

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

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

1000 hours on Wednesday, 28th October 2020, Online Meeting

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Kath Scott (Chair)

Councillors: Mohammed Aikhlaq, Barbara Dring, Kerry Jenkins, Chaudhry Rashid and Alex Yip

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

Also Present:

Councillor Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing

Darnish Amraz, Youth Worker

Becky Crampton, Youth Worker

Nichola Jones, AD, Inclusion and SEND

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

Dr Tim O'Neill, Director, Education and Skills

Ceri Saunders, Acting Group Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Soulla Yiasouma, Joint Head of Youth Service

Ilgun Yusuf, Acting AD, Skills and Employability

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) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Alex Yip declared that his sister works for National Express, who is the parent company for National Express Accessible Transport (NEAT) and he is a Governor at Wilson Stuart School.

Councillor Mohammed Aikhlaq declared an interest as a Director at Leigh Multi Academy Trust.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative.

4. ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER

(See documents 1 and 2).

Dr Tim O'Neill committed to providing Members with a written answer by the end of the week regarding reviewing the decision to not issue additional PPE to City of Birmingham School (COBS). It was queried whether there had been any communication with the schools and Dr Tim O'Neill agreed to provide the information on the communication with schools as part of the reply.

The Chair advised that Members had received written information regarding the action for 'a report on children's with SEND needs not being met in schools because of capacity and Covid'. Nichola Jones provided a brief verbal update on this and the Chair queried whether there had been any work with mainstream schools in providing the required space for children with special educational needs. Nichola Jones advised that conversations had happened with both mainstream and special schools.

Nichola Jones provided a brief update on home to school transport that included bubbles, travelling times and routes. The Chair advised that she had received a commitment from the Chief Executive, that although the outcomes from the inquiries will not be presented at Full Council next week, there will be a separate meeting, potentially on week commencing 16th November 2020, with all the relevant stakeholders and this will include the Parent Carer Forum.

RESOLVED

The action notes were agreed and the action tracker was noted.

5. SEND WSOA UPDATE

(See documents No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

CLlr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing, Dr Tim O'Neill, AD, Education and Skills, Rachel O'Connor, Assistant Chief Executive, Birmingham and Solihull CCG and Nichola Jones, AD for Inclusion and SEND were in attendance.

The Chair informed Members that included with the papers were the presentation, the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) agreed in December 2018, the WSoA Action plan that was updated in October 2020, locality working in the six areas (North West, Central, East, North, South West and South), five Parent Link Service case studies and the SEND support for families leaflet.

CLlr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing outlined that they are in attendance to discuss the progress of the WSoA in just over two years and this is very much a partnership approach, with Dr Tim O'Neill and Rachel O'Connor being jointly responsible for the programme. Examples of progress were provided and this included improvements made to the Local Offer.

Dr Tim O'Neill and Rachel O'Connor delivered a presentation and the following were among the main points raised during the discussion:

- Due to Covid the re-inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has been delayed and is now expected 2021.
- Averaging 90% completion overall, although there are areas that officers and parents and carers remain concerned about.
- Where actions are showing completed, there is still ongoing work to capture feedback and they are increasing efforts to ensure they have a good quality lessons learned approach and have enough information to assure themselves on the outcomes of those completed and ongoing actions. An example of this is the waiting times for therapies and a remedial plan is currently being developed.
- There has been significant work done regarding culture and how we do things in Birmingham.
- Dr Tim O'Neill would like to engage Scrutiny's support and challenge in the early intervention programme that is beginning in the Council and has a critical interplay with this programme.
- Independent support was brought in during the Summer with regards to the two year self-assessment and they now have quarterly self-assessments and will build in a mock inspection around March/April 2021. The dashboard combined with complaints and conversations with the Parent Carer Forum and survey etc., give a rounded perspective on how they are doing and the impact they are having on families and children.
- Actions may be showing as completed but some still need to be embedded.
- Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Information Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) was identified as an area of strength and there is currently a commission lead undertaking a piece of work in relation to capacity and reach. There should be an outcome early next year and this fully involves key partners, the CCG and Children's Trust.
- Parent Link Workers provide a signposting service as well as link families to their local advisory professional attached to the local school. In addition, the service provides a link support in relation to the statutory assessment and Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) review process.
- The critical change, similar to other local authorities, is that of the locality teams. This is where there are a group of professionals linked to a group of schools within a consortia. Each term the professionals meet with the school to discuss children where the school may want more help and support with

individual children and / or specialist resource. Through this joined up way of working the link professional develops ongoing relationships with the family and the school.

- By adopting an integrated joined up approach using teams based localities, professionals don't operate in isolation. Birmingham is made up of six localities, 16 consortia and six Parent Link Officers.
- There is still a long way to go with regards to ensuring the process for administrating and reviewing EHCPs is effective and efficient. However, clear pathways have now been developed and this includes putting in and monitoring provision. The redesigning of the service is happening and expected to go out to consultation some point later in the year for implementation in the new year.
- The targets for the therapies are the ones that received first business case approval and reflected the workforce and problems to recruit. Therefore, they absolutely want to bring down the 120 weeks target for Speech and Language Therapy (SLT). This is included in the remedial action plan.
- In response to a question regarding absence and exclusions for children with SEND, Members were informed that for children with SEND who have poor attendance, the development work of the home bridging team will support schools in supporting these children, whilst also supporting children and young people with more prolonged periods of concern. There is also an Exclusion Team and the Chair queried the relationship with regards to sharing information. Alan Michell to be invited to a future meeting to cover absence and exclusions and this is to include children with SEND and the interplay between the different teams.
- The Chair would like to see more case studies and this includes bad news stories and lessons learned about what we are doing differently. Members were informed that officers are having monthly meetings with SENDIASS and the Parent Link Officers to reflect and unpick some of the data. The Chair requested the committee be forwarded copies of the minute from the self reflecting meeting.

Cllr Kate Booth thanked the Committee for their input and support with the launch of the local offer at the end of November 2020, the locality model and the work with SENAR would be really appreciated.

Dr Tim O'Neill thanked the Committee for the support and challenge and noted it is really having an impact on the change process.

RESOLVED

The committee noted the update and requested the following:

- Scrutiny to be kept updated on the self-assessments.
- Dr Tim O'Neill will look at what the Local Offer does and doesn't say in relation to SENDIASS and the advertising of the service and report back.

- An update and overview of the commissioning piece of work in relation to capacity and reach and SENDIASS.
- An overview of the relationships and how families are benefitting from the Parent Link Service and how this links to the CCG, to ensure health services are delivered to children and the school networks and the bridging team.
- Information on the remedial action plan that is being developed regarding the waiting times for therapies. This is to include how it works and builds capacity, so the system has the confidence and expertise at all levels to support children and this is to include the health input. Rachel O'Connor confirmed she is happy to attend a future committee meeting to discuss this item with Birmingham Community Healthcare (BCHC).
- Confirmation as to whether the refreshed SEND Strategy went to Cabinet.
- Officers to check whether the completed baseline of SEND services can be shared with the Committee.
- Details on the reduction of mediations including figures, reasons and comparative data.
- Alan Michell to be invited to a meeting to cover school absence and exclusions and this is to include children with SEND and the interplay between the different teams.
- The SEND Improvement Board reports to be sent to scrutiny on a monthly basis.
- The committee to have regular updates on progress and the leadership teams / forums.
- The Chair requested the committee be forwarded copies of the minutes from the self reflecting meeting.
- Clarity on how parents and carers are elected onto the Parent Carer Forum.

6. YOUTH SERVICE

(See documents No. 9).

Ilgun Yusuf, Acting AD, Skills and Employability, Soulla Yiasouma, Joint Head of Youth Service, Darnish Amraz, Youth Worker and Becky Crampton, Youth Worker were in attendance for this item.

Introducing the report, Ilgun Yusuf provided the context and the direction of travel.

The following were among the main points raised during the discussion:

- This is an incredibly challenging time with Covid and the Directorate is well positioned to meet that challenge.
- There were a number of people who couldn't access the service. However, they were still able to reach out to a considerable number of people in a safe environment.

- There will be further work on the early help and prevention strategy and Ilgun Yusuf would like to update the Committee.
- Participation of young people in the decisions that are made about them is important and there is a piece of work where they are searching ways to involve young people in decisions before they become policy and also making policies that make a difference.
- They work with the Children's Trust and there is a piece of work that is under development where they are looking at the transitions 14-16, 16-19, 19+ and 25+ year olds. The idea is to get ahead of the curve, working with the Children's Trust so that those opportunities that become available, for example for apprenticeships there is one overall package. Also, they are looking at where there are any overlaps around services and looking to set up a skills and jobs group across the council and the Children's Trust is a part of this.
- In relation to participation they are looking at creating a forum for young people and are looking at different models and how other local authorities include their children in care to ensure it is representative.
- They have a Youth City Board and they are aware that the representation needs to be looked at to ensure the voices of all young people are heard.
- It was queried whether the Education and Skills Directorate was the best place for the Youth Service and there is a need to ensure the resources for the Youth Service is appropriate, especially as challenges have intensified because of Covid, for example mental health support.
- The income from renting the buildings is c.£40,000 per month and it has roughly evened out because of the corresponding reduction in costs and therefore they are on track to be in balance at the end of the year and this is being monitored and is under review.
- The Youth Service receives £1.8m from the Council and they raise £1.5m externally and this includes the money from renting out the buildings which is crucial to deliver the service.
- The corporate response to the Drop and Collect Service and staff resource within the Youth Service was identified and this is being monitored and there has been no impact to date on the Youth Service.
- Having a participation approach that also informs services and co-design of services they need is important.
- They are working with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to look at what post 16 providers are offering. The higher rates of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) tends to be in year 13 rather than year 11.
- They were able to access the hardship funds via the early help partnership based in localities and they have supported a lot of young people to access

support. They have also run a food bank and supported young people with activity and resource packs.

- Ilgun Yusuf sits on the Commonwealth Games Board and they are looking to put a proposal as to how young people can be involved in the Commonwealth Games.
- They need to further develop the transition to adulthood.
- They have agreed to create a Youth Hub with DWP in the Library of Birmingham.
- Employment is part but not the sole purpose of the Youth Service.
- Becky Crampton and Darnish Amraz provided Members with practical examples of their work that Members welcomed and demonstrated that Youth Workers are highly qualified, the breadth of work they do and how they help young people to make good choices.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the update and the following are to be provided:

- Update on the early help and prevention strategy and how Youth Service fits into this vision.
- What portion, if any, of the Government's Covid support money was allocated to the Youth Service.
- Timeline and plan for the Commonwealth Games proposals, including the legacy.
- The Youth Service to be invited back in the Spring and the Community Safety Partnership to be invited to the Committee (Cllr Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities).

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 10).

There was a general discussion about the future work programme and the work programme will be updated accordingly.

RESOLVED

- The committee noted the work programme.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 9th December 2020 at 1000 hours via an online meeting.

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

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Clr Aikhlaq referenced the e-mail some Members had received regarding ethnic minorities exclusions and the Chair advised that she is having conversations with the Cabinet Member, officers and the Parent Carer Forum etc.

RESOLVED

- Exclusions to be added to the work programme.

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 13.04 hours.