

# CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

**Members Present:** **28 July 2016**

**Chairperson:** Councillor A.R.Lockyer

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor H.N.James

**Councillors:** R.G.Jones, Mrs.K.Pearson, M.Protheroe and  
D.Whitelock

**Co-opted Non Voting  
Members:** A.Hughes

**Officers In  
Attendance** N. Jarman, A.Jarrett, I.Finnemore, Ms.C.Dyer  
and Ms.C.Gadd

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

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1. **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND  
EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JUNE 2016**

The Minutes were noted by the Committee.

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

The Forward Work Programme was noted by the Committee.

3. **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 with the circulated report, for indicators:

- Priority Indicator 5 – Number of looked after children by placement type.

- Priority Indicator 6 – the number of children who have been discharged from care and then subsequently re-admitted.
- Priority Indicator 7 – the number of cases held within the service categorised by status – child protection, looked after or child in need.
- Priority Indicator 8 – The number of cases “stepped down” from Children and Young People Services to Team Around the Family.
- Priority Indicator 9 – The percentage of children looked after during the year with a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school.

Members were informed that performance remained consistent across the Service. It was highlighted that the number of children on the Child Protection Register had reduced.

Members queried Priority Indicator 7 if the number of children receiving care and support included looked after children and those on the child protection register. Officers explained the term “children in need” had been changed to “children receiving care and support” and therefore this figure did not include other categories such as looked after. It was highlighted that there had been a slight increase in the number of children receiving care and support.

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

#### 4. **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES - PROPOSED 2016-17 PERFORMANCE REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received the report that proposed the revised Children and Young People reporting arrangements for 2016/17, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed of the revised statutory performance indicator reporting arrangements to Welsh Government and the revised selection of indicators for the Committee to decide on eight to be their priority indicators. It was explained that the Welsh Government indicators were statutory reporting obligations. The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 sets out a performance framework, which aims to measure the progress of local authorities and to support to them to continuously improve services. The new set of performance requirements shifts the emphasis from timeliness and quantity of support to a more outcome focussed

framework, which was designed to evidence whether service intervention was making a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and families. Members noted these new reporting arrangements.

Officers explained to Members the Children and Young People Services Business Plan set out new priorities for the financial year. To evidence these priorities 12 shortlisted Key Priority Indicators had been short listed for Scrutiny Members to select 8 to be reported on a regular basis. Officers were also suggesting that the indicators were reported on a quarterly rather than monthly basis as it would be less susceptible to monthly variation and would provide a more balanced overview.

Members felt that they were not in a position to decide on the priority indicators as they had not had sight of the business plan for the Service. Officers explained that there had been a delay in the business plan being brought to the Committee for consideration and for approval by Cabinet Board, as further consultation had been required from children and young people and it would be brought to the next meeting. Members requested that the decision on the priority indicators was deferred until that meeting and it was agreed by the Committee. Members noted that this added to the agenda for the next meeting. Officers explained that this could delay the setup of the performance reporting systems and the reporting of future priority indicators that were chosen by the Committee.

Members requested that officers considered the wording of some of the limitations included within the shortlisted priority indicators. It was queried if further information should be included with the reporting of indicators. Officers explained that they would not suggest including additional narrative with performance indicators, however, Members would request additional information as required. It was clarified that this was the approach that was currently taken by Members. Members also requested that the priority indicators included numbers as well as percentages.

Officers highlighted that the key priority indicators included in the report were key indicators for a successful service. It was explained that the Business Plan may not contain the information that Members required as it was an outward facing document and the Priority Indicators were standalone. Members highlighted that they could not decide on their priority indicators without more information on the priorities of the Service going forward.

Following scrutiny, the revised statutory performance indicator reporting arrangements to Welsh Government were noted by the Committee. The selection of Key Priority Indicators for reporting to the Scrutiny Committee was deferred to the next meeting.

## 5. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

### Cabinet Board Proposals

#### 5.1 Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Annual Plan 2016-17

The Committee received the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention draft Annual Plan 2016/17 for commending to Council, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the production of a Youth Justice Plan was a statutory duty and it sets out how youth justice services would be provided and funded. Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Youth Offending Teams had been a merged service since 2014. A summary of achievements were outlined to Members, which included the sharing of good practice, sustaining performance during a period of uncertainty and change and reducing the use of custodial sentences. It was noted that the Service had been concentrating on restorative practices. Members noted that there would be two schools in each Local Authority trained in restorative approaches and it was queried which schools had been identified in Neath Port Talbot. Officers explained that the schools in Neath Port Talbot had not yet been confirmed as they wanted to target schools with higher levels of exclusions and bullying.

Officers highlighted that there had been no young people in Neath Port Talbot placed in unsuitable accommodation on the completion of a court order. The Resettlement and Reintegration Panel for the three localities were now in place.

During 2015/16 the Service saw 109 children and young people enter the Youth Justice System but diverted 520 children and young people away from the system through the use of prevention programmes and non-criminal disposal. The Service had developed a screening tool for the early recognition of

needs of children and young people. It was noted that reoffending remains a big challenge for the Service and the reoffending toolkit they used targeted resources in the areas required. Members were informed that the Youth Offending Team had been rated as overall having good practice.

It was highlighted that there were risks to current delivery as the team had to continue to deliver services and sustain performance whilst making savings of almost £1 mil. The review of youth justice services would also have implications across England and Wales and restructuring within the Health Board could impact on substance misuse services.

Members asked if the budget reductions would continue to stretch the Service. It was explained that the Service was experiencing the same challenges as other areas in meeting financial savings, for example where there were vacancies in the team it had to be carefully considered if they would be filled. It was highlighted that the majority of staff had been open to new ways of working and the Service would continue to be redesigned in the most efficient way. Members were pleased to see that the Service was undertaking work with vulnerable young people to prevent them being drawn into terrorism. Officers highlighted that the team looked out for early indicators so that they could be challenged at any early stage.

Members asked for more detail about the Ministry of Justice review of youth justice services by Charlie Taylor. It was explained that the review was across England and Wales but seemed to have been very English focussed and the Welsh system differs to the English system. The review was due to be published in June 2016 but this has been delayed following the recent referendum result. The information received so far seems to be advocating a system of secure schools. Officers highlighted that there also needs to be a therapeutic base as well. The review may suggest that Youth Offending Teams should not undertake preventative work, as England does not undertake this work in the same way. However, the Western Bay Team had had a lot of success in preventing children and young people coming into the system. It was noted that the review could change the structure of the youth justice system, which would involve a change of legislation and take some time to implement. There was some concern that partners would read the review and start making reductions in resources and before any changes were implemented. If there were changes

to the way the Youth Justice Board and Welsh Government allocated funding this would have huge implications for the Service. Members noted that education was a devolved matter and would Welsh Government have a mandate to challenge recommendations from the review on this basis. Officers informed Members that it would have to be seen what changes were suggested. There was also an ongoing debate over whether or not youth justice should be devolved to Welsh Government.

Members queried the figures for the number of education workers (including tutors) as the report stated there were 8 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) in 2015/2016 but none in 2016/17. Officers noted that this was an error and there were still 8 FTEs and the Plan would be amended accordingly. Members noted that there were a few typographical errors in the report and officers would proof read the report again. Members also asked if there was going to be an increase in speech and language therapy and officers highlighted that funding had been confirmed to increase this post from 0.5 FTE to 1 FTE.

Following scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposal to be considered by the Cabinet Board.

## 5.2 Foundation Apprentices Report

The Committee received the report on the Foundation Apprentice Scheme and its adoption within Business Support Services, of the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the Foundation Apprentice Scheme was open to 16 to 24 year olds and new appointments were given a 15 month contract. During this time they were provided with all the necessary help and support required in completing a NVQ Level 2 in Business. The scheme provided on the job experience, a qualification and supports a number of the Council's Corporate Aims and Objectives.

Officers highlighted that the young people involved in the scheme brought new skills and ideas with them, such as IT, which was of benefit to the Service. An example was given of a young person developing a new system for computer records that had been an improvement for the Service. It was explained

that opportunities within IT Services were being considered to develop this young person's skills further.

It was noted that line managers had commented on the enthusiasm and energy the young people can bring to a team. A survey had been undertaken with teams and there had been positive responses to the services provided by Business Support. It was noted that after completing the scheme some of the young people were filling permanent and temporary posts within the Council, with a retention rate of 78% at present. It was highlighted that during April 2016 some of the Foundation Apprentices had completed a brief survey, noting their experiences of the scheme and all agreed or strongly agreed that it was rewarding and all of them would recommend it.

It was explained that the Corporate Parent Panel had received a report on how the Service had recently looked to draw on young people within the looked after system to apply for the scheme. It was highlighted that following this there were currently three that were employed and flourishing under the scheme.

It was noted that some other service areas were using modern apprentices, which was to be encouraged. It was recognised that some young people may be suited to other roles that were not administration based and there was scope to develop the scheme in other areas. Members asked what the biggest barrier was that prevented the scheme being rolled out further. Officers suggested it could be that there were some financial and management commitment involved, as time and support had to be invested into supporting the young people. However, the Service felt that these were small resource implications compared with the positive benefits.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People requested that Members encouraged Services to adopt this scheme where appropriate.

Members were pleased to hear the about the positive benefits of the scheme and thought that it was an excellent initiative.

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

## **CHAIRPERSON**