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CHILDREN & FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 1 March 2022

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Wendy Meikle (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Linda Holt (Vice-Chair); Councillors Anna Charles-Jones, Gary Lawson, Andy Sorton, David Wilson and Wendy Wild.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 19 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

The following interests were declared:-

Personal Interests

Councillor

Interest

Anna Charles-Jones, Wendy Meikle and Wendy Wild

Agenda Item 13 (i) – Call In of Cabinet Decision CMDCF&E23 ‘Termination of the appointment of a local authority governor’ as School Governors at Primary Schools.

Linda Holt

Agenda Item 14 – Anti Social Behaviour and Crime Statistics by virtue of employment.

3. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication relating to an individual, the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt information in the ‘not for publication’ in agenda item 13 (i) ‘Call-In of Cabinet Decision CMDCF&E23 Termination of the appointment of a local authority governor’.

4. EQUALITIES COUNCIL - PRESENTATION

Members of the Equalities Council comprising students from Stockport College, Cheadle College and Marple Sixth Form College attended the meeting and provided a presentation to the Scrutiny Committee in relation to covid-19 recovery involving young people, women

and girls in construction, mental health services for young people, LGBTQ+ and the importance of individual needs in education.

Members of the Equalities Council highlighted a number of concerns associated with each of the chosen topics, but also provided possible solutions and actions.

Covid-19 Recovery involving young people

- Young people have a voice and an opinion, that should be heard.
- Young people are the future generations and leaders.
- Recovery shouldn't be planned for and on behalf of young people, but should involve young people and listen to their views.
- More inclusion and youth led activities to listen to the voices of the young people.
- Involve more young people in the Student Council and the Young Members of Parliament.

Women & Girls in Construction

- There is a gender pay gap of 18%.
- Construction is predominantly a male dominated industry.
- Women and girls shouldn't be oppressed and laughed at if wanting to pursue a career in construction.
- Only 37% of women want to pursue a career in construction with only 14% making it as professionals.
- Stereotypes make it difficult.
- There is a need to reach out to young people and engage, rather than waiting for young people to express an interest.
- Organise workshops, all women shortlists, promote opportunities through social media.

Lack of Mental Health support for young people

- Important to keep active, talk about it with someone, regular exercise and eat well to stay healthy.
- Keep in touch with individuals through face to face meetings, telephone calls, messages, keep lines of communication open with social circle.
- There was a lack of support for young people with mental health concerns that can be easily accessed.
- Surround yourself with positivity and people who support you.
- Stockport College offers a number of services for young people including online and face to face services, pastoral care and other frontline services.
- There was also a Social Media and Access Team that offered a one stop shop approach and a triage, access and re-direct service.
- There was also an open door approach with face to face engagement.

LGBTQ+

- Lots of misconceptions and assumptions about bisexuality.
- A number of unknowns about the LGBTQ+ community exists.

- There was a need to raise the awareness, especially among younger people, possibly at KS1 (sexuality awareness) and KS2 (gender awareness).
- Could teach young people through videos and stories of experiences by and with members of the LGBTQ+ community in schools.
- Celebrate the lives of the LGBTQ+ community and the fights for justice and equality including key dates and birthdays in calendars e.g. Oscar Wilde.
- Add pronouns to ID Badges e.g. she/her, they/them etc.
- Be stricter with punishments for homophobia and transgender-phobia attacks.

Importance of meeting individual needs in Education

- 14% of children and young people in the UK have some form of special educational needs (SEN) and more than half would not get the supported needed.
- All children should be monitored, throughout their early education for quick interventions and prevent impairment.
- Early intervention was vital and no child should suffer in silence.
- Important to meet the needs of the child and not assume behaviours.
- Involve children and young people in decision making and this would ensure they feel included and help them to reach their desired aspirations and feel happier.
- Many children and young people will fall through the gaps, if the correct interventions are not identified and support offered.
- Need to do more collaborative working across services and people.
- Concentrate on more person centred education in order that individuals could be more accepted and succeed in education and have a better quality of life.
- More support could be provided for families with children with SEN.

The following comments were made/issues raised: -

- Committee welcomed the presentation and the individual contributions together with the honesty regarding their experiences and personal lives.
- There is a need to talk about differences and celebrate it, not isolate the individuals.
- Society needed to value people who were different and allow them to express their views and opinions and be themselves.
- Easy access, early diagnosis and interventions was needed for mental health among young people.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the representatives of the Equalities Council for highlighting their concerns but also for providing possible solutions and actions that could be considered and actioned accordingly.

RESOLVED – That the members of the Equalities Council be thanked for their attendance and presentation.

5. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - Q3 2021/22 UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Children's Services and Director of Education submitted a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the third quarter update Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports for the Children, Family Services and Education

Portfolio. These provide a summary of progress in delivering the Portfolio priority outcomes since the mid-year reports.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

Part One - Portfolio Overview

- Clarification was sought regarding the market authority being investigated especially with the number of Children Looked After growing year on year. In response, it was noted that the investigation was due to be completed in the summer together with another activity as part of the Greater Manchester partnership regarding sufficiency of places for children in care.
- Members congratulated Stockport MOSAIC service for receiving an overall rating of 'Good' by the CQC following an inspection in mid-December.

Priority Two

- Regarding CFSE.28 – Percentage of young people in academic Years 12 and 13 (16-18) in Apprenticeships it was noted that the numbers were again low due to Covid.

Priority Three

- Regarding CFSE.65 – Early Help Assessment conversion rate (within 30 days), it was noted that the target had not been met for the last 5 years but the Committee welcomed the review.

Part Two – Financial Resources and Monitoring

- Clarification was sought regarding associated costs relating to the Youth Offending Service. In response, it was stated that the Local Authority was not in control of the process and system, it was the responsibility of the judiciary system that sets the rate nationally and until the young people are sentenced the Local Authority has to pay the costs while the young people are in remand.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND CRIME STATISTICS

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the data that looks pre-Covid figures for both Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, the initial impact in 2020 and finally the present situation.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Detached Youth Work Team was now fully operational and would be funded through the 'Positive Investment Funding'. The impact has been significant and regular detached youth work sessions are now in place across identified areas of Stockport.

- Clarification was sought regarding the number of detached youth workers were employed. In response, it was noted that there were currently 10 youth workers, but there was a need for more and opportunities were being explored to recruit more.
- Lots of work being done with families and the communities relating to the detached youth workers and utilising the placed base activity and with a targeted approach with reporting functions linking into pastoral care for young people and families.
- It was noted that it was a partnership approach and the feedback and comments will be communicated to the partnership.

The Committee welcomed the detailed report and thanked Jacqui Belfield-Smith for attending.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. COOPERATION AGREEMENT IN RELATION TO HEALTH VISITING, SCHOOL NURSING AND FAMILY NURSE PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details relating to a cooperation agreement in respect of the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme funding, which provides Stockport's health visiting, school nursing and family nurse partnership services that was due to commence on 01 April 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee welcomed the detailed report and the growth of the service, together with the holistic approach being taken to develop the strong partnerships.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. POST-16 ROUTES - APPRENTICESHIPS AND THE DESTINATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the latest data on apprenticeships, the context around the performance and details of what the authority is doing, and will be doing, to support the borough's young people.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Committee welcomed the report and the website information which was easy to navigate.
- Members expressed concern regarding barriers for young people to register on courses, but were assured that there were different levels of entry for courses and lots of opportunities.

- Clarification was sought regarding the eligibility criteria for young people outlined in the report. In response, it was stated that any one of the criteria was acceptable, but practitioners were encouraged to find a way for the young people to be registered.
- It was noted that there were 120 apprentices in the Town Hall through the levy scheme with four under 20 years of age and the oldest being over 60 years old.
- There were a lot of opportunities available in the town centre developments and there were opportunities to connect more with post-planning developments and creating longer term opportunities.

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated the team on the partnerships being developed to ensure the young people were recruited including the targeted approach with young people with special needs given the current healthy jobs market.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT EDUCATION SETTINGS

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing information relating to the Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges and the recommendations made to schools and colleges following the review.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee welcomed the report and the details relating to the sources of support and the partners involved.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. SHARED SERVICES PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on progress with developing shared leadership for the early years functions of the School Improvement Teams across Stockport and Tameside Councils.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Clarification was sought regarding recruitment for the vacant positions and where would the persons be based. In response, it was stated that recruitment would initially be internally with the positions being based in both boroughs and there would be continue to be place based teams across the boroughs.
- Members enquired about the 'listening exercise' referred to in the key timescales for development of early years proposal. In response, it was stated that it was a consultation exercise to speak to colleagues in those settings and listen to the things that are valued most.

- Members sought reassurances regarding the outcomes of the 'listening exercises' and engagement processes with colleagues in the event that there was uncertainty with the proposals that it would be re-visited and the Committee would be updated accordingly. In response, assurances were given that the Committee would be informed of progress relating to the consultation exercises and engagement with colleagues.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services & Education submitted a report (copies of which has been circulated) setting out the agreed Cabinet Response to the recommendation contained in the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Review 'Children and Young People's Participation'.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee welcomed the update and requested a further update in 12 months regarding the impact of the recommendations on service provisions.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That a further update be provided in 12 months regarding the impact of the recommendations on service provisions.

12. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services & Education submitted a report (copies of which has been circulated) setting out the agreed Cabinet Response to the recommendation contained in the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Review 'Supporting Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Counselling in Schools'.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee welcomed the update and requested a further update in 12 months regarding the impact of the recommendations on service provisions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the

planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee's next meeting and any relevant Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Item 'Not for Publication'

14. CALL-IN

(i) Call-In of Cabinet Decision CMDCF&E23 'Termination of the appointment of a local authority governor'

The Scrutiny Committee was advised that the Cabinet Decision CMDCF&E23 had been 'called-in' by Councillors Chris Gordon, Linda Holt and Carol McCann. It was reported that the matter related to a decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) on 14 February 2022 with regard to the termination of the appointment of a local authority governor.

Councillor Linda Holt outlined her reasons for 'calling in' the decision.

Councillor Chris Gordon also outlined his reasons for 'calling in' the decision and read a statement written by Councillor Carol McCann in her absence.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education (Councillor Colin Foster) and the Director of Education (Tim Bowman) explained the reason for the decision.

The Scrutiny Committee discussed the contents of the report.

(NOTE: The report comprised a 'not for publication' report that was circulated to members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

RESOLVED – That no further action be taken.

(ii) To consider further call-in items (if any)

There were no further call-in items to consider.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.