

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SCHOOLS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (O&S) COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

13:30 hours on Wednesday 13 September 2017, Committee Rooms 3 & 4 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Barry Bowles (Acting Chair)

Councillors: Sue Anderson, Matt Bennett, Kate Booth, Debbie Clancy, Shabrana Hussain and Mike Sharpe.

Other Voting Representatives: Evette Clarke, Parent Governor Representative and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese Representative

Also Present:

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Birmingham Children's Trust

Seamus Gaynor, Head of Strategic Management

Rose Kiely, Group Manager, Scrutiny Office

Alan Michell, Interim Operational Manager, Schools Admissions

Gail Sadler, Research & Policy Officer, Scrutiny Office

Sarah Sinclair, Interim AD (Commissioning) Children's Services

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING

The Chairman advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (which could be accessed at "www.birminghamnewsroom.com") and 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.

2. APPOINTMENT OF NEW REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr Barry Bowles (Acting Chair) noted the appointment of the new representatives, Councillor Mike Sharpe and Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative made by the City Council for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the City Council in 2018.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of:

Councillors: Susan Barnett (Chair), Julie Johnson, Chauhdry Rashid, Martin Straker Welds and Alex Yip.

Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative.

4. ACTION NOTES

Action notes of the meeting held on 12th July 2017 were confirmed.

5. CHILDREN'S TRUST

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust and Sarah Sinclair, Interim AD (Commissioning) Children's Services presented the item.

Members raised a number of issues including:

- Agency staff – currently 19% of the children's social care workforce are agency staff which is high compared to the national figure of 17%. The agency staff contracts will transfer from the City Council to the Children's Trust. The intention is to become a centre for excellence and retain and recruit permanent staff as quickly as possible.

Cllr Debbie Clancy asked that the committee be kept informed of the situation regarding staff recruitment and retention.

- VAT – reference was made to an extract from Cabinet papers that stated "Pending further progress on that the Secretary of State has agreed to meet any additional costs arising from the VAT treatment of the Birmingham Children's Trust." Reassurances were sought that the guarantee would not be for just 12 months but long term. Members were informed that there is a meeting at the end of September where a number of existing Trusts and the Department for Education would discuss various issues and that question would be high on the agenda.

The Members requested to be kept updated on the VAT position.

- Trust premises – in response to a question enquiring if there were plans to relocate from the current headquarters in Lancaster Circus in order to create its own identity, Members were advised there were no current plans, but this will be kept under review by the Trust Board.

RESOLVED:

That further reports will be presented to Committee as set out in the reporting / accountability Service Delivery Contract.

6. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL CONSULTATION

Alan Michell, Interim School Admissions Operational Manager presented the item.

Members' comments included:

- Disappointment about the number of responses received to the consultation online (Beheard). Details to be circulated to Members on how and when they consulted with School Governors.
- What are the differences between the 2014 protocol and the new one and how can you measure success? How will they demonstrate that they are making a difference? What is the current position? These issues should be addressed in the next report to be submitted to Committee.
- How was it that the Fair Access Protocol produced in 2015 did not reflect the requirements in the 2014 DfE School Admission Code in that it did not include all the groups of children that should have been included and it did not include grammar schools or 14-19 university technical colleges or the studio school? Cllr Matt Bennett suggested that the Committee write to the Cabinet Member to find out how that came to be.
- Cllr Barry Bowles raised a query about the legalities of children excluded from school and the six day challenge and implications for the City Council of failing to meet that requirement. Alan Michell agreed to refer the query to another department for a response.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

A further report to be submitted to Committee which addresses any outstanding issues raised and a clear performance framework to include headline data on the numbers of children that have been identified through the Fair Access Protocol and the timeframes by which they were put back into a suitable school.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

The work programme was noted.

8. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr Debbie Clancy, on behalf of the Committee, wanted to send best wishes to all the students of Birmingham on their GSE results and wished them well for the future.

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.

The meeting ended at 1450 hours.