

Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee to be held on 27 June 2017

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Subject:

Children's Services plan for the effective scrutiny of external bodies and partnerships responsible for school improvement.

Summary statement:

This report informs the Governance and Audit Committee about the Children's Services plan for the effective scrutiny of external bodies and partnerships responsible for school improvement.

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Portfolio:

Education, Employment and Skills

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report informs the Governance and Audit Committee about the Children's Services plan for the effective scrutiny of external bodies and partnerships responsible for school improvement.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Strategic Director of Children's Services (DCS) has a professional responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority (LA) children's services and is responsible for securing the provision of services that address the needs of all children and young people including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and their families and carers. The DCS works closely with other local partners to improve outcomes and well-being of children and young people. The DCS is responsible for the performance of local authority functions relating to education and social care of children and young people. It is essential that the authority fulfils its statutory duties effectively.
- 2.2 The Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children's services. The LMCS is also democratically accountable to local communities and has a key role in defining the local vision and setting political priorities for children's services within the broader political context of the Council.
- 2.3 The LMCS is responsible for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, are addressed. The LMCS will work closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and well-being of children and young people. The LMCS should have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and ensure that children and young people are involved in the development and delivery of local services. LMCSs should not be responsible for detailed day-to-day operational management of education and children's services. They should provide strong, strategic leadership and support and challenge to the SDCS and relevant members of their senior team as appropriate.
- 2.4 Bradford has a Lead Member for Education, Employment and Skills and a Lead Member for Health and Well Being, both hold key responsibilities for children.
- 2.5 The LA has well established robust performance frameworks and associated improvement action plans which are monitored on a regular basis through key strategic partnerships. The local authority is also involved in a regional DCS group where a full self-evaluation of LA key performance indicators (KPIs) occurs annually. Regional LAs meet to consider the strengths and areas for development across the region and enter into peer challenge and reviews to assist with improvement.
- 2.6 Externally the LAs performance is also scrutinised by a variety of Inspection regimes.

3 Plan for scrutiny of external providers of school improvement

- 3.1 The DCS and the Deputy Director (DD) present school performance data and outcomes of Ofsted inspections at the half-termly Education Improvement Strategy Board (EISB) meetings. The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) is a member of the EISB and some of the headteachers who attend the meetings are also members of the Teaching School Alliances (TSA). Members of the Board asked searching questions about the quality provision from both the Local Authority (LA) and external providers such as the TSA and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs).
- 3.2 The DCS and DD meet with the regional Ofsted inspector and the RSC on a termly basis to discuss concerns and successes and the strategies in place for school improvement.
- 3.3 The DD and her management team have regular conversations with the TSAs as and when required and challenge the support being provided when there is clear evidence that impact is limited or progress is slow.
- 3.4 The DD has a monthly telephone conversation with the DFE representative about the progress of the LA maintained schools and academies causing concerns..
- 3.5 The DD meets with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the MATs serving the district on a termly basis to share the LA's strategic vision and discuss capacity as well as raise any concerns that have been brought to the LA's attention.
- 3.6 The DD and the Primary Strategy Manager hold termly meetings with the Diocesan representatives to share the LA's strategic vision as well as raise any concerns that have been brought to the LA's attention.
- 3.7 It is important to note that the LA has no influence on the quality of the school improvement support brokered and delivered by the TSAs and MATs. This scrutiny role is undertaken by the RSC,

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

5. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

N/A

6. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Risk Registers and Issues logs are maintained across key areas of development.

7. LEGAL APPRAISAL

The legal framework is the statutory functions of the LA, Children's Services and those associated with the inspections.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Under the Equality Act 2010 there is a public sector equality duty which requires local authorities, in the exercise of their functions, including when making decisions, to have due regard to the need to;

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- The “protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- All partnerships and improvement plans consider equality and diversity issues.

9.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The governance of Children’s Services will remain to support improvement across the KPIs for children, young people and their families. However it will remain responsive to change in local needs, government policy, inspection and funding constraints.

9.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

N/A

9.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Community Safety is an integral part of Children’s Services work.

9.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is central to the work of Children’s Services.

9.5 TRADE UNION

N/A

9.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

N/A

9.7 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

N/A

10. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Governance and Audit Committee receive this report for information.

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Diagrammatic representation of Scrutiny

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

N/A