

Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 2 December 2020 at 4.30 pm in Virtual remote meeting

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 7.30 pm

Present – Councillors

| LABOUR | CONSERVATIVE | LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP | BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Choudhry Humphreys Arshad Hussain S Khan | Winnard Pollard | Ward | Sajawal |

Councillor Winnard in the Chair

84. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

None.

85. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

86. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

No requests were received to remove the restriction on a report or background paper.

87. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No referrals were received.

89. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The purpose of this report was to provide Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee members, with a progress update on the elements of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

Officers provided member's with an update against some elements of the improvement plan.

In response to Councillors, officers indicated that Practice Supervisors would also now be undertaking case work.

Members were concerned about the use of agency staff to support the work of Social Care Workers and the impacts of this with regards to cost and staff morale.

In response, Officers stated that Agency staff did a good job and without them, the case loads would be much higher. However, Officers also indicated that the biggest issue with the use of agency staff was the level of stability and quality.

Members also highlighted the need to make these reports more concise and requested to see the numbers of agency staff being employed each month.

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee members were not content and were concerned that Children's Services were looking to undertake improvements that should really already be a part of a professional service and that as the service was now two years on from the OFSTED report, that these improvements should have been undertaken much earlier.

Members highlighted that Leeds Council has a reputation for outstanding practice and therefore, were keen to explore what best practice was.

In response officers stated that there was a National Programme called, "Partners in Practice", that Bradford Council was part of. Bradford Council agreed with a North Yorkshire authority to undertake a "deep dive", into Fostering. However this had been put on hold, due to the COVID19 pandemic.

Resolved-

- (1) That Stuart Smith, (Chair of the Children's Services Improvement Board) and representative(s) of the Clinical Commissioning Groups be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee to update Members on the progress being made.**
- (2) That a report on the Social Care Establishment be submitted to this Committee in February 2021.**

Action: Director of Children's Services

(Irfan Alam – 01274 432904)

90. EDUCATION COVID RECOVERY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The report provided members with an update on the work that forms part of the Education Covid Recovery Improvement Programme. It updates the status of work to date along with the approach to be taken for further development.

Officers from Bradford Councils Children's Services informed members that during the period of school closure from 23 March 2020 to September 2020, schools were required to ensure that learning opportunities were provided for all children on their roll. Members heard that this was done in a number of different ways and almost all schools were successful in engaging with the majority of their learners.

Members were keen to understand the background to the Education Therapeutic Officers.

In response, officers from Children's Services indicated that the Education Therapeutic Officers did not need to be qualified teachers, but needed to have an educational background and would be able to undertake individual and group work.

Members also wanted to know if the right children received devices for home learning.

Officers stated that they did not have this information, but were working with Bradford Councils Innovation Team; to establish this.

Members explored the Tuition Programme with Bradford University and were keen to ascertain what measures of performance were in place.

Here, officers highlighted that measures of performance were in place, with there also being a mentor appointed for each child and with regular six weekly meetings taking place to establish performance of the programme.

Furthermore, in response to members request regarding what the key outcomes were of the Education COVID Recovery Improvement Programme,

Officers stated that the recovery plan identified and supported families and worked with schools to highlight which child is at risk of not achieving or not thriving in the current COVID19 pandemic. This was the philosophy of the programme.

Resolved-

- (1) That all future reports should also include outcomes achieved from the actions delivered as part of the Action Plan.**
- (2) That the outcomes from the 2020 A Level and GCSE Assessments be shared with members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- (3) That the Raising Attainment Strategy to be presented to this Committee in the New Year.**

Action: Director of Children's Services

(Mariam Haque – 01274 431078)

91. UPDATE ON THE EARLY HELP AND PREVENTION SERVICE

The report provided an updated on the implementation of Family Hubs and the effectiveness of the Early Help and Prevention Service from 4 September 2019.

Officers explained to Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee members the local offer to families within each locality and that professionals from a number of statutory, voluntary and community based organisations collaborated to ensure that there was joined up working and locally responsive offer to support all families, children and young people in their locality.

Members were keen to explore, the criteria used to identify families, the differences that had been made as a result of the work of the early help co-ordinators and what the key targets and performance measures were.

In response, officers indicated to Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee members, that as the current Prevention and Early Help service had only gone live in January 2020; it was too early to cover these areas.

Members agreed that this would then be the focus on a further report relating to this area.

Resolved-

That the next report to this Committee should include targets and measures of performance, which demonstrate the effectiveness of the Family Hubs, as well as qualitative measures.

Action: Director of Children's Services

(Lisa Brett – 01274 431610)

92. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Overview & Scrutiny Lead went through the work programme for the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as well as the programme of detailed Scrutiny Review that the Committee has agreed to undertake.

Members agreed that the frequency at which the OFSTED Improvement Plan, along with the provision of education being provided during the COVID19 pandemic, be considered by the Committee should be reviewed.

Moreover, Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee members also agreed that the work programme should now also start to focus on other key areas of work within Children's Services and that the Alternative School Provision Scrutiny Review should be re-convened, as it was an area that was continuously being highlighted during members discussions.

Resolved-

- (1) That in light of the increased numbers of children being educated at home due to the COVID19 pandemic, members agreed to re-convene the Alternative School Provision, (including home education) Scrutiny Review.**
- (2) That in relation to the Children's Services Improvement Programme, members agreed that the Committee should focus on the services being delivered and that future reports should concentrate on the areas of greatest risk including all those requiring improvement (red areas) and that the Vital Signs report be considered every time the Improvement Plan is considered, to enable Members to scrutinise the progress being made.**
- (3) That Members also agreed to consider in more detail the workforce element of the Improvement Plan, with possibly having discussions with Children's Social Care Staff.**

Action: Director of Children's Services

(Mustansir Butt – 01274 432574)

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