting of this Committee.

(iii) That clarification be sought in terms of the Connexions figures, set out at Appendix One to the report, particularly in relation to the end column and that this be re-circulated to

Members.

### **16(a) POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which set out the background information in terms of the Performance Indicators included under the Positive Contribution outcome area and the Council's current performance information.

Members in their discussions focused on areas of under performance.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

### **16(b) CHILDREN'S CENTRES**

Ms. Catherine Greer, Strategic Manager, Early Start, gave a presentation which focused on the effectiveness of targeting vulnerable children in the Borough and their participation at Children's Centres.

By way of background information, Ms. Greer explained that the present position was:-

- 6 Full core offer status for  
(Oxford Grove, Alexandra, Tonge, Harvey, Great Lever, Lord Street and Grosvenor);
- 9 Designated status for  
(Westhoughton, Crompton, Oldhams, Orchards, Little Lever, Kearsley, Leverhulme, Bright Meadows); and
- 3 Building phase for  
(Bromley Cross, Hulton, Heaton and Lostock).

She went on to highlight the activities at each Children's Centre in terms of midwives, health visitors, early start, voluntary sector, job centre plus, childcare providers and schools and other health services.

The Committee were further advised of the early intervention process:-

- universal contacts identified vulnerable children and assessed a need;
- requests for a service were submitted to the Children's Centre Multi-Agency Resource Management Panels;
- intervention agreed and offered to family; and
- impact of intervention assessed and recorded.

Ms. Greer also outlined to Members information regarding what this model provided:-

- a framework for integration;
- pooled resources;
- joint planning and commissioning;
- information sharing; and
- co-location helped.

In terms of a focus on early intervention and prevention, it was explained that this centred around:-

- lower levels of need;
- maintenance for families exiting targeted services; and
- a means of targeting the most vulnerable.

With regard to evidence of the impact of this work, Members were advised that no meaningful data would be available until September, 2010.

In conclusion, the Committee was informed of the following:-

### **Take up of services from Children's Centres**

### **Period 1st January to 31st July 2009**

Foot fall in the 6 phase one centres	38,950
Foot fall in the 9 phase two centres	<u>25,974</u>
Total	64,925

### **Families receiving services in the Borough:-**

North	511
South	699
West	<u>837</u>
Total	2,047

Members in their deliberations sought details of a specific example, for example, of an early intervention that had taken place. It was explained that 136 children most at risk had been identified and had been provided ten hours a week free childcare and a package of family support.

Also referred to by Members was:-

- the cycle of criminality and co-ordination action.

It was explained that, currently, informal working arrangements were in place which needed formalising with the Adult Services Department. Members went on to discuss:-

- the need for all Members to be aware of this work;
- foot fall at each centre; and
- the issue of children "slipping under the net".

Resolved – That the presentation be welcomed and noted.

### **16(c) THE FIVE HOUR SPORTS OFFER**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the Committee with regards to the delivery of the

## 5 Hour Sports Offer PE and Sport Programme.

By way of background information, the report explained that Bolton was a Phase One Local Authority in the Government's and the Youth Sports Trust's School Sports Partnership programme, which was launched in 2003. Bolton was also the first local authority in the country to have four secondary schools designated with Sports College status. These were St. Josephs RC High School in Horwich, Ladybridge, Thornleigh and St James' Farnworth.

Following the Prime Minister's pledge to make sport a part of every child's day during the build up to and legacy of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Bolton, like other local authorities across the country, was tasked with the challenge of providing the offer of the equivalent of one hour of sport to every 5 to 19 year old, every day of the school week.

Bolton, in line with all other authorities, was currently undertaking a 'Self Assessment Review'. The review has been designed to provide the Council with an overview of:-

- the hours of participation opportunities available to young people;
- an assessment of the quality and accessibility of the offer; and
- key actions to be taken to ensure that every young person could access one more hour of quality PE and sport during the coming year.

The report went on to set out specific details in terms of competition, volunteering and monitoring.

Members in their discussions focused upon:-

- the emphasis on more competition;
- the impact of the work of the Competition Manager in terms of a mapping exercise;



- the achievement of the two hour offer;
- base line information being gathered in respect of the five hour offer across the Borough;
- what was happening at schools of all ages and in communities;
- the supporting of inspirational figures; and
- CRB checks.

Resolved – (i) That the update be noted.

(ii) That the Executive Member for Children's Services be asked to consider, at meetings of the Children's Policy Development Group, specific details of what was happening across the whole of the Borough.

### **16(d) BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report on the effectiveness of Behaviour Support mechanisms in place, the monitoring arrangements in place and the ongoing restructuring currently taking place.

By way of background information, the report explained that the Behaviour Support Service (BSS) supported disaffected pupils, pupils who were excluded and/or at risk of exclusion and/or those with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (SEBD) in schools. As part of this, the BSS provided both direct support to the pupils and advice, training and support to schools and families. The BSS had recently been remodelled and had moved to a new operational model since Easter 2009.

Many aspects of the work of the service had been very successful. This was clearly evidenced by the excellent Ofsted reports on Bolton's Pupil Referral Units, good feedback on the SEALs, Nurturing Environments and Nurture programmes from participating schools and regional advisors, our very low rates

of permanent exclusions and our good results on attendance.

However, there had been strong feedback from schools asking the LA to review the service and make changes that would improve the quality of the service, make the service more responsive to schools' needs, provide more hands on support, whilst continuing with the whole school development programmes that build school capacity to deal better with challenging pupils themselves.

Following discussions at Schools Forum, Access and Inclusion Schools Partnership Group, Access and Inclusion Senior Managers' meetings and at DMT, it was clear that there was a need to make some changes. These were explained in the report.

In conclusion, the report referred to issues around success measurement.

Resolved – (i) That the update be welcomed.

(ii) That a further position statement on the progress by submitted to this Committee in six months time.

## **16(e) YOUTH CRIME**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an examination of statistical information in relation to the Youth Justice system, including first time entrants and the effects of the economic downturn on the figures.

By way of background information, the report explained that the Youth Justice Board set a total of five key measures against which the performance of youth offending teams was measured. These indicators had evolved over the ten years that youth offending teams had been in existence into clear measures of outcomes rather than the process measures that typified youth offending team performance framework in their formative years. The measures paid particular attention to the key overarching objective of the youth justice system, which was to reduce offending by children and young people and to

those key pathways that research showed lead to increased risk of offending, namely the use of custody, access to suitable accommodation and access to suitable education, training and employment. The key measures were as follows:-

- to reduce re-offending by children and young people;
- to reduce the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system;
- to reduce the proportion of young people sentenced to custody;
- to ensure that children and young people have suitable education, training or employment at the end of a YOT intervention; and
- to ensure that children and young people have access to suitable accommodation at the end of a YOT intervention.

The report went on to outline the actual performance in these areas.

In terms of early indicators, Members were advised that the Youth Crime Action Plan was formally approved and implemented in April of this year, although funding was made available for pump priming activity from January to March. Early indications from Community Safety statistics showed a Borough-wide decrease of 22.5% (1,500) in calls to the police about young people and anti-social behaviour, when compared with the same period in 2008 (January to June).

In the eight priority neighbourhoods where there has been an increased focus of activity, there had been a 43% reduction in calls to the police relating to young people and anti-social behaviour.

It would be necessary to undertake further long-term analysis in order to determine if the preventative position activities and

targeted programmes are diverting young people from getting engaged in offending and anti-social behaviour, although early indications would suggest that the new integrated and targeted youth support services are having a positive impact, despite the current economic downturn.

Members in their discussions referred to:-

- the recording of crime and the breaching of ASBOs;
- statistical information based on people's perception;
- Members' awareness of local information; and
- the stressing of the positives.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

## **17. MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

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

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- a) Executive held on 24th August, 2009;
- b) Executive Member for Children's Services held on 24th August, 2009;
- c) Children's Policy Development Group held on 20th July, 2009;
- d) Executive Member for Looked After Children and Safeguarding held on 28th July, 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 6.36 p.m.)