

## **CHILDREN'S AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2013

Present – Councillors Ashcroft (Chairman), Cox (Vice-Chairman), C. Burrows, L. Byrne, Cunliffe, Mrs Fairclough, Harkin (as deputy for Councillor Jones), Kay, Lewis, Mistry, Rushton, Spencer, Mrs. Swarbrick and Watters.

### Representing Primary School Parent Governors

Mr S. Dunne – Co-opted Member

### Also in Attendance

Councillor McKeon	-	Cabinet Member for Schools and Skills
Councillor Murray	-	Cabinet Member for Looked After Children, Safeguarding and Early Years
Councillor A. Connell	-	Sport, Libraries, Youth and Culture
Ms M. Asquith	-	Director of Children's Services
Mr J. Rowlands	-	Assistant Director, Customer Services
Mr T. Birch	-	Assistant Director, Children's Services
Mr D. Smith	-	Head of Finance – Children's and Adult Services
Mrs S. Cornwell	-	Head of Service for Children with SEN
Mrs S. Bailey	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jones and Mrs Thomas.

Councillor Ashcroft in the Chair.

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

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's and Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 were submitted.

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

## **20. 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.

## **21. 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.

Resolved – That the updated work programme be approved.

## **22. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER TWO 2013/14**

The Director of Children's and Adult Services submitted a report which provided details on the performance information in relation to Children's Services as at Quarter Two of 2013/14 and gave an update on recent national and local approaches to performance management.

The report provided details of proposed improvement actions to address areas of concern with regard to performance.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

## **23. NEW SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS**

Mr T. Birch and Mr D Smith gave a presentation on the introduction of new funding arrangements for children with High Needs as part of the Government's School Funding Reforms.

Members were advised that from 2013/14, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) had been split into three blocks, as follows:

- Schools block;
- Early Years block;
- High Needs block.

The High Needs block included pupils with High Needs in schools, further education and alternative provision with the aim of:

- being responsive to pupils' needs;
- all providers being funded on an equivalent basis;
- bring pre and post 16 funding together; and
- provide clear information about available provision.

The presentation went on to summarise the main funding elements:

- the first £6,000 of additional funding, above and beyond the average educational funding per child of £4,000, should be met by schools from the mainstream budget; and
- where the value of a student's additional needs were greater than £6,000, the child was classified as a High Needs child and any further funding would be provided from the High Needs Block of DSG, based on the child's assessed needs.

Further information on the more detailed aspects of the funding arrangements was outlined together with the basis of top up payments.

The presentation went on to advise of the resulting budget pressures arising from the new funding arrangements with increasing demand in High Needs Block pre 16 in terms of numbers and complexity of need, raised participation age and new responsibility of post 16. From August, 2013, there was a new responsibility for post 16 year olds. £585,000 additional funding had been received through the DSG however, the cost of need identified was £1.8m leaving a shortfall of £1.2m.

In this regard, Bolton had submitted a one off successful business case where a further award of £637k for an 8 month period. This left a revised shortfall of £539,000.

There was an estimated shortfall of £1.7m in 2014-15 at this stage.

The presentation further informed members of the production of a draft Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for 0 – 25 year olds.

There was now a new requirement to ensure that parents, children and young people were fully involved in decision making and the reviewing position. In addition, the Authority must jointly plan and commission services to ensure close co-operation between education, health and social care.

Other changes included:

- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) to replace statements of Special Educational need and Learning Difficulty Assessments;
- a duty on Health to provide any provision specified in the EHCP;
- the option of personal budgets;
- a greater focus on successful transition to adulthood; and
- the need to publish a local offer.

The presentation went on to outline the timeframe for implementation of the new arrangements by 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2014 and the progress made in Bolton towards this.

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

- there would need to be additional support for those schools that had higher than average numbers of children with high needs;
- the reasons for the increasing number of children with high needs – Mr Birch advised that this was related to increased awareness and earlier and better identification of children with needs;
- there was a need to involve parents and engage with them if their child was identified as having high needs;
- the importance of involving parent governors on groups developing the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice;
- concerns that schools with significant numbers of children with high needs may experience financial difficulties; and
- there was no indication that additional funding would be available in the future.

Resolved – That Mr Birch and Mr Smith be thanked for their informative presentation.

## **24. SKILLS STRATEGY**

Mr P. Green gave a presentation on the main aims of the Council's Skills Strategy and focused on how schools fitted into the overall objectives.

Members were reminded that the main aims of the Strategy were to raise aspirations, develop skills and provide employment by:

- continuing to drive attainment improvement;
- building on skills of Education Zone partners;
- working with employers to deliver the skills pledge – provision of work based interventions and match skills to job through projects such as Team Bolton;
- showcasing opportunities via Team Bolton; and
- working with businesses and schools using economic data to raise aspiration.

The key challenge was to achieve high educational attainment and the right level and mix of skills which were essential for access to work and a competitive and innovative growth economy.

The presentation provided statistical information in relation to the Greater Manchester Skills Demand by occupation together an analysis of the Bolton business base and growth sectors and skills 2012/22.

The presentation summarised the five main themes of the Skills Strategy, as follows:

- governance;
- adult skills;
- raising participation;
- sector – based approach; and
- education zone.

There were also five delivery strands:

- employer engagement;
- pathways and information;
- education zone;
- apprenticeships; and
- aspirations.

There was also a partnership approach to three core outcome areas by engaging:

- individuals – addressing barriers and aspirations;
- partners - -quality, choice and integration of provision, increase skills and progression; and
- businesses – work, aspiration and skill development opportunities and economic growth.

The presentation then focused on how schools fitted into the strategy by:

- raising aspirations to align with economic growth and key local employment;
- advice and guidance on employment and skills option – routes and destinations;
- young people participation in education employment and training and maximising higher skills progression; and
- aligning learning with employers and key sectors and supporting prep programmes.

Various ways of achieving this were outlined which included:

- using labour market intelligence and online resources;
- CEIAG and aspirations, promoting and supporting routes and choices, destinations, specific opportunities;
- working direct with employers who had pledged support;
- careers days, sector specific activity, work/life/interview skills, entrepreneurship, work placements, aligned learning, school projects and events; and
- schools as employers.

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

- NEETS figures in Bolton had reduced significantly and were the second best in Greater Manchester;
- partnership working with the private sector was ongoing to enable prospective employers to assist in identifying the skills they required to assist in development programmes for young people so they were job fit;
- the local colleges and university were aiming to align skills taught to meet the needs of local businesses.

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

## **25. CULTURAL DISPOSAL POLICY**

Mr J. Rowlands gave a presentation on the Council's policy for the disposal of Museum collections.

Members were advised of the main features of Bolton Museums De - Accession and Disposal Policy which had been developed in line with the Museum Association's Code of Ethics and Accreditation Scheme.

The Strategy provided that disposal would not be undertaken on an ad-hoc basis but as part of an active Collections Strategy with every disposal being justified by demonstrating a long-term public benefit.

In addition, the Museum was required to have an approved policy for developing collections which included:

- a statement of purpose;
- an overview of current collections;
- themes and priorities for future collecting;
- themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal; and
- information about the legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items.

In addition, the policy allowed the Museums Service to access funding that would not otherwise be available.

The presentation went on to stress that although there was a strong presumption in favour of the retention of items within the public domain, the transfer or disposal of items could improve access to, or the use, care or context of, items or collections.

In this regard, the presentation highlighted an example of where the Council was in the process of rationalising one of its collections at Lincoln Mill with some of the artefacts being transferred to another museum where other similar objects were being displayed.



Other rationalised collections were being housed at the Chadwick Resource Centre which had the following benefits:

- collections that could be not be used were no longer being stored;
- costs of storage space had decreased;
- collections which had been transferred to other institutions were now publicly accessible;
- research of potential disposals had given a greater understanding and knowledge of existing collections which increased their accessibility to the public; and
- some disposals, such as scrap metal, had brought money to the Council.

The presentation concluded that collections rationalisation including object research, transfer and disposal where necessary, was an important part of collections management. Increased rationalisation could lead to increased accessibility to the public in many instances and could result in savings in the long term.

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

## **18. 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 14<sup>th</sup> October and 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2013; and
- (b) The Cabinet held on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2013.

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

**19. REQUEST FOR HEALTHWATCH REPRESENTATIVE  
ON SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chairman reported that a request had been received from Healthwatch to be represented on the Children's and Culture Committee.

Healthwatch had responsibilities to engage with young people about health and social care services and felt it would be appropriate to have a representative to sit on this Committee

Resolved – That, subject to Council approval, agreement be given to the appointment of a Healthwatch representative to serve on this Committee.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and ended at 6.25pm)