

Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 18 October 2023 at 4.30 pm in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.34 pm
Concluded 6.27 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Fricker Mohammed Regan Thirkill Zaman	Davies Pollard	Sunderland	Sajawal

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Joyce Simpson - Church Representative
Shifa Simab – Parent Governor Representative

Councillor Davies in the Chair

19. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

20. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meetings held on 12 July 2023 be signed as a correct record.

21. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

22. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

23. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES PLAN

The Strategic Director of Children's Services presented a report (**Document "D"**) which provided an update on the **Children and Young People's Plan**.

The Strategic Manager from Children's Services reported that the Children and Young People's Strategy was previously considered by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 March 2023 and the Committee made recommendations which included a follow up report.

The Strategic Manager from Children's Services informed members that the Strategy supports the collective district ambition to ensure all babies, children and young people had equality of access to the resources and support available to help them reach their full potential. The Strategy covered people ages 0-25 years old and all public sector, voluntary and community organisations that supported and worked with babies, children, young people, and their families in the Bradford District.

It was clarified that this was a Strategy for Children and Young People and not a Plan as mentioned in the earlier report. There were plans for implementation on each area, where some plans were working well while others were slow in progress, however, the work stream was regularly monitored by the Children and Young People Board and the Wellbeing Board.

It was reported by the Strategic Manager from Children's Services that all local authorities were required to have a Children and Young People's Plan under the Children and Young People's Plan (England) Regulations 2005. The Children and Young People's Strategy was intended to both fulfil the Council's legal duty to have a plan and to provide an overall strategy for the district. This was the reason why the document was a Strategy rather than a Plan.

The Strategic Manager from Children's Services said, following the Committee meeting held on 15 March 2023, a senior officer re-engaged with the statutory and non-statutory partners and amended and extended the priorities from 12 to 18. The revised strategy provided more clarity on how the key priorities would be delivered and the 29 key metrics that would be monitored that would be key in identifying if any difference was being made.

A Member of the Committee referred to page 13 of the report and asked what measures were in place to overcome the problem young people were facing due to racism and not obtaining work placements.

In response to this, the Strategic Manager from Children's Services reported that this issue would come under the post 16 plan, officers had spent a lot of time working with young people to enable and equip them with the transition to employment skills and knowledge they required.

Members were keen to understand if there were any plans to broaden the horizon for work experience and if more placements would be made available to young

people.

In response to members question it was reported that there were plans to offer more work placements, the Post 16 Team were working hard to achieve this and that a specific work stream of the Strategy looked at different opportunities for placements of work for young people.

A Member of the Committee asked if there was any support for parents with children who had special needs, as most parents do not understand the process of getting additional support.

In response to members question it was reported that support for parents was available through Barnardo's, Bradford SENDIASS was for parents and carers of children and young people 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the Bradford area - and for their children too.

The staff helped parents and children to work together with schools and the local authority so that they had a good understanding of what support was needed and to make sure that it was put in place.

Members of the Committee were keen to understand the feedback process of the Child Friendly Bradford District initiative and Born in Bradford (BIB).

In response to members question it was reported that the data for this initiative was captured by analytics. Child Friendly was a significant network which involved 25 different organisations. A Child Friendly event was held in November and was attended by children, young people, and their families. The event focused on healthy minds/mental health; this was another opportunity to understand what young people wanted. BIB had been involved with the Strategy and together the service has been able to build and gather better data.

A Member of the Committee asked if an action plan would be drawn up once the Strategy was finalised. In response to this it was reported that, an action plan would be created once consultations had been carried out. Once one plan had been achieved the service would move on to implement the next plan.

Members were keen to understand what streams meant in the Strategy. It was reported, in response, that there were 4 broad areas set out in the report for example, Education, Physical & Mental Health, Safe Homes, Places & Communities and Skills Development and each area had work streams that were managed by different organisations. However, some of the work streams have not yet been developed.

A Member of the Committee asked how other organisations would be monitored in relation to tasks/plans set out in each stream of work, members were concerned that work plans would be moved around organisations and remain incomplete.

In response to this, it was reported that there would be a constant follow up with various Boards. The ambition was to coordinate services and organisations to deliver what the children and young people wanted. Services and organisations had agreed to share regular reports and documents to hold each other accountable and there would be opportunities to raise any concerns. This was a significant network, and it required a number of organisations across the district to work together for plans to interrelate and connect, to help improve things for children and young people.

Members sought clarification on the role of the Committee regarding the Strategy and if the Strategy could be changed to reflect suggestions made by members. In response, the Strategic Manager from Children's Services advised that members could request specific reports to be brought to the Committee for democratic accountability. The Officer further reported that he would not want to modify the Strategy as it had been created with suggestions from children and young people.

A Member of the Committee said that the education system had a 'one size fits all' approach to education, which was not a suitable approach. The member asked what measures were in place to ensure children from ethnic minority groups received better opportunities.

In response, the Strategic Manager from Children's Services reported that this was the responsibility of the schools and not the local authority. Individual schools would ensure that the child received the most appropriate education in suitable surroundings. The Officer assured members that the service was keen to ensure that they do not disadvantage a group of children.

Members of the Committee were concerned of the negative impact on the local authority when a plan failed. The Strategic Manager for Children's Services reported, in response to members concerns that, this was a joint network strategy by many organisations and partners, therefore the local authority was not responsible for it. All partners had signed up to a code of conduct and although it would be led by the Council, all individual partners would be held accountable individually.

A Member of the Committee referred to page 8, 11 and 12 of the report and sought further clarification on vocational options available to young people and help available to disadvantaged families including resources for schools. In response to this, the Officer reported that one of the strands from the Strategy covered vocational options and the Living Well Schools strand focused on resources for schools.

Members of the Committee were keen to understand how physical and mental health could be improved for children and young people. In response to this, the Strategic Manager for Children's Services reported, that there was no quick fix to this issue as there were young individuals who had a predisposition to mental health, they may have been exposed to physical violence. The service realised the level of deprivation and would target areas where resources would be introduced involving physical activities that could help make a positive impact on mental health.

Referring to the report, a member of the Committee asked if domestic violence related to children and young people was an area that would also gain any focus in the Strategy. In response to this, the Officer said that this would come under the Safer Homes stream within the Strategy. However, the Committee could request for a further report specifically on domestic violence relating to children and young people.

Resolved –

(1) That this Committee requests that the progress against the delivery of

the Children and Young People Strategy, be presented to this Committee in 12 months, which also specifically focuses on:

- **Outcomes delivered;**
- **Action Planning;**
- **Performance Indicators.**

(2) That this Committee also requests that all key partners responsible for the delivery of the Children and Young People Strategy, be requested to attend the Committee meeting.

24. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The report of the Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document "E"**) was submitted to Members for comment and review of the 2022/23 Work Programme.

Resolved –

That the Committee discussed and amended the work programme.

Action: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

(Mustansir Butt – 07582 101597)

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