

Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 29 January 2020 at 4.30 pm in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.30pm
Concluded 7.05 pm

Present – Councillors

Engel S Khan	Gibbons Pollard	Ward
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Councillor Gibbons in the Chair

Apologies: Claire Parr Church Representative (RC)

37. **ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)**

There were no alternate members.

38. **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

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

There were no appeals submitted to review decisions to restrict documents.

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

There were no referral to the Committee.

41. **PROTECTING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS AT RISK OF EXPLOITATION**

The Manager of Bradford Safeguarding Board submitted (**Document P**), which provided an update and built on the report presented to the Committee on 10 October 2018, regarding the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The report now focused on the strategic response to all forms of exploitation in Children and Adults and how partners from the Working Together to Safeguard Children – the Bradford Partnership and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board work to drive improvements across the District and to hold agencies to account for their work in their area.

The report also outlined the emergence of other complex safeguarding themes and outlined how partners were effectively collaborating and focusing upon the protection of vulnerable Children and Adults.

Members sought clarification from officers about the support that was being received by partnership organisations, toward tackling all exploitation.

In response, officers stated that there was good partnership work taking place with health and the Police to support young people and prevent CSE. Further work was also being undertaken in reviewing the children who had committed crime at 14/15 years old, to establish if they had actually been victims of exploitation.

Members were also keen to explore the engagement and interaction with the Police, in relation to protecting children and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation.

In response, officers indicated that there was a very good working relationship with the Police, particularly keeping an overview of children who had committed a crime at 14 or 15 years old; to establish if they were also victims of exploitation. Moreover, officers also informed members that an event had taken place recently with key partner organisations to take forward the work being undertaken by partners in relation to exploitation. The focus of the event also included sharing knowledge and best practice and raising awareness of exploitation amongst communities.

Members highlighted their concerns that as this was a complex area, they wanted assurance that Bradford Council and its partner organisations were actually addressing the right issues. Members were also seeking confidence from officers that they were working together with key partners around exploitation and protecting children.

Officers replied by acknowledging that this was a huge and complex agenda, but they were working with key partners and also communities, to tackle this complex issue.

An area that members were seeking greater clarification on was why there had been such a rapid increase in parents choosing Elective Home Education, (EHE).

In response officers indicated that they preferred it if they knew when children were in EHE, so that it would enable them to know where children were and more importantly to be aware of, families that were choosing to register their children. Furthermore, officers also indicated that this would also allow them to send their staff to visit the children who are in EHE, thus building a relationship and partnership with the family. Also, any concerns with the child's education could also be addressed.

Members were in agreement that they wanted to explore further the outcomes from the Pilot Projects along with funding opportunities that existed from Government funding streams, to ensure that the correct areas were being addressed and that service provision in this key area was not being adversely affected.

Resolved –

- (1) That a further update on progress be presented in 12 months, with a focus on the outcomes from the Pilot Projects.**
- (2) That Officers be requested to further explore funding opportunities from Government funding streams to enable service provision in this area to continue and to report back on progress to the Committee.**
- (3) That this Committee requests that a report on the long term sustainability of commissioned services by the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups, for protecting children and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation, be presented to members in the new Financial Year.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

42. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY REFORMS

The report of the Strategic Director, Children's Services (**Document R**), provided an overview to members in relation to the developments and progress made against the delivery of the Special Educational Needs Reforms, (SEND) and the current risks and areas for development pending the imminent SEND Local Area Inspection.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) statutory guidance, the local authority, health services, early year's settings, schools and further education providers had statutory duties to identify and meet the needs of Children and Young People aged 0 to 25 years who had Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

Members learned that progress had been made in this area since January 2019, however members were concerned at the number of areas still requiring considerable improvement.

In response officers highlighted that an Action Plan had been produced and it identified the work that needed to be undertaken to address the SEND Reforms. Furthermore, officers also stated that Bradford Council had been slow in adopting the SEND Reforms.

Members were keen to explore how reflective the SEND Ambassadors were of the communities across the Bradford district. Officers replied by saying that, there were seven adults who were SEND Ambassadors and they all had differing needs.

Furthermore, members wanted to know more about personal budgets in Education. Officers informed members that teachers would have to agree with a family the purpose and use of a personal budget. This would also involve the delivery of support in a school, where the school would commission an external provider to come into the school and supplement the school curriculum.

The need to have a personal budget would be highlighted through an assessment and the Headteacher would have the right to accept or reject the request. The Local Authority would have to comply with the decision.

In addition. Members of the Committee were concerned about the waiting list for Autism Spectrum Disorder, (ASD) assessments and wanted to know what approaches were being developed to reduce waiting lists.

Officers responded by indicating that they would be looking into this further and that they had been informed by the Clinical Commissioning Group that there was a plan aimed at reducing waiting times for ASD and this would be considered at the next Partnership Board meeting. Officers also highlighted that the reason for the long waiting lists was that the number of children coming through, was exceeding the number of children being able to be assessed.

Members stressed that any plan would need to have clear timescales, which could also demonstrate a reduction in waiting times.

Resolved –

That this Committee requests that a report on the progress against the SEND Action Plan be presented in 6 month, which also specifically focuses on areas of risk and the approaches being used to address them.

ACTION – Strategic Director of Children’s Services

43. POST 16 PROVISION UPDATE

The report of the Strategic Director, Children’s Services (**Document “R”**) provided the Committee with an update on post-16 provision in the District and also with progress against the implementation of the post-16 review and the impact on participation and outcomes.

Members were advised that the Council with support, participation and cooperation of a range of key partners led a local review of post-16 provision within the District. This was to ensure that there was a sustainable, high quality offer that delivered the best outcomes for our young people, no matter where they started.

The report also provided an update to members in relation to the progress with the implementation of the agreed approach and the latest post-16 participation, performance and progression data.

Councillors sought clarification as to how many of the young people had been able to access education for reasons other than obtaining good grades through education attainment.

In response officers stated that different establishments maintained different entry requirements.

Furthermore in relation to members questions, officers were unable to say how many of young people aged between 16-18 had joined the armed forces.

There was also discussion and agreement amongst Councillors that the Work Force Development Plan for Young People should be presented to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members expressed concern that more should be done for young people aged between 16-18 providing opportunities for them for instance to take-up apprenticeships from young people. This was particularly important as Bradford district had the highest number of young people, the "youngest city".

Members were also keen to explore further the plans and approaches that were in place to improve level 2 and level 3 educational attainment by the age of 19.

Resolved –

(1) That a further progress report be presented which also focuses on:

- **The effectiveness of the approaches being used to encourage Young People to take up apprenticeships, on a ward-by-ward basis.**
- **A breakdown of employment figures across the District;**
- **The plan to improve level 2 and 3 attainment by the age of 19, across all phases of Education.**

(2) That the District Workforce Development Plan be presented to this Committee, specifically focusing on Young People.

(3) That a report be presented to this Committee which sets out how Bradford Council engages with Businesses and Professionals, in becoming role models and mentors for Young Children in the District.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

44. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The report of the Chair of the Committee (**Document "S"**), included the Children's Service's Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2019/20.

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead Presented the work programme for the Committee.

There was discussion amongst members about the key areas of work that should be considered by the Committee.

Resolved –

That the work programme continue to be kept under review.

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.

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER