

## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

TUESDAY 13 JANUARY, 2015 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

### **Panel Members Present**

Councillor E. Hughes (Chair)  
Councillor P. Lane (Vice Chair)  
Councillor A. Andrew  
Councillor C. Clews  
Councillor E. Hazell  
Councillor T. Jukes  
Councillor R. Martin  
Councillor K. Phillips  
Councillor H. Sarohi  
Councillor D. Shires  
Councillor S. Wade  
Councillor T. Wilson

### **Portfolio Holder**

Councillor B. Cassidy

### **Non elected voting Members present**

S. Raynor (Lichfield Diocesan Education)  
L. Lukes (Parent Governor Representative)  
M. Ayodele (Parent Governor Representative)

### **Non elected non voting Members present**

R. Bragger (Primary Teacher Representative)  
D. Blackwell (Secondary Teacher Representative)

### **Officers Present**

David Haley - Executive Director (Children's Services)  
Lynda Poole – Assistant Director (Access and Attainment)  
Tony Griffin - Interim Assistant Director (Social Care)  
Lloyd Haynes - Senior Finance Manager  
Jane Bonner – Interim Head of Service for School Improvement -  
Alison Glover – Group Manager  
Julie Jones - Homelessness & Housing Service Manager  
Sue Morgan - Strategic Lead - Early Intervention & Family Support  
Carol Williams - Head of Programme Delivery  
Neil Picken – Senior Committee Business and Governance Manager

461/15 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 462/15     **SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions.

#### 463/15     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

#### 464/15     **MINUTES**

Members considered the minutes of the meetings held on 25 November, 2014.

##### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November, 2014, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Martin within the list of apologies submitted.

#### 465/15     **CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that agenda item 6 - Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2018/19: Update on draft revenue and capital programme and outcome of budget consultation to date would be considered after item 8 – MOSAIC.

##### **Resolved**

That item 6 - Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2018/19: Update on draft revenue and capital programme and outcome of budget consultation to date be considered after item 8 – MOSAIC.

#### 466/15     **UPDATE ON THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT POST OFSTED ACTION PLAN**

The Panel considered a report [annexed] setting out progress made following Ofsted's inspection of Local Authority School Improvement Services in June 2014. Key issues identified for improvement included, to:

1. Ensure strong leadership in all Walsall Schools.
2. Ensure the Local Authority improvement strategy is fit for purpose.
3. Ensure the Local Authority maintains an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the performance of all schools.
4. Ensure a robust and unambiguous approach to school categorisation, intervention and support.
5. Ensure high quality school improvement across all sectors.
6. Ensure effective school to school support across the Local Authority.

The Interim Head of Service – School Improvement advised that the Independent Chair of the Walsall Education Challenge Board would be attending the Panel meeting in February, 2015 to provide further in-depth insight into the work being undertaken to improve education within Walsall.

Members were advised that two primary schools had moved from an inadequate rating (Special Measures) to good, meaning that 68.3% of Walsall primaries are now rated good or better compared to 81.5% nationally. No other schools had been put into special measures, however, officers assured the Panel that they would not rest until there were no schools which were cause for concern.

It was explained that during February, 2015, Headteachers would accompany representatives from Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) to inspect 12 primary schools to provide headteachers with a better understanding of how Ofsted worked. It would also allow schools to identify good practice which could then be applied in their own schools.

In terms of the structure and staffing, the team had been reshaped to ensure that the service was fit for purpose. A number of appointments had also been made including:-

- Phil Hand as Interim School Governance Manager;
- Balwant Singh-Bains as Head of the Virtual School
- Nicola Hart as Early Years / School Ready Lead Adviser

In response to a question regarding the shortfall in maths attainment and difficulties in recruiting teachers for that subject, the Interim Head of Service – School Improvement, advised that best practice would be identified and shared with those schools which required support. A directory of good practice was being developed and a school to school support strategy had been established.

A Member requested that consideration be given to receiving a presentation at a future meeting from the new Virtual Head.

In terms of the HMI inspections, it was asked which schools would be within the first tranche. The Interim Head of Service – School Improvement, advised that twelve schools had been identified and invited to take up the opportunity. The deadline for expressions of interest was Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. In terms of phases, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> phases would focus on Primary schools whilst the 3<sup>rd</sup> tranche would focus on secondary schools.

A Member questioned whether this would include Academies. The Panel were advised that 11 out of the 12 schools were maintained schools. There was 1 Academy which was the lowest performing school in the Borough.

A further Member of the Panel queried whether schools involvement in the HMI review was mandatory? The Interim Head of Service – School Improvement advised that it was a voluntary arrangement, however, invitations to schools made it clear that should they not participate, evidence would be required to clearly set out what strategies were being put in place to achieve improvements.

Referring to the report, a Member voiced concern that 4 Secondary schools (all sponsored Academies) had been rated as inadequate and asked what had been implemented to improve the situation.

Officers advised that the Authority had lodged concerns about 1 of the Sponsors with the schools commissioner. In 2 Academies, there had been a difficult start with their sponsors but this situation has now improved. The 4<sup>th</sup> Academy was making reasonable progress and was due to have a monitoring visit shortly.

Members suggested that the Panel hold a private session at a future meeting to have a full and frank discussion on school performance. The Chair agreed that this would be worthwhile.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**467/15 MOSAIC**

The Panel considered a report [annexed] setting out the implementation of the new social care case management system called **Mosaic** which delivers the Children's Services improvement plan to: *"Ensure that the child's electronic recording system facilitates and supports social work practice, quality assurance and performance management processes"*.

Members were advised that the new system would ensure that the transition for people from children to adults services would be improved as the system was being implemented in both Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

In terms of implementation, it was acknowledged that initial timescales had been challenging. It was originally anticipated that the best practice configuration would be adopted, however, it became clear during the process that there were elements of the system which required customising to suit the needs of Walsall. This created delay, however, it was stressed that it was better to implement the system safely rather than quickly. The new deadline provided sufficient time to ensure that data migrated to the new system was as accurately as possible as data cleansing was crucial to the effectiveness of the system.

The Head of Programme Delivery advised that the system would be tested within Fostering and Adoption before going live. It was stated that the system had further capabilities, such as raising invoices and other financial processes which could deliver savings in the future. It was anticipated that the system would go live in April, 2015 with the further benefits, such as financial systems following later that year.

Members of the Panel were requested to contact the Head of Programme Delivery should they wish to receive a 'walk through' of the new system.

The Chair asked whether new cases were being input into the new system or whether the Council was still using the old system, PARIS. In response, the Interim Assistant Director (Social Care) advised that cases were being entered in PARIS. Once MOSAIC was ready all cases will be transferred.

The Chair followed up asking if it was true that data cleansing had started a year ago. The Interim Assistant Director (Social Care) confirmed that this was the case and that data cleansing had been prioritised.

The Chair asked for examples of issues staff experienced with PARIS that would be solved by MOSAIC. It was explained that there were a number of advantages of the new MOSAIC system. This included a more intuitive interface and data entry to the ability to interpret and analyse data in a more user friendly and relevant format. One such example was the ability to build family trees which provided easy access to all relevant information in a graphical way. Further, MOSAIC would reduce the amount of time social workers spend on administrative functions which was considerable on the PARIS system. In closing it was highlighted that Ofsted viewed case records and formed a judgement on them as part of their inspection regimes. It was therefore important that records were accurate and up to date - MOSAIC would assist in this process.

A Member of the Panel expressed disappointment and concern that the implementation of MOSAIC was delayed given that the present system, PARIS, was so poor. It was imperative that the new system was implemented sooner rather than later. The Head of Programme Delivery acknowledged that there had been a delay but stressed that it was important to implement the system as safely as possible. The previous deadline had been optimistic and there was now a more practical approach in place. The system was being tailored to the Council's needs and so would take time to get it right. The Interim Assistant Director – Social Care explained that the new system would enable the Authority to begin single assessments which was not possible using the PARIS system.

The Chair stated that whilst there had been a delay, he was keen to have the system operational as soon as it was safe to do so.

### **Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

### **468/15 FINANCIAL PLAN 2015/16 TO 2018/19 – UPDATE ON DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND OUTCOME OF BUDGET CONSULTATION TO DATE**

Members considered a report [annexed] setting out an update on the draft revenue budget and capital programme and the outcome of budget consultation. A further report on children's centres (saving reference 22 was circulated at the meeting).

The Panel made the following comments.

## **Saving reference 22 - Children's Centre Services**

- Extend definition of vulnerable to include all new parents of 0-3's and retain universal provision of Play and Stay and PEEP (Parents Early Education Programme) groups to all families with 0-3s.

Members of the Panel were pleased to see that the definition of vulnerable had been extended following the outcome of consultation which identified that many new parents described themselves as vulnerable.

## **Saving references 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37 – Youth Services**

Members noted that a root and branch review was being undertaken and requested that the matter be considered by the Panel, once the review had been completed.

## **Saving reference 41 – Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services – Withdraw funding for psychologist working in schools**

Members expressed concerns that the waiting time to access CAMHS was unacceptable. A detailed report was requested to be considered at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Panel. Members further suggested that the Health and Well Being Board should visit this issue.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

1. **A report be considered on Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services at a future meeting;**
2. **A report be considered detailing the outcome of the 'root and branch' review of Youth Services, when completed.**
3. **That the Health and Wellbeing Board be advised of the Panels concerns and consider including Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services as part of its work programme.**

## **469/15 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

The Panel received a report [annexed] setting out the purpose and activity of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB). The report focussed on improvements made to increase the Board's impact on outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

The Interim Assistant Director (Social Care) explained that Corporate Parenting was much more than the operation of the Board and operated in a similar way to Scrutiny. He referred to 'Total Respect' training delivered by young people and advised that Members would be offered the opportunity to attend in future. Further training in respect of child sexual exploitation/admission arrangements would be provided for all members of the Council during February and March, 2015.

The Portfolio Holder (Children's Services) explained that work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel was also considered by the CPB such as reviews including safeguarding and looked after children. This ensured that information and good practice was shared.

The Board had established a number of Task Groups, each with direct responsibility for a section of the Looked After Children's Strategy. In addition to the membership of each being suited to its area of interest and action, the Board decided that every group should include Elected Member representation and an advocate for the voice of looked after children and young people. There were still vacancies for elected Members on some of the task groups.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**470/15 CARE LEAVERS WORKING GROUP**

The Panel received an update report [annexed] providing a progress update on the 20 recommendations of the Care Leavers Working Group report. The report grouped recommendations into 7 themes:-

- Environment;
- Out of hours support;
- The journey to independence;
- Accommodation;
- Money;
- Involvement and Information;
- Corporate Parenting/Keeping in Touch.

The Chair questioned whether there were sufficient funds available to develop 'Staying Put' arrangements. Officers advised that the council had to honour 'Staying Put' arrangements when requested. It was explained that 'Staying Put' required a cultural shift in the way that foster carers support young people.

In terms of money provided to care leavers, the Panel were advised that a review of the financial systems in the Care Leaver Service was underway and that benchmarking with other Authorities had been undertaken. Use of pre-paid cards which could give young people a greater degree of independence with their finances was being considered and an update would be provided to the Panel in April 2015.

A Member suggested that local banks should be approached to identify whether they would be able to assist as many had initiatives in place to support young people, such as those moving to university to develop their independence. Officers advised that they would pursue this further.

In terms of accommodation, the Homelessness & Housing Service Manager provided an update, clarifying that all young people had been successfully moved

from decommissioned accommodation. This included shared accommodation, 1 and 2 bed flats, social housing, returning to family homes (following mediation) and supported accommodation with 24 hour support.

The Chair asked whether it would be feasible to visit the new accommodation as it was clear during the review that previous accommodation wasn't fit for purpose. The Homelessness & Housing Service Manager advised that this would be possible.

**Resolved:**

1. **That further visits to accommodation be arranged for members of the Care Leavers Working Group;**
2. **That a further update on the recommendations of the Care Leavers Working Group be submitted to the meeting in April, 2015; and;**
3. **That the update be noted.**

**471/15      WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**

Members considered the work programme and forward plan (annexed).

**Resolved:**

**That the work programme and forward plan be noted.**

**472/15      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 24 February, 2015.

The meeting terminated at 8.35 p.m.

Chair: .....

Date:.....