

**CHILDREN'S AND CULTURE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 20<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2014

Present – Councillors Ashcroft (Chairman), Wild (Vice-Chairman), Hall, Jones, Mistry, Murray, Richardson, Shaw, Spencer, Sherrington, Swarbrick and Watters.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Mrs Thomas	-	Executive Cabinet Member Deputy Leader
Councillor McKeon	-	Executive Member for Education and Schools
Councillor J. Byrne	-	Executive Member for Culture and Youth
Councillor D. Burrows	-	Executive Member for Police and Community Service
Ms. M. Asquith	-	Director of Children's and Adult Services
Ms J. Spencer	-	Head of Libraries and Museums
Mrs D. Ball	-	Assistant Director Environmental Services and Committee Chief Officer Support
Mr T. Birch	-	Assistant Director of Children's and Adult Services
Ms J. Angus	-	Staying Safe Management Team
Ms S. Gatenby	-	Staying Safe Management Team
Ms S. Cornwell	-	Head of SEN Services and Principal Educational Psychologist
Miss A. Jeewa	-	Domestic Abuse Coordinator
Mrs. S. Bailey	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Kay and from Mr S. Dunne (Lay Member)

Councillor Ashcroft in the Chair.

## **5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's and Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be received and signed as a correct record.

## **6. MONITORING OF DECISIONS**

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

Resolved - That the position be noted.

## **7. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Deputy Chief Executive 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 previous meeting.

Members raised the following additional items for inclusion on the work programme:

- trafficking of children; and
- alternative education – Professor Hattie

Resolved – That the updated work programme be approved.

## **8. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014: SEN REFORMS**

Ms S. Cornwell, Head of SEN Services and Principal Educational Psychologist, gave a presentation on the special

educational needs and disability reforms that had been introduced as part of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Recent legislation to support the reforms included the Children's and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years. The presentation outlined the main aims and objectives of the reforms and the vision of providing joined up support across education, health and care from birth to 25.

Members were informed of the key changes involved in the new legislation and revised Code of Practice. Particular reference was made to the need to introduce Education, Health and Care Plans for those with more complex needs which would replace the current statements of Special Educational Need and Learning Difficulty Assessments. In addition, there was now a requirement to offer personal budgets to families. The progress made in Bolton to date in this regard was outlined. Funding and services available for families to take as a direct payment had been identified for 2014/15, details of which were provided and included:

- Education – element 3 funding (high needs top up funding);
- Health – a personal health budget following eligibility for continuing health care; and
- Social care – short break care funding to meet eligible social care needs for children, young adults and their carers.

The presentation also updated members on the progress in Bolton in the following areas:

- The Local Offer;
- Joint Commissioning; and
- Preparing for Adulthood.

A workforce development plan was already in place to assist with the implementation of the new requirements.

It was noted that the changes would be come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2015 for new cases and that the existing system would run concurrently with the new system until 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2018 for existing cases.

Resolved – (i) That Ms Cornwell be thanked for her informative presentation.

(ii) That an update on the SEN reforms be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

## **9. POST OFSTED INSPECTION PLAN – SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

Ms S. Gatenby and Ms J. Angus gave a presentation which outlined the new Framework of Ofsted Inspections and summarised the outcome of the first inspection of Bolton Children's Services under the revised format.

Members were advised that Bolton was one of the first authorities in England to be inspected under the new Framework which brought together a number of individual inspections that had previously been carried out separately.

The inspection had spanned a four week period with one day's notice. Judgments were made within a 4 point scale of Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate

In this regard, the presentation went on to detail the nature of the review and the areas that were graded on and the outcomes, as follows:

- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection – Requires improvement;
- The experiences and progress of children Looked After and achieving performance – Good
- Adoption Performance – Good
- The experience and progress of care leavers - Good;
- Leadership, management and governance – Requires Improvement;

- The Local Safeguarding Children's Board – Requires Improvement;

According to Ofsted, a local authority that required improvement meant there were no widespread or serious failure that created or left children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of Looked after Children is safeguarded and promoted but not at their criteria for a grade of good.

The presentation went on to outline the Action Plan that had been put in place following the inspections which was required to be sent to Ofsted within 70 working days of their final report.

Following the presentation, members made the following comments/observations:

- considering that Bolton was the second best performing authority in the country in terms of adoption, it was disappointing that a grade of Outstanding had not been awarded;
- As Bolton was one of the first authorities to be judged under the new criteria, it was considered that there would be limited comparable data available and this could have affected the outcomes; and
- members felt that the Department had already addressed many of the points of concern raised and were satisfied at the actions taken following the inspection by the Department.

Resolved – That Ms Gatenby and Ms Angus be thanked for their informative presentation.

## **10. CULTURAL LEARNING OFFER**

Ms J. Spencer attended the meeting and gave a presentation which provided details of the Cultural Learning offered by the Library and Museum Services to children and young people.

The presentation referred to the Henley Review of Cultural Education in England 2012 which stressed the vitally important

role that local authorities had to play in ensuring the lives of young people in their area were enriched with cultural activities and that this should never be underestimated.

In this regard, members were informed of the initiatives to promote cultural learning offered to children by the Libraries and Museum Services. Various examples of projects and ventures were provided to give members an overview of the ways in which the children were helped to learn about culture:

- Early child development;
- Family activities;
- Family learning;
- Promotional activities;
- Schools library and museum service;
- Help and advice for schools;
- Project loan;
- Reading skills;
- School museum resources;
- Crescent activity bank;
- School workshops;
- Promoting reading activities;
- Arts award;
- Super Saturdays and discovery days;
- Summer reading challenge;
- Young volunteers and work experience; and
- Children's promise.

The presentation also identified future priorities for 2014/15 which included:

- the development of time limited workshops to link to displays such as World War I and the Naughton and Moran exhibition;
- to coordinate the promotion of the learning offer so that teachers can more easily access all educational resources through one phone call or online;
- development of activity resources to support initiatives such as a family trail for the World War I commemorations;

- work with Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education and Curious Minds and 6 local schools to achieve a Discover Arts Award;
- to reassess and develop workshops in line with new Curriculum which would have an increased emphasis on local history; and
- to promote the use of online resources and e-books via public libraries.

Resolved – That Ms J. Spencer be thanked for her informative presentation.

## **11. DOMESTIC ABUSE – PROTECTING CHILDREN**

Ms A. Jeewa, Domestic Abuse Coordinator, gave a presentation on Bolton's Domestic Abuse and Violence Strategy with a particular focus on how it related to children and young people.

By way of background information, members were informed that the Strategy was delivered using multi-agency working which was overseen by the Bolton Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership.

Key themes of the Strategy included:

- prevention and early intervention – early identification, reporting, awareness raising;
- provision – support services for victims and families – perpetrator programmes;
- protection – effective support for victims and their children; and
- participation – engage with those accessing the services and those providing them.

The presentation went on to highlight the prevalence of domestic violence nationally, with 750,000 children a year witnessing some form.

Other local information identified that a high proportion of Child Protection Plans featured domestic abuse and violence and

that it was also a significant factor within Child SCR's, DHR's and the Family First Programme.

With regard to children and young people, the presentation referred to the work of the Bolton Safeguarding and Children's Board in terms of addressing domestic abuse and violence and highlighted the following aims and objectives of its Business Plan:

- to evaluate the effectiveness of work with children and young people who experienced domestic abuse and violence
- to respond to gaps in safeguarding policy and guidance identified in reviews, particularly Serious Case Reviews; and
- to explore the evaluation of the effectiveness of current responses to domestic abuse and violence as identified in Bolton's Framework for Action – Performance Indicators established for domestic abuse and violence.

Other key developments included:

- Healthy Relationships Programme in Schools;
- Feel Safe at Home Leaflets;
- publicity posters;
- Young Person's Violence Adviser;
- Paws for Kid Safe Haven Project;
- Fortalice Support Centre and Refuge;
- Domestic Abuse and Violence Practitioner Forum and Handbook;
- Bolton Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Steering Group; and
- dedicated processes in place to respond to issues of female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour based violence.

Following the presentation, members made a number of comments/observations:

- it was noted that although there were no victim representatives on the various forums/panels, there were proposals in place to introduce victims and youth forums;
- Fortalice accommodates young people and also provides counselling and support for them; and
- the Committee welcomes proposals to introduce the IRIS scheme at GP surgeries as a means of identifying domestic abuse and violence at an early stage.

Resolved – That Ms Jeewa be thanked for her informative presentation.

## **12. MEMBERS BUSINESS**

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

- (a) The Executive Cabinet Deputy Leader's Portfolio held on 30<sup>th</sup> June and 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and ended at 6.40pm)

F10

**NOTES**