

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (O&S) COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Wednesday 12th February 2020, Committee Room 6

Actions

Present:

Councillor Kath Scott (Chair)

Councillors: Mohammed Aikhlaq, Barbara Dring and Kerry Jenkins

Also Present:

Councillor Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing

Wendy Griffiths, AD, Customer Services and Business Support

Dr Tim O'Neill, Director for Education and Skills

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Viki Sullivan, Head of Business Improvement and Support

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chairman advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.civico.net/birmingham) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Mohammed Aikhlaq is on the Board of Directors for the Leigh Academy Trust.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of:

- Councillors: Charlotte Hodivala and Chauhdry Rashid.
- Omar Hanif, Parent Governor Representative; Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative; Rabia Shami, Parent Governor Representative and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese Representative

4. ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER

(See documents 1 and 2).

RESOLVED

Confirmed the action notes of the 22nd January 2020 and noted the action tracker.

5. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

(See document 3)

Councillor Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing; Dr Tim O'Neill, Director for Education and Skills; Wendy Griffiths, AD, Customer Services and Business Support and Viki Sullivan, Head of Business Improvement and Support attended for this item.

The following were among the main points made during the discussion:

- Locality Panels were introduced in October 2019 for the Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and Business Support has provided extra capacity to review the end to end process with a view to removing any double or treble handling.
- The council is operating with multiple systems and there are potentially seven access points / channels for complaints. Therefore, there is a risk that customers could get seven different answers from seven different people and the intelligence is lost to learn from complaints.
- Navigation Partners has been commissioned to undertake the review and this is a corporate issue that affects the whole Council and not specifically the Education and Skills Directorate.
- Also, they are in the process of trialling in Education and Skills Directorate the quality insurance framework and reviewing staff performance.
- They need to review call handling as there is a risk of calls not being answered effectively and there might need to be infrastructure such as telephone software put in place.
- There are four key strands: workforce development; improved practice; customer experience and further consolidation.
- They can breakdown the top five service areas with the highest number of complaints and also provide a further breakdown of the top five reasons for the complaints within the service areas.
- Members had concerns regarding the time taken to respond to safeguarding and home to school transport complaints.
- Members queried whether the targets to respond to complaints were challenging and the Director informed members that they now have a performance dashboard that can be shared.

- There is a difference between a safeguarding action and a safeguarding complaint. Members' concerns regarding whether 15 days is appropriate for a safeguarding complaint will be fed back into the review for it to be looked at.
- Members queried whether 100% of the services within the Education and Skills Directorate should be receiving business support rather than the 66%.
- The Director is not aware that areas within his Directorate are missing from the process and he is keen there is an integrated process and his services are in scope.
- The Director would welcome oversight on improving complaints handling.
- Defining what a complaint is, is key as sometimes an inquiry is being dealt with as a complaint.
- The recommendation report will be going to Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) by the middle of March 2020 and officers are happy to share this with members.
- Members queried how the customer journey is being tracked as this is not just about monitoring the complaints. Also, members would have liked to see in the report details of what is being monitored / looked at. The Director would welcome a wider customer journey discussion throughout the year.
- The Chair advised that she had been made aware that there are currently 161 children who have a school place in a SEND setting out of school because of transport issues. This information would not necessarily come out of the complaints process but would come out of a customer journey driven process.
- The AD highlighted that business support is not provided to the home to school transport service and is therefore not in scope. Although they could support this area and will be discussing this with the AD for Inclusion and SEND.
- Members highlighted that every complaint is not just a statistic and that is why it is important to get this right. Therefore, there is a need to make sure the system put in place recognises the human aspect and safeguarding should be at the forefront.
- The Chair mentioned the budget proposal regarding the SENAR team and the Director informed members that they are planning to invest in the SEND service collectively.

RESOLVED

The committee noted the update and members to be provided with the following:

- Performance dashboard.
- Top five reasons for the top five service complaints.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document 4).

The Chair advised members there would be an informal meeting afterward to discuss the Home to School Transport Inquiry.

It was suggested that if possible the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture attend the March meeting due to the April meeting having a large agenda with five items.

RESOLVED

The committee noted the work programme.

7. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

8. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

9. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 11.20 hours.