

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION AND VULNERABLE  
CHILDREN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
10 FEBRUARY, 2016**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EDUCATION AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10  
FEBRUARY, 2016 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 AND 4, COUNCIL  
HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

**PRESENT:** -

Councillor Susan Barnett in the Chair;

Councillors Sue Anderson, Matt Bennett, Councillor Barry Bowles, Mick Brown, Debbie Clancy, Barbara Dring, Martin Straker-Welds, Chauhdry Rashid, Valerie Seabright and Alex Yip.

Samera Ali – Parent Governor

Richard Potter – Church Representative

**IN ATTENDANCE:-**

Richard Browne - Intelligence Manager

Colin Diamond - Interim Executive Director for Education

Seamus Gaynor – Link Officer

Alistair Gibbons – Executive Director for Children’s Services

Peter Hay – Strategic Director

Councillor Brigid Jones – Cabinet Member

Louisa Nisbett – Committee Manager

Diana Reeves, Birmingham Safeguarding Children’s Board

Amanda Simcox – Scrutiny Research and Policy Officer

Benita Wishart – Overview and Scrutiny Manager

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**NOTICE OF RECORDING**

- 343 It was noted that the meeting was being webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council’s Internet site ([www.birminghamnewsroom.com](http://www.birminghamnewsroom.com)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs. The whole of the meeting would be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt items.

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**APOLOGIES**

- 344 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Uzma Ahmed and Sarah Smith for their inability to attend the meeting.

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**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Page 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence – She asked and not He asked.

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the minutes of the last meeting on 20 January, 2016, having been previously circulated be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

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**TRACKING:CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)**

The following Progress Report was submitted:-

(See document no. 1)

Alistair Gibbons presented the report. During the discussion and in response to questions the following points were made:-

1. The third quarter CSE data had been released. There had been 79 new referrals. A new Missing from Care Policy had just been launched.
2. Recommendation 9 – Since the recommendation Birmingham Children's Services were assisting licensing. A specialist post was not required.
3. Recommendation 10 – There were commission arrangements with the third sector funded from mainstream Children's Commissioning budgets and the CSP subject to normal procurement conditions. Interviews for 3 CSE Co-ordinator posts will be held in 2 weeks.
4. Recommendation 11 – The contracting arrangement was sufficient in this area.
5. Recommendation 12 – The Corporate Parenting Strategy Board had been reshaped as appropriate with better dialogue including with young people in care. All Children's Homes were inspected by Ofsted. There policy was not to place children in homes where the rating was inadequate.
6. Recommendation 13 –Police had used the new powers available and had taken out some Child Protection Orders in the last few months.
7. Samera Ali was pleased progress had been made since the report and felt it highlighted the role the community played in keeping the child safe. She suggested that the report be referred to faith forums so that all places of worship could be contacted about CSE awareness and the community learn how to recognise CSE and keep children safe. She also asked about the costs.
8. Alistair Gibbons advised that work had been done to engage places of worship. A workplan had been devised to raise awareness. There were limited resources in BSCB to do this. The Dudley website was useful and allowed concerns to be reported. A video called BAIT had been distributed to all schools.
9. Councillor Dring stated that the recommendations had been accepted by BCC and therefore should be carried out. She questioned why R10 had not taken place. Councillor Dring added that with regard to R13, Licensing could only

take action following notification from the police so this needed to be tightened up to enable action to be taken sooner.

10. With regard to R10 – Councillor Dring asked what would be reviewed.
11. Alistair Gibbons answered that it had been agreed that they would look at licensing applications from a safeguarding prospective. He was not aware that a review had been carried out. The view was that they were able to respond appropriately to requests from Licensing however this could be reconsidered. Councillor Dring did not accept that R10 had been fully achieved and asked for more information.
12. In response to questions from Councillor Bowles about the frequency of visits and children at inadequate homes, Alistair Gibbons informed that there were still 5 homes for disabled children. Homes were registered with Ofsted and visited twice a year. One visit was unannounced. Section 44 visits could be carried out at any time. The policy was not to place children in inadequate homes. Inadequate homes were required to have a plan for improvement.
13. In reply to Councillor Sue Anderson children in most homes were from different LA's. They considered the individual needs of children. They needed to be more responsive to Ofsted Inspections more quickly and have a robust system to follow this up. Since the last meeting Member training on CSE had been carried out. There was a safeguarding officer in BCC who had a relationship with schools.
14. Diana Reeves, BSCB Chair said the School Health Advisory Services Board wanted to see an emphasis on CSE and this would be driven forward through partnership working.
15. Colin Diamond reported that they had met with representatives of unregulated supplementary schools. A safety kit had been launched by SAFE. The software needed to be updated so that it could be better tracked. The training programme for safeguarding was co-ordinated by Jon Needham.
16. In reply to comments from Councillor Bennett with regard to Rec 9 and the role of the Safeguarding Board, it was reported that some new young people at risk had been identified in the last quarter. Their needs had been assessed and the information shared to achieve the best outcomes.
17. The Chairman stated as follows:-
  - Recommendation 1 – agreed as achieved
  - Recommendation 2 – agreed as achieved
  - Recommendation 3 – agreed as achieved
  - Recommendation 6 – The Chairman did not agree this had been achieved. More information could be provided.
  - Recommendation 8 – agreed as in progress

Recommendation 9 – Councillors felt that more clarity was needed. The Chairman suggested this be done outside the meeting.

Recommendation 10 – not agreed as achieved – to be discussed outside the meeting.

Recommendation 11 – agreed as achieved

Recommendation 12 – An email to be sent from Alistair Gibbons giving the date for completion.

Recommendation 13 – More clarification needed about quicker communication. Alistair will take up with W M Police and discuss with Licensing Officers.

The remaining recommendations will be tracked at a future meeting.

18. Councillor Yip asked for details on deadlines for recommendations 4 and 5.

**RESOLVED:-**

- i) That the information contained in the report be noted; and
- ii) That an update be provided in 6 months' time.

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**SCHOOL ATTAINMENT STATISTIC FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS (DETAIL)**

The following report was submitted:-

(See document no. 2)

A brief summary of the report was made followed by questions. During the discussion that ensued the following points were made:-

1. The Chairman noted that Birmingham Looked After Children had improved across all subjects. She asked what BEP was doing in particular about Gypsy Romany Children. In response the Committee was informed that the biggest issue was the inequality of the outcome overall. There were some concerns about groups in the City at risk of becoming isolated. They worked with leaders of communities to build trust with families. An enquiry could be made with BEP about their specific targets. The figures were however in line with the national picture of attainment.
2. Samera Ali noted the ongoing difference between the achievement of girls and boys and asked what could be done. Colin Diamond answered that boys and girls developed at different rates. The more formalised way of learning did not always suit boys, however there was a lot that could be done by schools with regard to different teaching methods. The Chairman felt it was good news that education could be tailored to the child.
3. Councillor Seabright welcomed the report and agreed that there were a number of issues. She felt it would be helpful to look at progress made during the year. Councillor Seabright spoke about the shortage of teachers in the City who were also less likely to be attracted to underperforming schools. Councillor Seabright

was interested in the catchment area for Washwood Heath School and the differences between boys and girls also the difference between children who had attended nursery schools to those that had not.

4. BEP had collected data and the Strategy Group meetings had also looked at the information from the 10 Districts. The majority of children attending Washwood Heath School walked to school.
5. It was difficult to recruit and retain teachers at some schools but in Birmingham overall this was okay.
6. Councillor Yip welcomed the increase in free school meals and felt it would be good to see a break down by ethnicity. He felt that Birmingham posed a specific challenge owing to the level of diversity in the City. Councillor Yip asked that attendance be built into the data as well. Richard Browne replied that performance in diverse areas was better than less diverse areas.
7. With regard to questions from Councillor Debbie Clancy about qualified teachers and actions by BEP, Colin Diamond invited her to let him know of examples.
8. Councillor Martin Straker-Welds welcomed the report and asked whether the size of the school had a bearing on the achievement of the children. He was pleased that Ofsted took into account the challenges faced by a school. Colin Diamond reported that BEP was carrying out several training sessions. Councillor Sue Anderson asked whether the District Plans could be requested from BEP so that good practice could be shared.

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

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**UNREGISTERED SCHOOLS)**

The following report was submitted:-

(See document no. 3)

Colin Diamond gave a verbal update on Unregistered Schools. During the discussion the following points were made:-

1. In 2015 Birmingham City Council drew the issue of Unregistered Schools to the attention of Ofsted and the significant risks involved. Since then they had been all inspected by Ofsted who were regulated by the Department for Education.
2. Birmingham's role was to ensure the children attending these schools were safe. Schools larger than 5 pupils were classed as an unregistered school and could apply for registration.
3. Joint visits had been made to schools. Examples of problems were - no DBS checks undertaken, poor quality of education etc. Schools had been given safeguarding advice.

4. There was now only one known unregistered school who were in the process of registering. The Chairman welcomed the support from the Leader for this issue.
5. In reply to Councillor Bowles, Colin Diamond said that they had held discussions with H M Chief Inspector regarding schools not up to standard and individuals barred from teaching working in unregistered schools. They had discussed the importance of DBS checks.
6. In answer to Councillor Bennett 19 schools had been closed in recent years. The DFE had never prosecuted a single schools but Ofsted was looking at a number of former schools. Councillor Seabright was pleased this had been taken up. The Committee was informed that there were some children that had never been on record and would be hard to track.
7. Councillor Martin Straker-Welds spoke about the lack of educational standards and minimum basic requirements for the schools.

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

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**LGA PEER REVIEW FINDING FOR THE EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS  
STRATEGY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND NEXT STEPS**

The following report was submitted:-

(See document no. 4)

Colin Diamond and Peter Hay presented the report. During the discussion that ensued the following points were made:-

1. Reference was made to the 10 recommendations on page 114. Peter Hay thanked Colin Diamond and others for their work with schools.
2. Councillor Seabright said that data was needed to monitor the improvements. She felt that there was risk that longstanding Governors could be lost to the City. Colin Diamond said that the Education Improvement Group met monthly and would look at training.
3. Councillor Martin Straker-Welds said that it would be useful if good news could be notified to Members to enable them to congratulate schools and use as an opportunity to contact them.
4. Peter Hay informed that by 2017 there will be no role for the Local Authority in the running of a school. The District Chairmen informed by data could become a critical friend to the schools.
5. Councillor Sue Anderson spoke about the difficulties faced by Councillors in linking with schools and the lack of plans in place to support and assist them. Councillor Sue Anderson continued that barriers needed to be broken down with this regard. Councillor Debbie Clancy concurred with the comments made by

Councillor Sue Anderson and added that most parents were fully engaged with the schools and could work with schools to stop problems occurring.

6. In response to the Chairman the Work Programme could be used to keep the issue on the agenda.

- 349                    **RESOLVED:-**
- i)        That the findings of the peer review be noted;
  - ii)       That a refreshed improvement plan be presented to Cabinet for approval; and
  - iii)      That it be noted that the plan will be monitored by the Cabinet Member, Children's Services and this Scrutiny Committee.

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**EDUCATION AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN O & S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

The following work programme was submitted:-

(See document no. 5)

The work programme was briefly discussed.

- Remove Councillor Sir Albert Bore and replace with Councillor Mick Brown
- An extra meeting had been arranged for Wednesday, 16 March, 2016 in Room 2.
- 2 additional items to be added to the Work Programme
  - Tracking CSE
  - Rights and participation (Voice of the Child) – Lisa Carter
- The Chairman advised that an email would be sent about either extending the meetings or arranging another additional meeting

- 350                    **RESOLVED:-**

That the Work Programme be noted.

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**DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS**

- 351                    It was noted that future meetings were agreed for the following Wednesdays at 1400 hours in the Council House:-

16 March  
23 March  
20 April

Councillor Rashid sent his apologies for the next meeting.

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

352      None were received.

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**OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

353      Councillor Rashid expressed concerns about a school in the City affected by strike action. He was informed that Senior Officers were working with the school however there were still some issues to resolve.

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**AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

354      **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 1652 hours.

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CHAIRPERSON