

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

2 June 2016

Chairperson: Councillor H.N.James

Councillors: M.Ellis, R.G.Jones, A.Llewelyn, J.D.Morgan,
Mrs.K.Pearson, A.L.Thomas, R.Thomas and
D.Whitelock

Officers In Attendance N. Jarman, A.Jarrett, Mrs.A.Thomas, S. Curran,
Ms.V.Jones, M.Lazarus and D.Cole

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors P.A.Rees and P.D.Richards

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

The following Member made a declaration of interest at the commencement of the meeting:

Cllr P A Rees: Private Report of the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing re: Agreement between Hillside Secure Centre and Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School as he is Chair of Governors at the School.

2. **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 APRIL 2016**

The Committee noted the Minutes.

3. **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 APRIL 2016**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the meeting of the 28th April 2016. In relation to the item on the Review of School Music Service the Committee noted that a discussion had been held in the meeting noting the high level of negative responses to the

consultation and requested that this be included in the Minute for that item.

With the above amendments the Committee noted the Minutes

4. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17**

The Committee received the Forward Work Programme for 16/17 and were reminded that the Forward Work Programme Planning Worksop is due to take place where the Committee will meet to plan their work for the year. Members noted that discussion should take place in the workshop about items for inclusion but suggested that Education matters be regularly included on their agenda.

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

5. **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES - KEY PRIORITY INDICATORS**

The Committee received the report on the key priority indicator information within Children's Services, as detailed within the circulated report for indicators:

- Priority Indicator 1- Average Number of Cases held by Qualified Workers across the Service
- Priority Indicator 2- Staff Supervision Rates
- Priority Indicator 3- The Number of Social Worker Vacancies across the Service (including number of starters/leavers/agency/staff/sickness)
- Priority Indicator 5- Number of Approved Foster Carers within the Council

Members noted the numbers of staff that had received supervision but stated that the figures included in the report did not give corresponding numbers of staff so there was no way for the Members to know if there was good or bad performance against the indicator. Similarly the information presented in relation to Children Placed by Foster Carer Type was considered and it was noted that the percentages and numbers of children being presented in two separate tables made it difficult to analyse the information in relation to the indicator. The Committee requested that in future overall

numbers of the cohort that the Priority Indicator is referring to be included in the report in the same graph or table.

Members discussed the average number of cases held by qualified workers across the service. In relation to the School Based Teams it was queried if any changes would occur within the Teams when the new Ysgol Bae Baglan School opens in September 2016. Officers explained that there are no anticipated changes to the Teams who are mainly geographical in nature although ongoing assessments of staffing and structure is continual within the service to ensure they are operating efficiently and effectively.

The Committee noted that the number of Social Worker vacancies was slowly increasing and asked if this was becoming a concern to the service. Officers stated that the number of vacancies were not a current concern although noted that if rates continue to rise concern could begin to grow. It was explained that as Social Workers progress their careers they tend to move upwards into management roles which do not exist in the Council so they end up moving to other organisations to continue their career path. Officers were satisfied that the Management Structure in the service is stable and when exit interviews are conducted with the relatively low number of leavers the responses are positive. It was also noted that two vacancies are for newly created posts.

Members noted the number of agency workers within the service and officers explained how agency workers are used where necessary but reminded Members it has recently been agreed to introduce five Peripatetic Workers to the service to cover sickness/maternity absence in an attempt to rely less on agency workers.

In relation to the Number of Children placed with Foster Carers Members queried if the pooling of data under the two age ranges hid a general transition or if there in fact a real change as children move from Primary to Secondary School. Officers explained that no significant change occurs but as the children progress through the Looked After Children (LAC) system the needs they present can become more complex and challenging and they can become harder to place and may need to go to external placements although Members were pleased to note the decrease in external placements in relation to this indicator.

6. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

6.1 Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 16/17 and Annual Report 2015

The Committee received the Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 16/17 and Annual Report 2015 as contained within the circulated report.

Members asked if the Foreword of the Annual Report be proof read before being published as it contained some grammatical errors.

Members noted the concern of budget and resource reductions and the ability of agencies to action agreed tasks and noted that letters are now formally written to agencies expecting action in relation to aspects of safeguarding.

Members asked for further information in relation to timescales for actions included within the Business Plan. It was noted that the majority of action takes place within Sub Groups of the Board and that most of the work is continuous.

In relation to participation Members asked if planned engagement and communication with children and young people was in relation to those who are already known to the service or was broader; particularly in relation to 'Safeguarding Week 2016.' Officers commented that it is Children and Young People in general with no limitations with the aim of raising awareness.

Members asked what the abbreviation SAIT referred to and Officers confirmed they would clarify this and feedback to the Committee.

Members asked for a progress update in relation to the Strategic Priority of Neglect. They noted a significant investment in a NSPCC project relating to early intervention and prevention and the importance of preventing instances of neglect instead of responding to it.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

6.2 Regional Adoption Service Inter Authority Agreement

The Committee received information in relation to the Western Bay regional Adoption Service Inter Authority agreement as contained within the circulated report.

Members attention was drawn to the Recommendation and were informed that the second point of the recommendation be amended from:

‘ To authorise the lead social services officer to make any further amendments to the Agreement (in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) necessary following the Agreement being presented to the respective Cabinet meetings of Bridgend County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea Council’

To read:

‘ To authorise the lead social services officer to make any further amendments to the Agreement (in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services) necessary following the Agreement being presented to the respective Cabinet meetings of Bridgend County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea Council’

Members asked if the figures included in the Financial Information be clarified and Officers confirmed the correct figures would be fed back to Members.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered at Cabinet Board.

7. ACCESS TO MEETINGS

Resolved: that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12 A to the above Act.

8. PRE- SCRUTINY

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

Cabinet Board Proposals

8.1 Agreement between Hillside Secure Centre and Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School

(Councillor P.A Rees reaffirmed his interest and left the meeting for this item.)

The Committee received information in relation to Hillside Secure Centre entering into an arrangement for the provision of educational services at Hillside with Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School as contained within the circulated report.

Members asked if steps had been taken to negotiate Terms and Conditions with the staff to negate some of the issues that had been raised within the report. Officers explained that attempts had been made and certain changes had been implemented but no real progress had been made hence the requirement for the actions included in this report.

Members made reference to Appendix 3 referred to within the report but noted that the appendix was not in fact included within the report. Officers apologised and informed the Committee that the collaboration agreement and specification as included in this appendix is still in development with the Legal Officers within the Council.

Members asked if there would be an impact on the children as the teachers work between both Hillside and Cefn Saeson sites. It was explained that teachers will be moved between sites but this would not be disruptive and would be planned accordingly.

The Committee asked what provisions were in place if Welsh Medium Education was required. Officers drew attention to the outcome included in the agreement stating: 'it is aligned as far as possible to mainstream curriculum in Wales and with appropriate reference to the Welsh culture, heritage and language' and confirmed that any Welsh Language requirement would be catered for.

Members asked what protocols were in place if the staff involved chose to appeal or challenge the decision. Officers explained that an extensive formal consultation had taken place with all involved including Trade Unions and Governors although there is a right of appeal if the staff so choose. They went on to explain that an extensive benefits package had been put in place for staff including access to training and progression through the upper pay spine co-ordinating with continued engagement with the new process.

The legal position of Hillside as an educational establishment was queried and it was explained that the teaching staff will be employed by Cefn Saeson and not by Hillside.

The Committee asked if Officers were confident that the existing budget allocation is adequate to cover the new arrangements. Officers confirmed that the budget allocation is sufficient although the service will be liable to national pay awards.

Members were confident that the new arrangements will be managed effectively by the management within Cefn Saeson and were pleased to note that the Governing Body were highly supportive of the proposal.

Following scrutiny, the Committee were supportive of the proposals to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

CHAIRPERSON