

## **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

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

**1000 hours on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019, Committee Room 6**

### **Actions**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Kath Scott (Chair)

Councillors: Mohammed Aikhlaq, Safia Akhtar and Kerry Jenkins

Other Voting representatives: Omar Hanif, Parent Governor Representatives and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese Representative

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing

Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture

Detective Inspector Wendy Bird, West Midlands Police

Simon Cross, Business Manager, BSCP

Lisa Fraser, AD for Education and Early Years

Nichola Jones, AD for Inclusion and SEND

Rose Kiely, Group Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Alan Michell, School Admissions Operations Manager

Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Chief Executive, Birmingham and Solihull CCG

Dr Tim O'Neill, Director for Education and Skills

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Penny Thompson, Independent Chair, BSCP

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### **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](http://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**

The following declarations of interests were made:

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

### **3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of:

- Councillors: Barbara Dring, Chauhdry Rashid, Suzanne Webb and Alex Yip.
- Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative and Rabia Shami, Parent Governor Representatives.

### **4. APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMITTEE**

#### **RESOLVED**

Noted the City Council appointed Councillor Chauhdry Rashid to the Committee.

### **5. ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER**

(See documents 1 and 2).

#### **RESOLVED**

Confirmed the action notes of the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and noted the action tracker.

### **6. BIRMINGHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19 AND LAUNCH OF BIRMINGHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP**

(See documents 3, 4 and 5).

Penny Thompson, Independent Chair, BSCP and Simon Cross, Business Manager, BSCP attended for this item and answered Members' questions.

The following were among the main points raised:

- Penny Thompson has been the Independent Chair for over three years and it has been a time of change and improvement. They are still focused on delivering improvement in leadership and practice. The Ofsted visit indicated that improvement can clearly be seen.
- Now launched the partnership in line with national expectations. However, in Birmingham this has not meant there had to be a lot of structural change and so they are continuing to build on progress already made on outcomes. This includes embedding early help, tackling neglect and developing their approach to contextual safeguarding.
- Measuring impact is a challenge and the Quality Impact and Outcomes Group is charged with measuring this. Ofsted gives an indication of measuring improvement and there are also a number of soft indicators that can be used. The partnerships' focus on leadership of practice is key to this, as is the importance that we have a learning culture.
- The Partnership has an annual conference and they have a practitioner forum every three months. The bi-monthly Partnership Executive Board meetings

are hosted by partners, the last one by Barnardos and the next one by Neighbourhoods Directorate.

- In response to a question regarding how partners are working together, the Independent Chair responded that partners at a strategic level are coming together and at an operational level this is work in progress.
- Early help is a challenge for partners to contribute. Birmingham is fortunate in having West Midlands Police contribution and this does not always happen with other forces in the country.
- There is no room for complacency and there is quite a lot of evidence of partners contributing. Members can support employees working for the Council involved in this and appreciate the work they are doing, highlighting success, rather than focus when things go wrong. The understanding and recognition that working in the areas of safeguarding and child protection is challenging and not for the faint hearted.
- Consistency and continuity is very important and the Independent Chair has been requested by the partners to renew her contract, which she will do.
- They are developing and embedding a learning culture that is not going to be people dependent, in the partnerships and they are on the way to achieving this.
- There is an extra vulnerability for children who are not in education and they support schools. Almost inevitably safeguarding is more challenging when children are out of education and there are escalation processes if there are concerns.
- All schools have a safeguarding lead and meet at least termly. All education settings in the city are required to complete an Education Safeguarding Self-assessment tool (S175). An annual audit is undertaken of these with an analysis and action plan completed. Best practice is identified so this can be used to support schools that may need assistance.
- Austerity has had an impact on the agencies and organisations (public and voluntary) that have lost funding and therefore capacity and the lives of families where they are struggling.

### **RESOLVED**

The Committee received the BSCB Annual Report 2018/19.

## **7. BIRMINGHAM AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (BAFGM)**

(See document 6).

Detective Inspector Wendy Bird attended for this item.

The following were among the main points raised:

- DI Wendy Bird is also the Regional Police lead for FGM, honour based abuse and forced marriage. There is strong leadership within the police regarding

FGM. Christine Wellington, Children's Trust is going to start to co-chair BAFGM.

- Members of the partnership are doing this on top of their day job and are very impassioned. Funding is an issue and they have applied for different funding pots from the police and the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) office.
- Members can assist by being the "eyes and ears on the streets" as there is a lack of intelligence across the West Midlands and nationally, as to what is happening in communities regarding FGM (who is doing it and where it is happening). DI Bird is happy to go out to communities to help dispel myths etc.
- Hazel Pulley, the previous Chair developed and delivered an FGM training package to a number of schools and members could help promote the use of the training package in schools.
- The police have done a number of initiatives and these include:
  - Temporary tattoos for 'stop forced marriage' and 'end FGM'.
  - Flash mob in New Street Station.
  - Stickers in toilets at Birmingham Airport.
  - Operation Limelight (an initiative at Birmingham Airport which involves intercepting passengers which are bound or returning from areas of the world where FGM is conducted). This year children's social care were involved.
  - 350 delegate conferences.
- The posters, information and leaflets are available and can be used in schools, GP surgeries and by the communities etc.
- Councillor Jenkins suggested:
  - BAFGM could work with the Youth Service and Youth Forum and Councillor Jenkins can provide links to the relevant people.
  - BAFGM may wish to attend the 'market place' before City Council so they can provide all members with the information and leaflets etc and/or e-mail all members, so they can share this in the communities.
- Members can join the mailing list so they are aware of upcoming conferences and details will be provided.
- There is a current debate at a strategic level with the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (holds the budget for FGM) and Birmingham Safeguarding Childrens Partnership about the development of an FGM Strategy for the City.

#### **RESOLVED**

- The Committee received the BAFGM Annual Report 2018/19 and requested a further update in 2020/21.

- Members to be provided with information and leaflets etc on FGM that can be shared in the communities.

## 8. SEND

(See documents 7, 8, 9 and 10).

Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Chief Executive, Birmingham and Solihull CCG and Nichola Jones, AD for Inclusion and SEND attended for this item.

In discussion and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- There is a significant amount of change and turnaround work that has to be made following the inspection last year.
- They recently had the quarter 4 visit regarding the improvements that need to be made contained within the Written Statement of Action (WSOA). There has been a positive meeting with the regulators and the feedback was that improvements have been made.
- This year is very much about the building blocks and they do not underestimate the work they need to do. They had to start with small things to demonstrate improvements and this might not yet be felt by the families.
- On a quarterly basis the partnership review the quality of the EHCP's, checking that there is multi-agency support around the care plan and they reflect the voice of the young person and the young person is at the heart of the plan. This is driving the training and action plan and the quality of the EHCPs is a top priority with the partnership.
- Year 9 (post 16) transition plans has slipped and is not in place and there is a remedial action plan for this.
- 293 appeals were lodged during the academic year 2018/19 compared to 265 in 2017/18. Of the appeals that went to tribunal 81% were found in the favour of the parent and this is not acceptable.
- There is a need to get back to a locality model and develop an early help offer. This is the transformational model the partnership is now getting into.
- Over the next two months the Invest to Save will be out with schools to look at early intervention and help.
- They are in process of commissioning a creative and innovative web based system for the 'local offer' as this is clunky at the moment.
- The areas being developed to build school capacity through a locality led model, as well as the reviewing and realigning of specialist provision, will ensure inappropriate use of resources, enabling the local authority and schools to make the best use of its resources.

- Dr Tim O'Neill made three points:
  - Dr Tim O'Neill and Rachel O'Connor are on the Transformation Board and carry the statutory duty for this and they are working well together.
  - The shift to early help does not take five minutes and they need the time and space to deliver the change which will take time and effort.
  - The money is in the wrong place and again this will take time and effort and they need members support to achieve this change over the next 12 months and beyond.
- The Chair is pleased that they are recognising the parent expert and are engaging in better ways. However there needs to be more input and this needs to be more robust.
- In month 3 of the financial monitoring report it mentions under SENAR Staffing, that a review of the staffing structure is underway which will seek to align the structure with funding on a sustainable basis. There is a concern that this may result in a reduction of staff and more information on this was requested.
- The Chair agreed at Full Council that she would ask the Committee to take part in a full investigation into the Travel Assist Service. Committee agreed this.

#### **RESOLVED**

The update was noted and members will be provided with the following:

- Information on the SENAR staffing review to be provided.

### **9. CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CULTURE**

(See documents 11 and 12 (late presentation)).

Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture; Dr Tim O'Neill, Director for Education and Skills; Alan Michell, School Admissions Operations Manager and Lisa Fraser, AD for Education and Early Years attended for this item.

The following were among the main points raised:

- There was a detailed improvement plan and now there is a two page operational plan that tells staff what they need to focus on and this can be shared with the Committee.
- In overarching terms we are performing poorly against core cities and are in the bottom quartile and Dr Tim O'Neill is happy to have a more detailed discussion on this.
- Dr Tim O'Neill cannot assure members that they are on track but he assured members they are doing all they can to be back on track and they need members support.

- There is a need to move from a traditional model of school improvement, to where the system better supports itself and this is not an easy journey and is an important piece of work.
- They are working with schools on UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme and this is very much about empowering children and young people to make informed decision and the onus is on the Council to get more schools involved.
- Protests at Anderton Park School are back and officers are working extremely hard supporting staff and the parents. The Council will return to the high court in October 2019. It is not just Birmingham that has these protests. The Cabinet Member will adapt what is being used in Nottingham and she is working with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities on developing a toolkit that can be used in schools.
- The new RSE curriculum for all schools means that there will likely be more challenges and we need to ensure we have got things in place. The Cabinet Member is happy to report back to the committee on this. Dr Tim O'Neill confirmed they are supporting the schools and parents can choose, if they wish, to educate from home or move schools. This is a sensitive area and they need to ensure they do not step on the schools and governors toes. Generic data on this can be shared with the committee.
- Admission figures: 89% got first preference for reception and just under 70% got first preference for primary admissions. Communication is absolutely key and they always encourage parents to make realistic preferences using historic data.
- A written response will be provided with regards to the additional funding of £0.500m in 2019/20 of School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant that will be held in Strategic Leadership to mitigate some of the pressures.

### **RESOLVED**

The Cabinet Member's priorities were noted and the following will be provided:

- The two page operational plan.
- Generic data on the new RSE curriculum.
- Information on the additional funding of £0.500m in 2019/20 of School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant to include what the pressures are.

## **10. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document 13).

Members discussed the Travel Assist Inquiry and it was agreed that this will take the place of the SEND item at the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 committee meeting. The intention is to broker some meetings with the SEND Service and get some face to face meetings with the parents. Also, there is a need to give the service some time to make some improvements to the service before they attend the November committee meeting.

To allow enough time for the Travel Assist item the Business Improvement item that was to be confirmed for the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 will be moved to another meeting.

If necessary an additional meeting of members will be organised before the Travel Assist Inquiry item is discussed at the committee meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

### **RESOLVED**

The work programme was noted and Members:

- Agreed that there will be a Travel Assist Inquiry, following on from the discussion at City Council and this will be an item on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 committee meeting.

## **11. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

None.

## **12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

## **13. 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.

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The meeting ended at 12.04 hours.