

# Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 15 November 2016 at Ernest Saville Room - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced      4.35 pm  
Concluded        7.00 pm

**Present – Councillors**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
<b>D Smith</b> <b>M Pollard</b>	<b>Mullaney</b> <b>Peart</b> <b>Tait</b>	<b>Ward</b>

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Claire Parr	Church Representative (RC)
Joyce Simpson	Church Representative (CE)

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Tom Bright	Teachers Secondary School Representative
Tina Wildy	Health Representative

Observers:

Apologies: Councillor Sinead Engel, Councillor Talat Sajawal, Sidiq Ali and Gull Hussain

**Councillor D Smith in the Chair**

**41. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

The following disclosures of non pecuniary interests were made in relation to the review of Post 16 Education (Minute 44):

- (a) Councillor D Smith as a Governor of Bradford College and a Governor of Immanuel College.
- (b) Councillor Peart as she worked in a school 6<sup>th</sup> form.



- (c) Councillor Pollard as Vice Chair of Governors of a school with a 6<sup>th</sup> form.
- (d) Tom Bright as he worked in a school with a 6<sup>th</sup> form.

**42. ARRANGEMENTS BY THE COUNCIL AND IT'S PARTNERS TO TACKLE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (6 September 2016 Minute 21)**

At the meeting of the Committee held on 6 September 2016 Angela Sinfield (Keighley mother who had campaigned for a public inquiry into how grooming had been tackled in the past) asked a number of questions of the authority and the following responses from the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) were circulated at this meeting:

**(1) When did Bradford Council Staff become aware that cohorts of children were being abused?**

Bradford Council does not recognise the term cohort in this context. The Council and its partners clearly understand sign of vulnerability in children but always responds to children at risk of harm as individuals requiring individualised assessments of need and personalised responses. Bradford has had longstanding arrangements and procedures to respond to children identified as being at risk of CSE. The Children Act 1989 strengthened our arrangements for the reporting, investigation and assessment of children identified as being at risk of significant harm. In 1991, Working Together Under the Children Act was published which further cemented the duty of agencies including the Local Authority, Police, Health, Probation and other partners to protect children. These reporting arrangements have been at the forefront of identifying children in need of protection.

**(2) What did the Authority do?**

In 1995, Bradford Council provided premises and support for the Barnardos Streets and Lanes project. In 1999 the Authority, under the then nationally used terminology, established SCIP (Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution) as a subgroup of the Area Child Protection Committee. In 2005, provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 started to come into force which reframed this type of abuse as CSE and enabled the Police and Authority to work more closely together to tackle CSE. The Bradford Safeguarding Childrens Board was established in 2006 and immediately appointed a CSE Co-ordinator. The BSCB oversaw various operations, procedural developments and challenge panels culminating in the establishment of the multi-agency CSE hub in 2012. In 2013, the CSE subgroup of the BSCB produced a 7 point plan (later to become a 9 point plan) as a strategic response to CSE in the district. The CSE play "Somebody's Sister, Somebody's Daughter" was commissioned to tour all secondary schools. In 2015, monthly meeting were established with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Children's Services to provide assurances around social care practice and performance issues.

**(3) What contact was made with other Councils like Rotherham?**

Children's Social Care, BSCB, Director of Children's Services, Lead Members and others are always in contact with other Councils as part of a continuous process of learning, developing and delivering the best evidence based



practice. This has included consideration of the issues raised through the Jay report and in December 2014 BSCB agreed a 9 Point Strategic Response to CSE which replaced the previous 7 point plan.

**(4) What advice and support had been given by the Home Office to prosecute perpetrators.**

BSCB have worked closely with West Yorkshire Police who lead on investigations into alleged perpetrators and make prosecution decisions in line with advice they receive from the Crown Prosecution Service. The CPS review all the evidence for a case by applying the Code for Crown Prosecutors, a document issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions. They must be satisfied that there is enough evidence to prove any offences and that it is also in the public interest to prosecute.

#### **43. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS - ANNUAL REPORT**

The Strategic Director Children's Services submitted **Document "V"** which detailed the annual admissions to schools process, the current position with annual admissions, appeals and in year applications. The report gave an update on the progress the Admissions Team had made with a programme of change over the last 12 months and outlined changes for the forthcoming year.

It was noted that the services of the Admissions Team and Committee Secretariat, were available to all schools, including academies and free schools, through Service Level Agreements with the schools.

In response to a member question about in year mobility members were advised that this occurred in all parts of the district.

A member asked whether there was any analysis, mediation or support where an "issue with school" was identified as a reason for an in year transfer. In response it was noted that parents had a legal right to change school and that it was difficult to interrogate parents about their reasons for the move, however schools were asked not to permit moves mid term. If issues were identified parents were asked to refer them to the school and Governing Body. Any concerns identified by officers in the Admissions Team would be referred to the Deputy Director, Education, Employment and Skills to ensure that appropriate action was taken.

A question was asked whether all schools took an equal share of children under the Fair Access Protocol. In response it was noted that at present, some schools took disproportionately more than others over their planned admission numbers but this was on a voluntary basis and no schools were forced to take more pupils. It was further noted that the Fair Access Protocol was being refreshed to make it fairer and more transparent for schools and to ensure that every school was dealt with in the same way. Panels worked in partnership to provide places for young people as soon as possible while taking into consideration issues of health and safety and the implications of moving in the upper years of school.



It was noted that schools that ran their own appeals had to set up an independent appeal panel and that parents who were not satisfied with the procedure could complain to the Ombudsman or the Education Funding Agency.

With reference to on line applications for secondary schools, it was noted that recent initiatives had led to an increase in on line applications from 70% last year to 97% this year. Schools had participated in enabling parents to apply on line through primary school and had support from staff in the Admissions Team. No negative feed back had been receive from primary schools and it had allowed staff in the Admissions Team to check the applications earlier than usual.

**Resolved-**

- (1) That the current position with admissions be noted.
- (2) That the Strategic Director Children's Services be requested to strongly urge that all schools, regardless of status, are compliant with the Code of Practice regarding consultation of their admission policy every seven years and comply with the requirement to send their policy, every year to the Local Authority.
- (3) That the Strategic Director Children's Services request that all schools explore adopting the medical and social priority that the Local Authority has in its own admission policy.
- (4) That Primary schools be asked to pay particular attention to explaining the secondary school allocation process to parents and carers.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

**44. REVIEW OF POST 16 EDUCATION IN BRADFORD**

Members were reminded that this Committee at its meeting on 6 September 2016 deferred consideration of this item to a future meeting.

In accordance with the above the Strategic Director, Children's Services resubmitted **Document "K"** which reported that this was a period of significant change for post-16 education and training locally and nationally and the Council with the support, participation and cooperation of a range of key partners had led a local review of post-16 provision within the District to ensure that there was a sustainable, high quality offer that delivered the best outcomes for young people no matter where they started.

Helena Blair attended the meeting from Queens College Cambridge which was linked with Bradford schools to develop new strategies and support higher



education progression. She was researching options to help the college develop a strategy to forge stronger relationships with Bradford schools and colleges.

A discussion took place in which different views were expressed about the future of post 16 education in Bradford as follows:

- Students required support and advice to assist them in their choices during transition from GCSE's. In response it was noted the authority was working with schools and colleges on Bradford Pathways which was a key priority to ease transition post GCSE.
- Sixth form colleges were preferred by some for educational reasons and because of issues about choice.
- The authority had been encouraged by how the review had been received by schools, colleges and university. However funding would be the key. A mature debate was taking place on post 16 provision in a spirit of collaboration and there was a general acceptance that larger sixth form colleges would offer a wider range of options and enrichment programme.
- A member expressed concern that the establishment of sixth form colleges could damage the attractiveness of Bradford for secondary school teachers and questioned whether the motivation to close school sixth forms was to make available accommodation for 11 – 16 school places. In response it was stressed that financial considerations were only part of the review and that the starting point had to be meeting the needs of post 16 pupils and employers. Other factors to be considered were increasing the post 16 offer and improving standards. Officers stressed that they were not stating that school sixth forms of under 250 pupils were earmarked for closure. They would not interfere with excellence and acknowledged the A level results achieved. It was accepted that attracting high quality teachers to Bradford was an issue but there was no evidence that neighbouring authorities that had sixth form colleges found it more difficult. It was noted that secondary schools had not indicated that attracting quality teachers as an issue.
- Members emphasised the achievements in school sixth forms.
- A detailed risk assessment should be carried out on recruitment and retention of teachers before the proposals are implemented. Gifted teachers wanted to see their work across the age range.
- Young people matured at different rates and some would spend a considerable time settling in to sixth form colleges and would miss continuity of progression.
- Mixed provision was what was needed.
- Mixed provision was the way forward. Successful sixth forms and sixth form colleges would give pupils wider access to vocational and academic provision. In response it was noted that there was a need to strengthen vocational provision and provide programmes of learning for the wider economy of the district and beyond.
- Officers took on board the comments on the need for a mixed economy and inspirational teachers. In Bradford there would be 3 new post 16 free schools. Decisions on free school submissions were made by the Department for Education. The local authority was consulted but had no



control over the decisions.

- With reference to the Bradford school sixth forms with less than 250 students listed in appendix 3, members would be provided with information and analysis of the number of subjects offered, the drop out rate and qualifications achieved.
- There was a need to consider all children including those with special needs.
- The location of New College Bradford was questioned.
- A member raised the issue of transport costs for pupils with special needs and stressed that they were very vulnerable to change.
- In response to a question about who was funding the new colleges it was confirmed that funding for new free schools was through the Department for Education and although the Local Authority was asked for it's views on the proposals it was not involved in the decision making.
- It was stressed that the authority was not asking any sixth form to close but requesting schools to look at provision, given the funding arrangements. The authority was not making any judgement on any sixth form and the future of sixth forms was up to the school not the Local Authority. No assessment on the quality of teaching and learning in Bradford was being made. The authority wanted to see more mixed provision with larger providers as part of the mix. There were increased demographic pressures on 11 to 16 year old places. It was stressed that the council was not making any suggestions on the future of any sixth form but it was about widening the offer.
- Why had it been decided that sixth forms with less than 250 were not viable? The figure had been produced by school and college leaders and was recognised by the Department for Education on the efficiency of the use of finances.
- There was a need to look at the bigger picture and what this would mean for pupils over the next 20 years.

#### **Resolved-**

- (1) That the Committee note the contents of the report and express concerns about bullet points 1 and 4 of paragraph 9.1 of Document "K".**
- (2) That the Committee asks that careful consideration be given to recruitment and retention of teachers in all sectors.**
- (3) That consideration be given to the better use of the time between finishing GCSEs and starting A levels to assist with pupil's transition.**
- (4) That members of the Committee be sent information showing the outcomes and achievements of secondary schools across the district in 6<sup>th</sup> form.**
- (5) That Helena Blair (Queens College Cambridge) be requested to**



**submit a copy of her findings on expanding the opportunities for young people of the Bradford District.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

**45. UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST OFSTED ACTION PLAN**

Bradford Council's Local Authority's arrangements for school improvement were inspected by Ofsted between 15 and 19 June 2015. Following the publication of the report, in the form of a letter, on 21 August, an action plan was developed to address the issues raised in the report. The plan was submitted to Ofsted on 28 September and a response was received on 26 October. This led to some minor revisions to the final plan.

The report of the Deputy Director, Education, Employment and Skills (**Document "L"**) provided an update on the continued delivery of the action plan throughout the academic year 2015/16, and the next steps in revising the plan. Information on the post-Ofsted Action Plan was previously provided to the Children's Services O&S meeting on 12 January 2016.

In response to a request it was agreed that the key themes set out in Appendix A to Document "L" could include who was responsible for each theme.

The Deputy Director Education, Employment and Skills noted the changes to the education landscape since the Ofsted inspection and conjectured about what Ofsted would look at if the inspection had taken place now.

In response to a member question it was noted that the Regional Schools Commissioner was accountable to the Minister of Education and that Multi Academy Trust's were subject to Ofsted inspection. It was noted that there was an expectation that where academies were identified as requiring improvement the Multi Academy Trust would undertake the improvement, rather than the school receiving regional support.

**Resolved-**

**That the information provided in Document "L" be noted and that officers be thanked for the work undertaken.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

**46. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK**



## **PROGRAMME 2016/17**

### **Resolved-**

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

**ACTION: Overview & 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

