

# Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 1 November 2016 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced        1630  
Concluded         1810

**Present – Councillors**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	INDEPENDENT
M Pollard D Smith	Mullaney Peart Tait	Ward	Sajawal

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Joyce Simpson

Church Representative (CE)

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Stephen Pickles  
Tom Bright  
Tina Wildy

Teachers Primary Schools Representative  
Teachers Secondary School Representative  
Health Representative

Observers: Councillor Imran Khan

Apologies: Councillor Sinead Engel, Councillor Fozia Shaheen, Sidiq Ali and Claire Parr

**Councillor D Smith in the Chair**

**34. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

- (1) Councillor Dale Smith disclosed an interest in Minute 39 as he was a Trustee of Canterbury Imagination Library.
- (2) Councillor Sajawal disclosed an interest in Minute 39 as he was an employee of Barnados.
- (3) Councillor Peart disclosed an interest in Minute 39 as she worked at Tong



School.

(4) Councillor Ward disclosed an interest in Minute 39 as his wife was an Education Social Worker.

(5) All those who were School Governors disclosed an interest.

**Action: City Solicitor**

**35. MINUTES**

**Resolved-**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 be signed as a correct record.**

The Chair commended the Committee Services Officer for her comprehensive minutes.

**36. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

**37. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

No Referrals had been made to the Committee.

**38. SCHOOLS FORUM UPDATE**

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has asked for a regular update on the work of the Schools Forum. The last update was presented to the Committee on 12 October 2016. The Schools Forum had met once since on 19 October.

The Strategic Director of Children's Services submitted **Document "S"** which reported on the principal items that were considered by the Schools Forum on 19 October, which were:

- Primary and Secondary formula funding arrangements in Bradford for the 2017/18 financial year (the outcomes of our consultation).
- The consultation on proposals for funding the early years free entitlements in Bradford for the 2017/18 financial year.
- The consultation on proposals for funding High Needs provisions in Bradford for the 2017/18 financial year.
- The future position of DSG centrally managed and de-delegated funds.



It was reported that in relation to the Primary and Secondary formula funding arrangements in Bradford, further discussion was now taking place on the values of formulae factors and the value of additional contribution from the Schools Block to High Needs Block pressures.

Members were informed that The Schools Forum had approved the publication of the consultation on the approach to the funding of the early years free entitlements delivered by providers in Bradford (Nursery school, nursery classes and Private, Voluntary and Independent providers) in the 2017/18 financial year. The proposals were put forward in the context of the Government's proposals for its Early Years Funding Reform (National Funding Formula), an outline of which was provided to the Committee on 12 October. The consultation closed on 28 November 2016.

It was reported that the Authority would more closely assess the potential impact of the proposed funding reduction on our Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes, the financial sustainability of individual providers, the continuation of nursery schools in their current forms, and the sufficiency of free entitlement places.

Members were informed that dialogue was taking place with other local authorities in relation to the Funding Formula Reforms.

Members were informed that the Schools Forum had also approved the publication of the consultation on the approach to the funding of High Needs providers in the 2017/18 financial year. These proposals were put forward in the context of the announcement by Government in July 2016 of the delay in the implementation of National Funding Formula arrangements, with changes now expected to be introduced from April 2018.

An outline of the position of National Funding Formula reforms were provided to the Committee on 12 October.

It was reported that the size and continuing growth of the cost pressure within the High Needs Block was one of key issues for the Local Authority, which the Schools Forum, must manage. The High Needs Block continued to be under significant financial pressure; overspending in 2016/17 in total by £5.6m (10%), and estimated to overspend by a further £5.4m in 2017/18, against the notional DSG budget allocated by the DfE. This was largely the result of demographic stresses, which will continue for a number of years. This overspending was met currently through contributions from the Schools and Early Years Blocks within the DSG.

**Resolved-**



- (1) That Members expressed concern at the Government’s proposals for its National Funding Formulae Reform and asks officers to ensure that funding is maximised due to the district’s unique deprivation and demographic position.
- (2) That the Committee supports the dialogue taking place with other authorities in relation to the National Funding Formulae.

**Action:** Strategic Director, Children’s Services

### 39. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 all local authorities have a statutory responsibility to:

*“make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by ‘suitable education’ we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.”*

The Strategic Director Children’s Services submitted **Document “T”** which provided information on matters relating to children missing education.

It was reported that In order to fulfil its statutory duty the Education Social Worker Service had established the ‘Out of School Register’ where all known pupils missing from education were placed in one of four referral categories until they had been accessed to an appropriate education provision. This did not capture any possible ‘unknown’ children in the district, this number maybe considerable, therefore the Out of School Register will not represent the whole picture for Bradford.

Referral Categories included:

**Missing Children** – pupils who had gone missing, with their families, from Bradford Schools. The ESW (Education Social Work Service) had an established information sharing and gathering arrangements with Children’s Social Care, Health Services, Police, Housing and Welfare Benefits. Since 2011 the Service had access to the Council’s Benefits system. This had been extremely useful in tracking and tracing families.

**Not on Roll** – pupils who had been identified as living in Bradford but not on the roll of a school. These pupils were identified through a variety of sources including Health Services, Police, Children’s Social Care and Education Services.

**Removed from Roll** – Pupils who had failed to return following a period of Leave



of Absence or Extended Leave of Absence. The Pupil Registration Regulations allowed a school to remove a child from the school roll if they failed to return to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date or after 20 days of unauthorised absence and there was no good reason for the non-return.

**Other Local Authority** referrals – there was an established network of Named Persons responsible for Children Missing from Education within every LA. The ESWS via this network regularly received referrals from other LA's informing them of pupils who had or may have moved into the Bradford area.

Members were informed that from January 2017 Bradford Council's Department for Children's Services would be part of a pilot with HMRC, whereby the Council would share information of children who were missing. HMRC would cross-reference the address details the Council held of the individual family with those that they had in relation to their receipt of benefits. The first phase of this pilot was rolled out in Sheffield earlier this year, whereby over 40% of their missing family's whereabouts were located.

Members commented on a number of issues which included:

- Would be useful to have a breakdown of the age of children missing education as well as the impact on the schools budget in managing vulnerable children.
- How many days were children missing in the Missing or Not on Roll category? there were a lot more children not on roll from particular ethnic groups; was there particular difficulties in placing children in schools from different ethnic groups than other groups?
- Did the pilot of data sharing with HMRC have any data protection issues?
- As schools became academies was the Local Authority still responsible for safeguarding?
- What about children educated at home? How would the authority find information on families who did not claim benefits and whose children were educated at home?
- Was there a system in place to track eastern European families returning to their original Countries?
- Could not gather from the report how much education on average a child was missing? It would be useful to have further information in a future report which included period of time an individual was not in education.
- There were also issues to consider such as children attending special schools who no longer received transport; needed to consider children with disabilities missing education.

In response to Members questions it was reported that:

- Breakdown in age group of the children missing education could be provided; children missing education did create budget pressures for schools; there were systems in place for schools who had children with behaviour problems.
- It was a statutory duty to ensure every child had a school place; sometimes



parents choose not to send the child to the allocated school as it was not their preferred school; there was staff/support in place to support vulnerable groups.

- The process for applying for school places was undertaken online; families who needed support with their application could attend Margaret McMillan Towers; weekly drop in sessions were available to provide support to complete application forms; outreach and drop in sessions were also available.
- Safeguarding concerns superseded all data protection matters.
- The Local Authority was still responsible for safeguarding if a school became an academy; the Local Authority had a good working relationship with academies; from September 2016 legislation had changed in that all education establishments had to be responsible for safeguarding including children educated at home.
- There were still children that were not known to the Authority but the HMRC pilot would help with finding those children; the Local Authority had responsibility for the welfare of all children; the Authority was trying to find ways of identifying all children.
- The Service had bilingual officers that had links with Slovakia; some families did return to their country of origin but it was a small number approximately 12/15 a year.
- A family that did not have a school place would be advised of schools that had places but some families filled in an application for a school and then moved.
- Children with special needs that were not receiving transport were known to the Authority and were not classed as missing ; transport was an issue that was being looked at.

The Education, Employment and Skills Portfolio reported that the Authority had a responsibility for the welfare of all children but the Authority was doing all it could to try and identify children who were not known to authorities. There may well be children who had slipped through the net but it was the Authorities responsibility to look after children once they had been identified; the Council had come a long way in tracking these issues; the Authority knew a lot more about children missing from education than was known a few years ago.

#### **Resolved-**

- (1) That the report (Document "T") on matters relating to Children Missing Education be welcomed.**
- (2) That the development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Team be supported.**
- (3) That the work that is being undertaken in raising awareness of Children Missing Education among Council Wardens, the police and other Council employees be supported.**



- (4) That a report be presented to Members in March 2017 on the outcome of the HMRC Children Missing Education benefits data sharing pilot.

Action: Strategic Director, Children's Services

40. **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

The report of the Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document "U"**) presented the Committee's Work Programme 2016-17.

**Resolved –**

**That the Work Programme 2016-17 continues to be regularly reviewed during the year.**

Action: Scrutiny Lead

Chair

**Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

