

**Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday,  
27 September 2017 at Ernest Saville Room - City Hall,  
Bradford**

Commenced 4.35 pm  
Concluded 7.05 pm

**Present – Councillors**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT
M Pollard D Smith	Mullaney Peart Shaheen Tait Thirkill	Ward

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Sidiq Ali  
Claire Parr  
Joyce Simpson

Parent Governor Representative  
Church Representative (RC)  
Church Representative (CE)

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Kerr Kennedy

Voluntary Sector Representative

Observer: Councillor V Slater

Apologies: Councillor Talat Sajawal, Tom Bright, Irene Doherty and Gull Hussain

**Councillor D Smith in the Chair**

**10. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

- (a) In the interests of transparency Sidiq Ali Parent Governor Rep. disclosed an interest in the items relating to Young Carers (Minute 13) and Progress of the Fostering Service (Minute 14) as a freelance social worker who had worked in varying freelance roles for Bradford Council since 2007. He also disclosed that he was a Director of the Beckfoot Trust.

(b) All members who were school Governors disclosed an interest.

## 11. MINUTES

**Resolved –**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2017 be signed as a correct record (previously circulated).**

ACTION: City Solicitor

## 12. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

## 13. YOUNG CARERS

The report of the Director of Children's Services (**Document "E"**) provided an annual update on plans to meet the needs of Young Carers, within the Bradford District, following the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding 2010, refreshed in Feb 2014, and previous annual reports presented.

A number of young carers attended the meeting and shared with the Committee their experiences and how they engaged with the service.

Reference was made to the work that had been undertaken to raise the awareness among GPs of the necessity for early identification of young carers. It was noted that the number of referrals from GPs had remained disappointingly low. A member suggested that this issue could be raised with patient participation groups. The Strategic Director suggested that he work with GPs to develop methods of identifying and referring young carers.

A member highlighted that the Care Act and the Children and Young Person's Act placed responsibility on Local Authorities to support young carers without giving the authorities power to carry this out.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the young carers be thanked and complimented on their contribution at the meeting.**
- (2) That the Strategic Director Children's Services be requested to work with GPs and develop methods of identifying and referring young carers and report back to the Committee in six months.**
- (3) That the governor's service be requested to invite Barnados Young**



**Carers Group to make a presentation to one of their Governors Forums.**

- (4) That the Chair of the Committee write to the Secretary of State highlighting the Committee's concerns regarding the fact that the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 put responsibility on the Local authority to support young carers but do not assign any powers to carry out this duty, a copy of the letter to be sent to the District's MPs.**

ACTION: Director of Children's Services

#### **14. PROGRESS OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE**

The Director of Children's Services presented a report (**Document "F"**) that provided an update on the progress of the fostering service noting the positive direction of travel. He highlighted the improved relationship between the authority and foster carers since the beginning of the year. Support to foster carer had improved. Recruitment had improved with 49 new foster households since April 2017.

It was noted that only one foster carer had resigned as a result of the changes to fees and allowances and they had moved to an agency so the child had remained in the placement. There was a national move out of the foster service as foster carers got older but no sharp increase was being observed. There had been a significant increase in the number of enquiries of 37% over the same period in the previous year.

In response to a member question about the rate of conversion from enquires to registration being significantly below the national average it was noted that this was being addressed.

A co-opted member noted that 31 of the 39 new fostering households that had been approved since April 2017 were connected persons and only 5 were new mainstream carers, however it was pointed out that a number of connected persons did go on to become mainstream carers.

In response to a member question, the Strategic Director advised that 302 Social Guardianship households were being supported. He pointed out however, that as these were private orders there were children with Special Guardianship Orders with whom the Council had no involvement. He added that 50 cases were being looked at that may break down and the child may have to come back into the care system. He added that a lot of work was being undertaken to ensure that the orders did not break down. He stated that changes to the allowances would not be a barrier to Connected Persons becoming Special Guardians for financial reasons.



In response to a member question about the ethnicity of foster carers it was reported that 79% were white, 15 % Asian, 3% black and 3% mixed heritage. The number of Asian children in foster care was lower than the general population and the number of Eastern European children was higher than the general population. The Council was working with the Mercy Mission Charity to assist in sorting through enquires which it was anticipated could help to increase the number of Asian heritage Foster Carers.

It was reported that the Fostering Carter and Handbook launch on 14 September 2017 had been attended by 70 foster carers and had been a very positive event with a number of stalls including BAFFA, GNB and Foster Care Associates.

In response to a member question it was reported that 83% of Foster Carers were up to date with their annual review. 50 foster Carers had not had a review, 11 of whom were not actively fostering which meant that 86% of active foster carers were up to date with their annual review.

**Resolved -**

**That the improvement in enrolment and training of foster carers be welcomed and that an update be presented to the Committee in six months.**

ACTION: Director of Children's Services

## 15. SCHOOLS FORUM UPDATE

The Director of Children's Services presented an update on the work of the Schools Forum (**Document "G"**). The last update was presented to the Committee on 11 April 2017. The Schools Forum has met twice since on 5 July and 20 September 2017. The decisions lists from these meetings were attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Members were advised that since the report was written a detained announcement had been made by the Secretary of State on 14 September on the National Funding Formula. The main elements of the announcement were summarised as follows:

- The Local authority will continue to have responsibility over primary and secondary finance for the next two financial years
- There will be more money going into the system
- There will be pressures on the high needs block over the next five years
- There is no suggestion of a change in direction of travel to the early years National Funding Formula

Work was being undertaken with the Schools Forum and partners regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2018-19. The key decisions to be made were:

- Whether to move root and branch to the new funding formula
- At what point to set the protection for schools that lose out on funding



arrangements. 85% of the primary sector would be on minimum finding criteria for next year

- The extent to which to cap schools that gain under the National Funding Formula
- The extent to which to set the minimum amount of pupil led funding
- How pressures in the high needs block are managed and that budget is balanced.

Reference was made to the change in emphasis between using deprivation factors and prior attainment as a means of assessing need. It was noted that there was more fluctuation when using prior attainment rather than the receipt of free school meals. Prior attainment was a good proxy measure to get money into schools but it was pointed out that it created a perverse incentive regarding Key Stage 1 SATs, there was a level of turbulence in the measure and it was cyclical.

**Resolved –**

**That the information provided in Document “G” be noted.**

ACTION: Director of Children’s Services

**16. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18**

The report of the Chair of Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “H”**) presented the Committee’s Work Programme 2017-18.

**Resolved -**

**That the Work Programme continue to be regularly reviewed during the year.**

ACTION: Overview and 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

