

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> JULY 2019  
REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDRENS WELLBEING  
COUNCILLOR KATE BOOTH**

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report sets out my portfolio priorities and provides an update on areas of my portfolio of responsibility that relates to the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **2. ACCOUNTABILITY**

The portfolio that I have political accountability covers all the local authority children's services and social care. My post is required by law to hold directly accountability for the effectiveness, availability and value for money of the local authority's children's services.

The City Council's Constitution clearly sets out the portfolio and areas of accountability.

Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS)	<p>Political accountability for all the local authority children's services, including education and social care.</p> <p>This post is required by law to hold direct local accountability for the effectiveness, availability and value for money of the local authority's children's services (particularly education and children's social care.)</p> <p>This role will therefore require close joint working and formal reporting with the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture to ensure appropriate accountability for statutory education functions contained within the LMCS role – including fair access to schooling for all children, high quality early years provision and children's involvement in public decision making.</p>
Safeguarding Children and Young People	With statutory partners, the safety and wellbeing of all children.
Children's Services	Leadership, strategy and effectiveness of children's services – responding to the needs of all children and young people, especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers.
Overseeing the Children's Trust	Oversight of the 'client side' role of the Children's Trust to ensure the delivery of agreed outcomes, KPIs and finances within the legal and contractual framework agreed

Overseeing Early Years	Ensuring a sufficiency of places and a citywide Early Years Health and Wellbeing offer.
Corporate Parenting	Political leadership on improving the lives of looked after children. Ensuring all Council members, officers and services understand and actively promote the Council's responsibilities to looked after children.
Lead Member for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion	Lead Member for the SEND agenda across children's agencies and holding officers and partners to account for the delivery of the Birmingham SEND strategy.

### 3. SUMMARY OF KEY PRIORITIES

Over the past year I have had the opportunity to go out and meet different staffing teams across the directorate and our Children's Trust; as well as go out to meet with many of our partners and providers of services.

I have also been meeting key stakeholders and in particular our children and young people and visiting some of our schools both mainstream and special school across the City; as well as special schools our children attend just outside the City.

Our City's children's social care improvement journey is well documented and this Committee has received many reports from previous Cabinet Members and from the Chair and Chief Executive of our Childrens Trust. The Trust was officially launched last year and the improvement trajectory continues at pace. Our childrens social care in our last full Ofsted inspection was rated as 'requiring improvement to be good. The Children's Trust, strategic business plan provides an overview

My key priorities over the forthcoming year include,

- Continuing to work with the Childrens Trust to ensure that we continue to improve our services and providing better outcomes for our children, young people and families.
- As set out in our Council Plan it is our ambition for Birmingham to be an aspirational city to grow up in, for our children to grown up in and realise their full potential
- Continuing to listen and ensuring our children's, young people and families voices are heard; and that we involve our children in improving our services as they as recipients know what works and what does not. Looking at co-production whenever we can to ensure our services, policies and practices are tested and appropriate and fit for purpose. Our Parent / Carer forum has recently been r-established.
- Strengthening our early years health and wellbeing offer, over the past year we have been working with BCHT and their partners (known as Birmingham Forward Steps) to strengthen the contract requirements and the performance framework. This will enable

and drive improvement of performance with a focus on the key priorities around the mandated Public Health requirements. We will continue to work with Birmingham Forward Steps to ensure that all our children across the city are developing well and are ready for their transition to school.

- We currently have 12 operational day nurseries that will be transitioned to new providers over the summer. Following a due diligence exercise, (and direct negotiation for 2 of the settings) the nurseries will be taken over by 9 different providers from the private/voluntary/independent sector and an Academy school. All are existing high quality providers with experience of providing good/outstanding provision either within the city already, or within another area in the country. Officers are working alongside Ofsted to ensure that the transition for children and their families will be seamless. As a result of this work, council staff will be transferred to the new provider. The ongoing annual financial deficit of £1m incurred to run the nurseries will be removed, and an annual income will be received for the leasing of the buildings to alternative providers.
- Continuing on our improvement journey in relation to our Special Education Needs and Disability Service. The Written Statement of Action (WSOA) sets out our improvement plan in response to the Ofsted SEND inspection and steps that have been put in place to ensure that our children and their families get the best start in life. Attached to this report is the first monthly SEND Newsletter, providing an update on the action that we are doing across organisations to improve our health, care and education officer to our children, young people and families. The report also sets out how we are progressing with our written statement of action following the Ofsted Inspection of SEND services in June last year.
- I did set our last year that one of my priorities would be to look at SEND provision in mainstream schools. All our children and young people wherever possible should have their education in mainstream settings alongside children in their localities. If a child's needs cannot be met in the mainstream schools wherever possible we need to ensure that specialist provision is close to their homes. We have been working with our special schools over the course of the year and are looking at developing with our schools, children and young people a SEND sufficiency plan.
- Improving our offer on quality of Education Health and Care Plans, ensuring these are completed effectively to ensure children needing extra support have appropriate access to the support to enable them to thrive at school.
- The Government has recently published the Timpson Report on exclusions and we will be reviewing our processes to ensure we support our schools in meeting their responsibilities for school exclusions. I am fully supportive of the review to ensure all our children in our city get access to education. It is important that we recognise that the cohort of young people excluded is over represented by children under local authority care and those with special education needs. These children / young people are excluded for a fixed term or permanently from a school not from education.
- Continuing to improve our home to school travel service, this has been discussed at length in Scrutiny. The policy approved at Cabinet in May will begin to shape

improvements to our education transport service to our most vulnerable children and their families and modernise and improve our offer.

- Childhood exploitation and safeguarding continues to be an area that we are working closely with our partners on. Public awareness through local and national campaigns has increased awareness which is great as we all need to remain vigilant and report areas of concern.
- Improving our Mental Health Offer, over the past year I have been out to meet many organisations and groups that are looking to ensure that appropriate Mental Health advice and services are available. The Post 16 forum, has been leading on this area and in December carried out a mental health survey of secondary schools and Post 16 settings. The survey findings confirmed that the mental health and wellbeing of students was a concern and a major issue impacting on attendance, achievement, behaviour and progression. The Post 16 forum have been working with young people to see how we can improve information provision, the young people liked the glossy teen health magazine. We are seeking to gain sponsorship to roll this out to all young people through schools in our City. This is an area that Cllr Alex Yip has also invested a great deal of time in and I know has recently been successful in gaining support to distribute a teen health guide within his schools in his locality, Sutton Coldfield.

#### **4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

As is the case across the country we are seeing the impact on children lives with deprivation; parental mental health; substance misuse domestic violence, and poor housing. In addition over recent years we are seeing an increase in knife violence and 'county lines' all which create additional risks to our young people. These issues do have an untold impact on our children creating adverse childhood experiences.

As a City we are working more and more closely with partner agencies to address these challenges and find innovative solutions. We have our Birmingham Children's Partnership (BCP), which I attend which is up and running which is looking at improvement capacity funded jointly by partnership. Attached to this report is the first quarterly BCP newsletter. A key focus that the Think Family programme is looking at is early intervention and prevention to safeguard our children.

Our work with Health on the WSOA is one key example where our partners are working with us and the Trust and our schools to support our most vulnerable citizens. As a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board, we are ensuring children's wellbeing is integral to all we do to improve the health outcomes for all our citizens as our children and young people are intrinsic.

There continues to be investment in all schools to assist in early recognition of radicalisation and setting out clear reporting lines. Similarly we have seen work on supporting schools through the UNICEF Rights Respecting Award which produces resilient young people who understand how to avoid any extremist influences and promotes positive wellbeing.

I attend wherever possible meeting of our Nursery School Heads and Special School Forums so am very aware of some the challenges that these schools are facing and innovation taking place.

## 5. PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Within the Council Plan are a number of performance targets with either monthly or yearly returns. The recent monthly returns include:

### **REF 2.1.1 Percentage of new Education Health Care (EHC) plans issued within 20 weeks, excluding exceptions**

Nationally there is a DfE target of 95% of plans completed within 20 weeks for 2019/20. The national average for performance against this measure is 61% with 90% being seen by the DfE as the expected target for high performing LAs is 90%.

Nov18	Dec18	Jan19	Feb19	Mar19	Apr19
83.3%	77%	93.3%	83.9%	80%	85%

BCC are currently dealing with a 10year high in the number of assessment requests, 501 open cases against an expected 300 to 350. Various actions are being undertaken to deal with this level of enquiries including a continued increase in resource, despite the increase, the cumulative performance for 2019 still remains higher than the national average

### **REF 2.1.3 Children's Trust meeting or exceeding their performance targets**

The Children's Trust reports monthly on 15 indicators. The agreed contractual position is that they should be delivered at the contractual target or an agreed level of tolerance.

For Apr19, of the 15 contractual KPIs

- 13 out of 15 KPIs were performing within contractual target or tolerances
- 9 performing better than target level
- 1 performing below target level and below tolerance
- 5 missed target but performing within contractual tolerance

#### **KPI 1 % of referrals with a decision within 24 hours**

- performing above target during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average above target and performing within agreed contractual tolerance

#### **KPI 2 % of re-referrals to CSC within 12 months**

- Below target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average above target and performing within agreed contractual tolerance

#### **KPI 3 % of assessments completed within 45 working days**

- Performance below target during Apr19

- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average above target and within agreed tolerance

**KPI 4 Child in need cases open for more than 2 years**

- Below target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average not reaching target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance

**KPI 5 % of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 working days**

- Performance better than target during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average above target and above agreed contractual tolerance

**KPI 6 % of children who become subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time within the last 2 years**

- Performance below target during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average better than target

**KPI 7 % of children (under 16 years) who have been looked after for 2.5 years or more and in the same placement for 2 years or more**

- Performance below target during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average is on target

**KPI 8 % of Looked After Reviews held on time**

- Performance better than target during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average better than target

**KPI 9 % of care leavers who are in Education Employment or Training**

- Performance better than target during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average better than target

**KPI 10 average time between LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match**

- Performance below target during Apr19
- Previous 3 year average not reaching target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance

**KPI 11 % of young offenders that re-offend within 1 year**

- Performance below target. Whilst we are not performing as well as core cities, our performance has improved on the last period by 4%, and has continued in the right direction over the last six months.

**KPI 12 % of established Social Worker posts filled by agency/interim staff**

- not reaching target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average not reaching target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance

**KPI 13 % of Child Protection plans ending within 3 months or less**

- Performance better than target during October

- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average better than target

**KPI 14 – average caseload of qualified Social Workers**

- not reaching target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance during October
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average not reaching target but performing within agreed contractual tolerance

**KPI 15 - % of Social Workers who have had supervision in month**

- Performance on target during Apr19
- Previous 12 month cumulative performance average above target and performing within agreed contractual tolerance

## **6 UPDATE ON KEY BUDGET ISSUES/KEY FUTURE BUDGET ISSUES**

In 2018/19 the directorate out-turn position was an overspend of £2.314m, which was a reduction in the position reported in December 2018 of £0.221m. This position is due to an overspend of £3.167m on School Travel Service, which was offset by underspends in Business Support and Strategic Leadership.

The Children's Trust out-turn position was an overspend of £0.059m on a net Trust budget of £195m, which represents less than 0.1% of the budget. There were overspends on Care Leavers (£2.125m) and External Placements (£1.890m) due to increased demand for services, though these were largely offset by underspends in other areas.

Over the forthcoming year 2019/20 we have a number of savings targets, totalling £8.837m, which are being progressed. A significant risk has have been flagged against the School Travel Service saving of £1.718m, which is forecasting a saving of £0.400m in 2019/20 and £0.700m in a full year.

For 2019/20 the biggest budget pressure remains School Travel Service, officers are currently working with the Administrators to secure alternative provision. Other services linked to Early Years, Day Nurseries and SEND staffing costs will need to be carefully managed to ensure that General Fund costs do not rise. Part of the savings plan involves increasing income targets in some areas, largely through subscriptions or payments to cover costs. These fees have been kept as low as possible, to limit the impact on subscribers, such as schools.

Spend on High Needs spend and placements within DSG is also a significant concern with the cumulative deficit forecast as increasing this financial year. A High Needs Task group has been established to focus on this area and produce a deficit recovery plan over 5 years, which will seek to bring the deficit down over this period through a range of measures. An invest to save fund has been set aside to progress initiatives as part of the deficit recovery plan.

The relationship with the Schools and Early Years Forum continues to develop, and as the commissioner of Schools Funding for the city, I will continue to work with them to

ensure that schools are receiving the best value for money from services and getting support to seek to reduce the level of deficits.

Following the debate in Full Council in April the Leader and I sent a letter to the Secretary of State, calling for fairer funding at national level for Special Educational Needs.

## **7 Closing Remarks**

Safeguarding all our children remains this administration's key priority and in particular protecting our vulnerable children and children in need.

SEND is a service area that in particular is undergoing a close deal of scrutiny we were aware and plans are in place to improve practice and performance in this service area. The newsletter attached highlights progress in this area and how we are looking at modernising and improving our SEND service.

The budget also remains a fundamental challenge identifying and realising savings whilst ensure the impact is mitigated so the outcomes for our children is not compromised.

### **Latest Ofsted Inspection – Children's Services**

Ofsted came in December 2018 for a full inspection of children's services, and they came back in January and February to inspect, separately, our fostering and our adoption service. The outcome of these inspections is that we achieved what we set out to: none of our services are rated 'Inadequate'. Our children's services overall, and our fostering service are judged as 'Requiring Improvement to be Good', while our adoption service is judged as 'Good'. Full Ofsted reports can be accessed by searching 'Birmingham' at: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

I have been holding regular meetings with the Children's Trust Chief Executive Andy Couldrick and Chair Andrew Christie, as well as the Governance arrangements which have been established to monitor and have oversight on progress.

Over the past year I am pleased to see progress being made and pleased that our last children's social care Ofsted inspection was judged as requires improvement in all areas after more than 10 years rated as 'Inadequate'.

It is my aspiration that Birmingham becomes a Child Friendly City, a City in which our children have the best start, are safe and can grow up with high aspirations and opportunities to thrive and realise their potential.

Councillor Kate Booth  
Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing