

## Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 3 July 2019 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.35 pm  
Concluded 6.35 pm

### Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Engel Arshad Hussain Mullaney Choudhry	Gibbons K Green	Humphreys

### VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Claire Parr  
Joyce Simpson

Church Representative (RC)  
Church Representative (CE)

### NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Kerr Kennedy  
Tom Bright

Voluntary Sector Representative  
Teachers Secondary School Representative

Observers: Councillor Adrian Farley (Children and Families Portfolio Holder)  
and Councillor M Pollard

Apologies: Councillor Talat Sajawal and Shain Wells

### Councillor Gibbons in the Chair

#### 1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

- (1) Councillor Engel disclosed an interest in the item relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability Reforms (Minute 8) as her child was on the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) waiting list.
- (2) Claire Parr disclosed an interest in the item relating to Update following OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services (Minute 7) as her daughter was a Social Worker.
- (3) Councillor Humphreys disclosed an interest in the item relating to special Educational Needs and Disability Reforms (Minute 8) as her son had an

Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

ACTION: City Solicitor

**2. MINUTES**

**Resolved –**

**That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 February, 20 March and 10 April 2019 be signed as a correct record.**

ACTION: City Solicitor

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

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

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

The following referral had been made to this Committee:

*Corporate Parenting Panel on 15 April 2019*

*Resolved -*

*That the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the outcome of the recent Care Quality Commission inspection in relation to CAMHS provision.*

**Resolved –**

**That the outcome of the recent Care Quality Commission inspection in relation to CAMHS provision be added to the work programme.**

ACTION: Scrutiny Lead

**5. APPOINTMENT OF NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

**Resolved -**

**That the appointment of the following non-voting co-opted representatives for the 2019/2020 municipal year be recommended to Council :**

**NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:**

**Teachers Secondary School Representative: Tom Bright  
Voluntary Sector Representative: Kerr Kennedy**

ACTION: City Solicitor

**6. APPOINTMENT OF VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

**Resolved -**

**That the appointment of the following voting co-opted representatives for the 2019/2020 municipal year be recommended to Council :**

**Katherine Haskett – Parent Governor Representative from 16 July 2019**

**Fauzia Raza - Parent Governor Representative from 3 September 2019**

ACTION: City Solicitor

**7. PROGRESS UPDATE FOLLOWING THE OFSTED INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILACS) - IMPROVING MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Strategic Director Children's Services presented a report (**Document "A"**) that provided the Committee with a progress update in respect of improvements identified within the Improvement Plan following the Ofsted inspection of September 2018 and the subsequent Department for Education (DfE) notice to improve issued in December 2018.

More specifically the report focused on the actions underway in improving management oversight and quality assurance through this work stream of the Improvement Board.

The newly appointed Strategic Director of Children's Services noted that the authority was keen to learn from best practice across the country. He added that there was a lot of work to do but that formal plans were in place to make progress. He accepted that there were still challenges and that the authority was working to direct activity in the right places.

The Chair of the Improvement Board attended the meeting and explained that following the Ofsted judgement that Children's Social Care services were inadequate the Government had decided not to appoint a Commissioner as it considered that Bradford had the capacity to self improve. As Chair of the Improvement Board he had been tasked with reporting to the Department for Education to assure it that the Council was doing what was needed to improve and prepare for an inspection of good or better. He added that the Committee should get to a position where it was able to scrutinise the service and make a judgement for itself regardless of what officers told it. He referred to the "vital signs" report which contained 200 performance indicators of which there was a short version. It was being considered by the Improvement Board to identify how to know if things were going wrong. The report would start to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He described it as an early warning system that could be imbedded in the Overview and Scrutiny's business. He explained that the Improvement Board had identified 8 to 10 areas of development and the Board was overseeing areas of work. At the point when these were good or better the Board would like to transfer them to a statutory body such as the Corporate Parenting Panel, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Community Safety Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with a recommendation that they be seen at a regular interval. He suggested that the Chairs of the statutory Committees would have to agree that these areas of work

were reported to them on a regular basis. However, he pointed out that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could call anything in. He confirmed that the transfer would not happen until the Improvement Board had agreed to it and he noted that the Chair of this Committee was a member of the Improvement Board.

The Chair welcomed the input from the Chair of the Improvement Board and was appreciative of the extra work undertaken by a significant number of people.

When asked whether he was satisfied with the pathway to improvement the Chair of the Improvement Board confirmed that Bradford had built the infrastructure for improvement but that the improvement had not yet been made, but that building the structure was vital to maintain improvement.

The following responses were given by the Strategic Director of Children's Services to member questions and comments were made:

- Bradford was not ready to be re inspected and needed to move with some pace, within the framework set.
- In the next 18 months all the regulatory services would be inspected such as children's homes and fostering. The biggest challenge would be making sure that the basic quality of social work was good or better. Work was on going to address this and the framework was in place.
- The timescale for the review of how best to deploy targeted performance information to individual managers was on going and would be completed in weeks.
- The recruitment of qualified social workers was a challenge, part of which was making Bradford a good place to work. Additional recruitment of social workers had taken place but it was still a challenge.
- The detail of how much case work was being graded good or better would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.
- A Co-opted member expressed concern about the amount of Time Off in Lieu social workers were carrying and noted that in some cases it was as high as 100 hours.
- Following the Ofsted inspection the Council had invested in new social worker posts, some of which had come on stream. Social workers were under increased pressure due to increased demand. This could not be solved by the Council alone and needed the support of partners such as health and the police. Work loads were higher than desired, but one of Bradford's biggest assets was its front line workers who were committed to Bradford and to getting it right.
- Members agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needed to see the "vital signs" report regularly and in a timely manner and a request was made that they receive it in September. The Chair of the Improvement Board confirmed that at the Chair's discretion the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could receive the "vital signs" report and

confirmed that the Department for Education would be pleased that the Committee had asked for this early. He wanted the Committee to be comfortable that it understood enough of what was happening in Children's Social Care without officer input. He had produced a document on his suggestions of how the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could be involved in the process that he had sent it to the Children and Families Portfolio Holder.

- A Co-opted member commented that staff in schools should be regarded as key partners in the process and that soundings should be taken from them. She noted that in monitoring what goes on in schools Ofsted encouraged the use of evidence from officers together with using one's own eyes. She suggested consideration be given to how members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee use their own eyes and have some hands on engagement with the work.
- Officers were aware of the difficulty in championing the voice of the child and noted that additional advocacy had been commissioned for children to have their voices heard. The use of social media was being explored as an on going piece of work.
- The additional investment in social worker posts had been used to recruit quickly by using agency staff. This had led to some children having more than one social worker which was not desirable. However it was noted that the most stable teams were the long term teams and the majority of the changes had been in respect of children coming into the service.
- The Chair of the Improvement Board noted that the focus group of front line staff was very committed to Bradford. They had reported a number of small issues that could be resolved. Staff had too high a workload and a short term fix had been put in place with the use of agency staff.

The Chair thanked the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Interim Deputy Director of Social Care for their work.

The Strategic Director noted that the letter following the second focussed Ofsted visit would be published on Thursday 4 July and that it would include some positive but also some challenging messages.

**Resolved -**

**That the contents of Document "A" be noted.**

## **8. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY REFORMS**

The report of the Strategic Director Children's Services (**Document "B"**) provided an update on the developments and progress in respect of the delivery of the SEND reforms. This report was an update to the report presented to the Committee on 13 February 2019. It updated the risk profile and impact of the work undertaken and provided and supports the updated SEND Action Plan.

The Deputy Director of Education reported that compliance rates within the

statutory 20 week period for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) had improved but it was still not good enough. She added that the targeted assessment team had significantly reduced the backlog allowing staff to concentrate on new cases coming in. All of the 3,800 cases had been allocated to case workers and the teams were now aligned with schools. She summarised the progress to date and the areas of risk as detailed in the report.

In response to a question from the Chair she expressed confidence that the issue of the department being spread over two floors would be resolved.

The Chair asked about progress in establishing a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Health and was advised that there had been a number of issues such as information governance between health and the Council but confidence was expressed that it should be in place by September 2019 and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be kept up to date on progress.

Responses were given to member questions and member comments were made as follows:

- Staff had been positive about the restructuring that would increase capacity and reduce workloads which had been welcomed by staff. Consideration was being given to changing ways of working, some staff would require training and this had been welcomed. It was accepted that there had been some anxiety because of the changes.
- Personal budgets were a mandatory requirement. Increasingly families felt the need to have more choice and to make decisions on how to meet their child's needs. It was noted that there had not been a significant closure of respite provision nationally as a consequence to the use of personal budgets.
- A member referred to an example of a child moving to secondary school where there had been a delay in their EHCP and they had been allocated a school which was a long way from their home. She added that the quality of school SENCO's varied from school to school. She was extremely concerned that the waiting time for auditory appointments was 6 months and for an ADHD assessment it was 18 months. In response the Deputy Director of Education reported that an SEN matrix of need had been launched on Bradford Schools on line and the Local Offer website. All SENCO's and head teachers had been invited to learn how to use the matrix to understand and meet the needs of children with SEND with or without an EHCP and to make their responsibilities and duties clear. Over 65% of schools had attended two sessions and further training would take place in September. A log of those schools that had attended would be kept and a rolling programme of training would continue. Reference was also made to the Specialist Advisory Service that provided a fresh pair of eyes and could give advice on small changes that could make a difference.
- In response to a member question whether Tracks in Shipley was to close it was noted that Tracks was for children who were medically unable to attend school and comprised of 3 PRU's, the hospital schools at BRI and Airedale hospital and Tracks in Shipley. Officers were looking at working

with staff to allow them to operate not as schools. It was confirmed that the main Tracks in Shipley was not closing.

- It was noted that traditionally children with EHCP's had three options, they could stay in school, go to a special school or go out of the district. It was being proposed that provision would be made in mainstream schools in a specialist environment and that 354 additional places being created in the district. Special School provision was also being increased. Consultation had taken place with families in early April and Statutory Notices had been published in May. A lot of responses had been received which had overwhelmingly been positive.
- With reference to a member question on guidance to families regarding the use of personal budgets it was noted that how this was put into practice in Adult Services was being looked at. There was a need to work with providers on what could be offered.
- It was noted that the district historically had a low number of children identified with SEND and that there had been increase in the number of children with SEND so there would be additional demand for the 354 places.
- With reference to the imminent SEND inspection it was noted that the authority was in a challenging situation, that progress was being made but that the progress needed to increase. The authority was at the start of a journey but it should be further along from the reforms in 2014. Health partners reiterated their commitment to work together with CCG's and providers to improve SEND provision. It was noted that early help and prevention had reduced funding since 2016 and that referrals to CAMHS had increased.

The Deputy Director of Education stressed that the Local Authority and CCG's should be held to account and not let mediocre be acceptable. It was added that partnership working was the key to moving forward.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the contents of Document "B" be noted.**
- (2) That the Committee requests a briefing note giving an update on progress to establish the single point of contact (SPOC) and the co-location of all the SEND teams within six weeks, and a verbal update at the next Committee meeting on 4 September 2019.**

**ACTION:** Strategic Director Children's Services

**9. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20**

The following changes were made to the work programme:

- Post 16 be added to 9 October.
- Provisional Educational Standards Secondary Schools be added to the work programme.
- The “vital signs” report be included at the same time as the Improvement Plan updates.
- At the request of the Corporate Parenting Panel 15 April 2019 the outcome of the recent Care Quality Commission Inspection in relation to CAMHS be added to the work programme.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Committee agrees the Work Programme**
- (2) That the Work programme 2019-20 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