

CHILDREN & FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 31 October 2018

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Linda Holt (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Paul Porgess (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Malcolm Allan, Paul Ankers, Richard Coaton, Mike Hurleston, David Meller,
Jude Wells and David Wilson

Ian Roberts (Church of England Diocesan Education Committee)
Dr Lisa Robinson – Parent Governor Representative

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 1 August 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interests were declared:-

Personal Interest

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Paul Porgess	Any discussion relating to the Disability Living Allowance as his son was in receipt of that allowance.

Co-opted Member

Lisa Robinson	Any discussion relating to Brookside Primary School as a governor.
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3. CALL-IN

There were no call in items to consider.

4. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - MID YEAR REPORTS

The Director for Children's Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing for comment the mid-year portfolio performance and resource reports for the Children & Families and Education portfolios.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

Children & Families Portfolio

- The Committee discussed the impact of the budget reductions for 2018-19 which involved substantial changes in the Council's approach to Early Years with an increased emphasis on school readiness and the creation of Start Well.
- Numbers of Looked after Children had remained around 365 for the last three months but there were significant resource implications arising from the increasingly complex needs of those children which resulted in higher cost residential placements and higher payments to foster carers to provide much needed stable placements in a home environment.
- Councillors discussed the rationale and appropriateness of the performance targets.
- Councillors requested further information in relation to the statistics held for childhood obesity levels.
- The Committee noted that the SEND inspection took place 24-28th September 2018 and looked forward to the report which would be published in December 2018.
- The Committee welcomed the information provided in respect to School nurses acknowledging that they were an important part of the universal health offer to children and young people. Concern was expressed however in relation to the waiting times for the diagnosis of Autism Related Disorders which remained problematic. The Committee heard that it currently takes 12-18 months from referral to completion of the Autism Diagnostic.
- Observation Schedule (ADOS) assessment whilst there is a substantial backlog of assessments. The Committee asked for regular updates in respect to this issue.

Education Portfolio

- The Committee welcomed the news that following recent Ofsted inspections 98% of Childminders remained graded Good or better and that whilst the proportion of Early Years settings graded good or better had reduced slightly from 97% to 96%, the proportion of Outstanding had increased. Furthermore, all childminders in the Borough's Priority 1 areas were now graded good or better.
- Councillors requested further information in respect to the GM Early Years Delivery Model which supported the school readiness programme.
- Councillors discussed again the rationale for the performance measures relating to the performance targets.
- In respect to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), concern was expressed that the Q2 position forecasted a year end deficit of approx. £0.882m.
- The Committee requested further information in respect to performance indicator E15 – the percentage of young people in academic years 12 and 13 not in employment, education or training.
- The Cabinet member provided an update in respect to the repair to the collapsed roof at St Thomas' Primary School, Heaton Chapel.
- It was agreed that an update report be submitted to a future meeting in respect to the 'Road Safety Around Schools' initiative.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The Cabinet Members for Children & Families and Education submitted a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Scrutiny Committee to comment on the

overall report and the five themes contained within it and on the detailed proposals relevant to the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The Committee identified Special Educational Need Home to School Transport as an area that required further consideration in the context of savings proposals.
- The Committee were keen to hear further details in respect to proposals for early years.
- Concern was expressed in respect to the proposals relating to the reduction of Area Committee budgets relating to highways and discretionary spending at an Area Committee level.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Democratic Services Manager submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee next meeting and relevant Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.09 pm