

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

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

**10:00 hours on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019, Committee Room 2 - Actions**

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**Present:**

Councillor Mohammed Aikhlaq (Chair)

Councillors: Debbie Clancy, Diane Donaldson, Kath Scott and Alex Yip

**Also Present:**

Councillor Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing

Councillor John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities

Suwinder Bains, Cohesion and Partnerships Manager

Andrew Christie, Chair, Children's Trust

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust

Rose Kiely, Group Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Prof Simon Pemberton, Co-Chair, Child Poverty Action Forum

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Sarah Sinclair, AD, Children and Young People Commissioning

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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 Chair declared that he is on the Board of Directors for the Leigh Academy Trust.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Shabrana Hussain and Kerry Jenkins.

#### **4. ACTION NOTES**

(See documents 1 and 2).

#### **RESOLVED:**

The action notes of the meetings held on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were confirmed.

#### **5. OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES**

(See document 3 and 4).

Andrew Christie, Chair, Children's Trust; Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust; Councillor Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing and Sarah Sinclair, AD, Children and Young People Commissioning attended for this item.

Andrew Christie declared an interest as he is the Chair of the National Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board.

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

- Following the full Ofsted inspection in December there have been inspections of the fostering service and adoption service. These were standard regulatory inspections and they have to take place because they are a Trust. Further information on these services can be shared when the inspection reports are available.
- They are in the process of assembling the action plan and a broader Trust improvement plan. It was suggested that the action plan could be discussed at the Committee's March meeting.
- Ofsted were positive about accountability and the Trust has got this right with regards to Scrutiny, in that it was not too onerous on the Trust, nor was it too light touch.
- They are expecting the next full Ofsted inspection to be in 2021.
- There is work for partners to do in order to get to the next stage and be assessed as 'good'. For example, the Council is responsible for the virtual school.
- The Council's Chief Executive has taken leadership of the partnership responsible for children.
- The Trust will roll out an early help assessment model.
- The Trust has inherited the significant investment made on improvement work from the Council, such as the social care data system.
- Ofsted were satisfied with the safeguarding of children who are home educated. The Cabinet Member suggested that the Committee may want officers to attend, so they could take a detailed look at elective home education and she was also happy to attend. However, it was acknowledged

that there was an overlap with the Learning, Culture and Physical Activity O&S Committee, as education falls within its remit.

- Councillor Clancy agreed to raise again the issues of the overlaps of the two Committees with the Deputy Leader.
- The Council is working closely so the requirements of the Ofsted inspection are picked up by Birmingham Forward Steps and they are looking at the pathway of care.
- Missing Children – there has been a shift in consistency with partners and information is known and shared. Return Home Interviews were brought back in-house a year ago and this is embedded within the front door service. They are introducing greater persistence, so more young people take up the offer of return home interviews and they can reduce the risk. This is work in progress.

**RESOLVED:**

The Committee discussed the Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Care and the action plan will be discussed at a future meeting/visit.

**6. UPDATE ON THE CHILD POVERTY ACTION FORUM**

Councillor John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities; Prof Simon Pemberton, Co-Chair, Child Poverty Action Forum and Suwinder Bains, Cohesion and Partnerships Manager attended for this item.

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

- The Forum is looking at three issues:
  - Living wage – the inclusive growth agenda is being championed by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The Commonwealth Games and HS2 provide opportunities for this agenda.
  - Universal credit – the Co-ordinating O&S Committee is undertaking an inquiry and the University of Birmingham will contribute to the evidence base for this.
  - Holiday hunger – they are awaiting the outcome of a consortium bid they have submitted. Also, through a number of undergraduate students at the university they will be building a comprehensive picture and evidence base for holiday hunger.
- Councillor Cotton is the new Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities and he will have a joined up approach with other Cabinet Members. He will also be laying down a challenge to other parts of the Council, as to how they are going to use opportunities to drive social investment.
- The Cabinet Member will investigate the best way to inform ward councillors so that effective communication travels both ways.
- It was acknowledged that child poverty is not totally within the Council's remit.
- Councillor Yip queried whether this is relative poverty as figures are based on median household income.

Members were disappointed that there were no papers for this item, especially since this had been on the Committee's work programme for some time. The Cabinet Member took on board members' concerns over the lack of a written report and he was happy to come back to a future committee meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

The update was noted.

**7. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document 5).

Councillor Yip would like a Cabinet Member to attend for the first agenda item of the March meeting.

**8. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Committee noted the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 1000 hours in Committee Room 2, The Council House.

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

None.

**10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**11. 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 11.50 hours.