

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Wednesday, 14 June 2023, Committee Rooms 3 & 4,

Council House

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Kerry Jenkins (Chair)

Councillors: Jilly Bermingham, Debbie Clancy, Adam Higgs, Des Hughes, and Jane Jones

Other Representatives: Osamugi Ogbe, Parent Governor, and Rabia Shami, Parent Governor Representative

Also Present:

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Paul Clarke, AD, Programmes, Performance, and Improvement Division

Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Young People

Tracey Murray, Improvement and Change Partner, Finance and Governance

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Richard Smith, Head of Insight, Policy, and Strategy

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Deborah Harries, Justine Lomas, Roman Catholic Diocese, and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting, and none were declared.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Noted the resolutions of the City Council meetings on the 23 May 2023 and 13 June 2023 appointing the Committee, Chair and Members to serve on the Committee for the period ending with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the City Council 2024:

- Labour (5): Cllrs: Kerry Jenkins (Chair), Jilly Bermingham, Des Hughes, Jane Jones, and Shehla Moledina.
- Conservative (2): Cllrs. Debbie Clancy and Adam Higgs.
- Liberal Democrat (1): Cllr. Debbie Harries.
- Other Representatives:
 - Church of England Diocese (1): Sarah Smith.
 - Roman Catholic Diocese(1): Justine Lomas.
 - Parent Governors (2): Osamugi Ogbe, and Rabia Shami.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Cllr. Des Hughes was elected as Deputy Chair for the purposes of substitution for the Chair if absent for the period ending with the Annual General Meeting of the City Council in 2024.

6. EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

(See document No. 1)

Noted the Terms of Reference for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. MINUTES

(See document No. 2)

RESOLVED:

The minutes for the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 May 2023 were agreed.

8. ACTION TRACKER

(See document No. 3)

The Committee discussed the outstanding actions and agreed these needed to be added to the new action tracker going forward.

RESOLVED:

The Committee reviewed and noted the actions from the previous Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the outstanding actions are to be carried forward into this year.

9. DELIVERING EFFECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE SCRUTINY

(See document No. 4)

Members discussed the different ways of working / options, adding value, and making a difference, and the main points included:

- It was important that the Committee's Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry was completed and reported to City Council in December 2023.
- There was a need to create space and be flexible so items can be added to the work programme as and when required.
- Scrutiny needs to amplify the public voice and concerns.
- A smaller group of Members could visit and / or undertake pieces of work and report their findings back to the Committee for consideration and agreement.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the development of a flexible and effective work programme for 2023/24 as developed by members of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the last municipal year 2022/23.

10. DEVELOPING THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

(See document No. 5)

Paul Clarke, AD, Programmes, Performance, and Improvement, Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Young People, Tracey Murray, Improvement and Change Partner, Finance and Governance, and Richard Smith, Head of Insight, Policy, and Strategy were in attendance for this item.

The Chair highlighted that the work of the Committee needs to take into account the Cabinet Member and City Council's priorities, drew Members' attention to the papers for this item, and provided an update on the discussion at the informal meeting held on 6 June 2023.

During the discussion, the main points included:

Information and Data

- When the work programme items have been agreed, Officers will look at aligning and providing relevant information / data that would be useful and proportionate.
- This data will assist Scrutiny in its aims to see if improvements are happening, shape policy thinking, and get a better understanding of the issues etc.

Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry

- Work on the CCE Inquiry will be the focus for the next couple of months. Evidence gathering will take place during July and August, with the report being presented at City Council on 5 December 2023.
- Cllr. Debbie Clancy and Cllr. Adam Higgs will confirm who the Conservative representative will be on the Task & Finish Group for this Inquiry.

Children and Young People's Mental Health Inquiry

- This is a joint Inquiry led by the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee. Cllr. Jilly Bermingham will remain on the Task & Finish Group and Fiona Bottrill highlighted that Cllr. Gareth Moore, from the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee is on this Task & Finish Group, and she will follow up on the membership in relation to the Education, Children and Young People O&S Committee representative.

Committee Meetings

- To allow for sufficient time for each item it was agreed that there would be two substantive items for formal committee meetings.

July Committee Meeting Items

- Home to School Transport Service / Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service to provide assurances that everything is on track for September, an update on policies and developments, and to address any concerns and issues.
- Janie Berry, City Solicitor to update Members on tribunals and delays etc., and feedback on how the role of Legal Services contributes and makes risk informed decisions (this had previously been added to the work programme under 'to be scheduled' in October 2022).

September Committee Meeting Item

Members discussed school exclusions, part-time timetables, and unsuitable school places, which had been discussed at the February 2023 committee meeting, where the Committee had proposed that officers come back in six months to provide an update on the progress of the work undertaken. During the discussion and in response to Members' queries the main points included:

- Those not in the education system, such as children and young people who were in elective home education, to be included in the item.
- Information on children that have and have not returned following the pandemic to be included in the item.
- Student attendance at school during their period (this had come from the Health and Social Care O&S Committee's Period Poverty Inquiry), to be included in the item if possible.
- The Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) could be in attendance or provide written information.
- The Head Teacher of City of Birmingham School (the Council's Pupil Referral Unit) to be invited.
- The data provided would be for attendance this year, then a subsequent report can be provided to show post September 2023.
- The Chair was open to suggestions as to the best way for this item to be addressed, taking into account the new ways of working, and this could include having a meeting followed by a visit to a school. The Chair and Deputy Chair will be meeting with the Cabinet Member and Strategic Director to discuss the best way forward.

October Committee Meetings Items

- A report back on the short breaks review if appropriate, and this will be guided by the Children's Trust nearer the time.
- The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership's (BSCP) Annual Report if appropriate, and this will be guided by the BSCP.

Future Work Programme Items

- Early years may need to be scheduled before the end of the year.
- Child Poverty.
- Regular updates on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Chair and Deputy Chair will discuss with the Strategic Director, as to how these can be incorporated, taking into account the SEND Improvement Board, and the need for a steady stream of communication on a regular basis.

Communication

The Chair highlighted the suggestion at the Co-ordinating O&S Committee for there to be some form of communication strategy for citizens, to make the work of scrutiny more accessible and on point for them.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- Noted the information set out in Appendices 1 – 3 and identified a menu of topics for the Committee to explore over the coming year.
- Confirmed, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, items for the Committee meeting in July:
 - Home to School Transport / Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service.
 - SEND Tribunals.
- Agreed the issues that the Committee will consider during September – October 2023, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.
 - September: Attendance, Exclusions, children not in formal education etc.
 - October: Update on the review of short breaks and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership's Annual report if appropriate.
- Noted that a draft work programme will be presented to the Committee meeting in July for consideration and approval.
- Noted, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Co-ordinating O&S to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.
- Members of the Task and Finish Group for the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry and the Children and Young People's Mental Health Inquiry will be followed up.

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

None.

12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

13. SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES FOR COMMITTEE MEETING AND SCRUTINY WORK

The Chair proposed that the committee meeting on 13 September 2023 was moved to 6 September 2023 due to her being on leave. The Committee agreed to this.

RESOLVED:

Noted the scheduled dates for 2023/24: 19 July 2023, 6 September 2023, 18 October 2023, 29 November 2023, 17 January 2024, 28 February 2024, 10 April 2024, and 15 May 2024

14. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

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 10.58 hours.