



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2014

10.00 am - 12.14 pm in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

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Present

Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)

Councillors Peggy Mullock (Vice Chairman), Hannah Fraser, Vince Hunt, Robert Macey, Kevin Pardy, Robert Tindall and Roger Evans (Substitute) (substitute for Andy Boddington)

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

Dominic Wilson

54 Apologies and Substitutions

- 54.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Andy Boddington, Mr Mark Hignett, Councillor Kevin Turley and Councillor David Turner.
- 54.2 Councillor Roger Evans substituted for Councillor Boddington.
- 54.3 The Chairman informed the meeting that it would be the last meeting Mr Wilson would attend as he had retired as the secondary school governor representative. She thanked him for all his hard work during his time on the Committee.

55 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 55.2 None were made

56 Minutes

56.1 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Young People's Scrutiny Committee held on the 20 November 2014 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

57 Public Question Time

- 57.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

58 **Members' Question Time**

58.1 There were no questions from Members.

59 **Briefing Paper - Care Leavers Accommodation**

59.1 The Chairman made reference to the briefing paper regarding Barnados "Beyond Care" guide for Councillors on care leavers accommodation which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. She thanked Councillor Fraser for bringing the topic to her attention and Officers for preparing the briefing note.

59.2 The 16 Plus Team Manager advised Members that currently the Portfolio Holder for Housing did not attend the Corporate Parenting Board but that he would be invited to future meetings.

59.3 The 16 Plus Team Manager informed the Committee that information regarding the number of children leaving care and the accommodation that they moved to was not routinely reported to Members but he could bring a report to a future meeting of the Committee if required.

59.4 A Member thanked Officers for the briefing note, and commented on the good work being carried out and asked what support was given to care leavers. The 16 Plus Team Manager advised that support was given by the individual personal adviser who provided continuing support to the age of 24.

60 **Shropshire Schools Funding Formula 2014**

60.1 Members received the report of the Director of Children's Services which set out the proposals for the Shropshire Schools Funding Formula agreed by the Shropshire Schools Forum.

60.2 The Service Delivery Manager advised that the funding formula proposed by the Schools Forum had been formally ratified by Cabinet at the 10 December meeting.

60.3 The Service Delivery Manager advised that Shropshire had received an extra £10 million funding to address previous underfunding in the schools grant, and this additional funding had led to less schools requiring the minimum funding guarantee. He added that in the future there would be a National Funding Formula and that work was ongoing to enable Shropshire schools to take the best advantage of this.

60.4 The Service Delivery Manager advised that there were still issues around the sustainability of some schools and that the Schools Forum Task and Finish Group would continue to meet to monitor the situation. He added that work was also being done with schools to address the problem.

60.5 A Member commented that small schools were still not receiving sufficient funding and it was important that they were able to deliver good outcomes for their pupils and that collaborative working may be the way forward. The Service Delivery Manager commented that there was need for Officers to work proactively with

schools to address problems. The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency advised the Committee that currently there were 10 primary schools in formal federations and 3 more in the process of federating, and that this would enable 4 of the 13 schools involved to deliver better outcomes as they were more sustainable. She added that with regard to management of school budgets the deficit protocol was being reviewed and work was being done with schools to address any problems.

- 60.6 In response to a Member's query the Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency advised that the formula applied only to maintained schools. The Director of Children's Services advised that academies were funded on the same basis as maintained schools although they had much more freedom in how they spent the money.
- 60.7 A Member commented that falling pre-school rolls in rural areas were making them unsustainable. The Service Delivery Manager commented that the Council was required to assess sufficiency of places in pre-schools. The Director of Children's Services suggested that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
- 60.8 A Member expressed concern that sparsity had not been sufficiently recognised within the formula and that this may affect funding in the future. The Service Delivery Manager informed the meeting that the Task and Finish Group had fully considered sparsity during its deliberations and had found that some schools which fitted the definition of sparsity did not actually require the extra funding and hence the formula was developed to reflect this.
- 60.9 A Member thanked the Schools Forum for all the hard work they had undertaken to develop the formula. This was endorsed by all Members.
- 60.10 **Resolved:** -

That the recommendations made by the Schools Forum be noted.

61 School Performance 2014

- 61.1 Members received the report of the Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency which provided an overview of the performance of primary and secondary schools in Shropshire in 2014.
- 61.2 The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency reminded Members that outcomes for pupils in Shropshire over time had been above the national average and also in line with, or above, those of the statistical neighbour group, and this pattern had been repeated in 2014. She made the following points:
- Over the last 3 years there had been an overall improvement in outcomes at Key Stage 1 and that results in reading, writing and mathematics were at Level 3 in 2014 which placed Shropshire first or second in the statistical neighbour group for all the indicators.

- Shropshire was in the top 3 within the Statistical Neighbour Group for all subjects at Key Stage 2 and that there had been a marked improvement in the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling assessment with Shropshire moving to 2nd place in the Statistical Neighbour Group.
- Levels of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 showed an improvement between 2013 and 2014.
- Attainment of pupils entitled to free school meals continued to improve and in 2014 was within 1% of the national average and a sharp focus was maintained on “closing the gap” including through the effective use of pupil premium.

61.3 The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency advised Members that School Improvement Advisers (SIAs) regularly reviewed school performance including an annual risk assessment. She added that a school performance monitoring process was undertaken twice a year which identified the level of support and challenge required and enabled the local authority to take pre-emptive action and target school support accordingly.

61.4 The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency informed the meeting that good levels of achievement being reached were not reflected in Ofsted judgements. In 2013 these judgements showed a lower than national proportion of schools being judged good or outstanding, and in November 2014 one Secondary school and three primary schools had been assessed as inadequate and in special measures; it was noted that these schools received a large amount of targeted support from the local authority.

61.5 A Member asked what progress was being made with the schools which were in special measures and how many schools “required improvement”. The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency advised that of the 4 schools currently in special measures, 3 would shortly become sponsored academies leaving 1 school in special measures and that, since the report was written, 1 additional school had been placed in special measures. She informed Members that 3 senior schools were currently graded as ‘requiring improvement’ and these would shortly be re-inspected and it was hoped that they would move to a ‘good’ rating.

61.6 A Member asked whether the difference in progress at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 was due to problems with transition between primary and secondary school. The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency advised that schools tended to “start again” in Year 7 rather than take on board the pupil’s learning at the end of Key Stage 2; work was currently underway to try to address this issue.

61.7 A Member welcomed the progress being made in “closing the gap” and asked whether sufficient steps were being taken in secondary schools to address the problem. The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency commented that there was often a dip in performance in Year 8 and that work was being done to address this whilst looking at the pupil experience “in the round”.

61.8 A Member asked whether there was a common reason why schools were placed in special measures. The Head of Education Improvement and Efficiency commented that, whilst each case was different, a common theme was a lack of good leadership both from the Head Teacher and the Governors.

61.9 **Resolved:**

That Members accept the position as set out in the report.

62 **Business Case: Redesign of Residential Provision**

62.1 Members received the report of the Head of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding which set out the draft business case for the redesign of the provision of residential care in Shropshire.

62.2 The Head of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding advised Members that the redesign of residential services was part of the larger redesign of Children's Services. She added that the redesign aimed to ensure best value for money whilst ensuring the best outcomes for looked after children (LAC).

62.3 The Director of Children's Services advised Members that the costs of LAC were the largest cost within children's social care and there was a constant overspend on the budget. It was recognised that there was need to balance reducing costs against a growing demand for services.

63.3 The Head of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding reminded Members of the current provision which consisted of 3 homes – Chelmaren, Havenbrook and The Rowans and the proposals for future provision which included the closure of The Rowans and increasing the number of places at Chelmaren and renegotiation of the external block contract.

64.3 A Member asked how many places were in the block contract and how many of the settings had a "good" Ofsted rating. The Head of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding advised her that there were currently 20 beds in the block contract, and that currently one of the settings had a "requires improvement" rating however the Council was satisfied that the reasons for this rating being given was not relevant to the core activity of the setting. She further advised that the Ofsted rating was always considered when spot purchasing places.

64.4 A Member suggested that, given that monthly internal costs would be lower than the costs for the external block contract, the use of more internal provision may provide a better solution. The Head of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding stated that the building at the Rowans was not fit for purpose and would present too many challenges. She added that the LAC Strategy looked at other solutions such as foster care provision for teenagers rather than admission into care.

64.5 The Head of Children's Social Care and Safeguarding advised Members that a further report regarding the proposals would be prepared for the Director of Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder.

64.6 The Chairman thanked Officers for the report and Members for their comments.

63 **Work Programme**

63.1 The meeting received copies of the Committee's Work Programme and the Cabinet Forward Plan.

63.2 Mr Evans asked whether the Committee would get further chance to discuss the financial information given that it had changed since the Committee had considered it at its last meeting. The Chairman commented that this may be considered by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, and that she would check and report back to Councillors.

63.3 The Chairman stated that, following concerns raised by the Chair of the Shropshire Safeguarding Children's Board, a report on taxi driver licencing would be brought to the next meeting.

63.4 The Chairman asked Members to let her know of any other topics they would like added to the Committee's Work Programme.

64 **Date of Next Meeting**

64.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Young People's Scrutiny Committee would be held on Wednesday 4 February 2014 at the earlier start time of 9.00am.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: