

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

Panel Members Present

Councillor E. Hughes (Chair)
Councillor B. Cassidy (Vice Chair)
Councillor L. Beeley
Councillor O. Bennett
Councillor K. Chambers
Councillor R. Martin
Councillor D. Shires
Councillor R. Thomas

Non elected voting members present

A. McDevitt
K. Yeates

Non-elected non-voting members present

D. Jones
R. Bragger

Portfolio Holder Present

Councillor R. Andrew

Officers Present

Louise Hughes- Assistant Director, Children's Services
Graham Talbot – Interim Managing Director, Serco
Sue Wedgwood – Assistant Managing Director, Serco –
Improvement and Effectiveness
Avril Walton – Assistant Managing Director, Serco –
Management and Development
Carol Boughton – Head of Early Years and Disability
Services
Matt Underhill – Scrutiny Officer

Invitee Present

Susan Gill – Healthy Weight Programme Manager – NHS
Walsall

56/10 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received for the duration of the meeting.

57/10 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

58/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

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

59/10 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD: OBESITY

The Chair explained that this item was being considered earlier in the meeting than stated on the agenda. The Healthy Weight Programme Manager introduced

the presentation (annexed). The Following is a summary of the report and subsequent discussion:

- Nationally one in four adults are obese, with 26% of adults in Walsall obese and 70% of adults either overweight or obese. Following a Member query the Healthy Weight Programme Manager explained that to be overweight an individual would have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25, with a BMI of over 30 indicating that an individual was obese. BMI is calculated based on height and weight;
- Levels of childhood obesity in Walsall have increased between Reception and Year 6. Following a Member query, the Healthy Weight Programme Manager explained that both underweight and overweight children are signposted to appropriate support, including dieticians. Following a further Member query it was explained that it was part of national strategy for all PCTs to send out letters to parents advising them as to whether their child is underweight, overweight or obese;
- In response to Member queries it was explained that there was universal provision of intervention to tackle early years obesity. A Member expressed concerns regarding the massive social change which had contributed to the rise in obesity. It was important that all partners cooperated to tackle this issue.
- The levels of obesity in Reception Year children were similar in Walsall to the national and regional position. However, by Year 6 Walsall is out of step with the national and regional perspective. The key Walsall obesity objectives were the percentage of children in Reception considered obese with a target of for 2009/10 of 11% which was presently being met with performance of 10.6%. The target for the same measure and period for Year 6 children was 20%, which was presently being missed with performance of 21.6%;
- Following a Member query regarding whether the targets set were sufficiently challenging, the Healthy Weight Programme Manager explained that reversing the rates of obesity was very challenging and that government targets were focused on preventing any further increases. However, the outcome of the preventative work that is currently underway will only be apparent in future years. Walsall's National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) exceeds the NCMP government programme with above average participation at reception, and years 4, 6 and 10;
- Following a further Member query the Healthy Weight Programme Manager agreed that parental responsibility was critical in tackling the issue of obesity. However, it was usually the case that both parents and children within family groups were obese. As a result a family targeted approach had been adopted by NHS Walsall;
- The Healthy Weight Programme Manager explained that there were 9,000 children aged 2 – 15 in Walsall were obese. A strong link had been identified between deprivation and obesity, with evidence that in certain parts of the borough you are twice as likely to be obese. Members raised concerns regarding the proliferation of fast food outlets and take-aways near schools, as well as local high streets. Members agreed that it would be important for planning decisions to reflect concerns regarding the risks of contributing to levels of obesity;
- Levels of physical activity for adults were lower in the borough when

compared with the region and England. While 90% of children undertook two hours of physical activity per week at school, although some of this time was likely to have been used in changing;

- There were a range of health outcomes for obese adults including diabetes, hypertension and some cancers. For children obesity would be likely to cause asthma, depression, anxiety and possibly diabetes. It was also likely to have an impact on attainment. There was also significant evidence that an obese child would become an obese adult;
- The Healthy Weight Programme Manager explained that proactive follow up included 1,250 proactive calls in Reception and Year 4, with other activity including a GP Pilot working with families. Elsewhere a childhood obesity care pathway had been developed and partnership work, including the Fun4Life weight management programme for children aged 8 – 16 years, has been established and achieved a 76% retention rate, while the Make it Count prevention programme for children aged 4 – 7 which involved working with families;
- In addition, the Active and Sustainable Transport and Road Safety Project encourages children to increase physical activity, this had achieved increases in the numbers of children either walking or cycling to school. Take up of school lunches had increased and there was also 100% schools engagement with the healthy schools programme, with 75% having chosen obesity as the issue which they will tackle using the scheme. Activity includes the development of health diets and establishing active life styles amongst children. At the same time Area Partnerships are taking a leading role in a neighbourhood approach to obesity, including the issue of parking around schools and food desert mapping;
- Risks to the current work undertaken in schools included the loss of Healthy Schools Programme funding. The Assistant Managing Director, Serco – Improvement and Effectiveness explained that the loss of such schemes would restrict the ability of schools to support parents in providing healthy diets for children. Following a Member question officers explained that the Jamie Oliver school dinners campaign had a positive impact and Serco had worked with the council's catering service in the promotion of new foods and improved food presentation. A Panel Member highlighted that he and colleagues had faced resistance from parents when they had had introduced nutritional meals and removed chips from the menu at a school;
- The Assistant Director, Children's Services explained that the funding and grant changes posed significant challenges. However, the area partnership area profiles developed using NHS needs analysis data in relation to a number of health inequalities were of a very high standard It would now be important to target those areas where challenges had been identified and work with partners in tackling them;
- The Healthy Weight Programme Manager explained that future opportunities included the establishment of the GP consortia-outcome based contract, with those consortia indicating enthusiasm for supporting the obesity agenda.

Resolved:

that the presentation be noted.

60/10 SNEYD SCHOOL

The Assistant Managing Director, Serco – Management and Development introduced the report (annexed). The following is a summary of the report and subsequent discussion:

- At its meeting on 17 November 2010, Cabinet took the decision to accelerate the closure of the school to August 2011. As a consequence the current year 8 cohort of 33, together with year 9 pupils, will be transferring to new schools on 1 September 2011, with admission rounds continuing;
- Further staff will cease employment with the school at Christmas, having either been made redundant or moving to new posts. At the same time the Interim Executive Board (IEB) is working with Serco to manage the staff resource and make incremental reductions to reflect the decreasing teaching requirement;
- The Ofsted monitoring visit in November noted that progress had moved from “satisfactory” at the previous inspection to “good”. The governance of the schools was commended, with the partnership work with Barr Beacon having established also receiving credit;
- Following a Member query, officers agreed to report back to the Panel regarding the non-attendance of the University Technology College (UTC) did not attend the Year 11 parents’ evening.

Resolved:

That

officers will be report back regarding the Member query in relation to the University Technology College (UTC) and the Year 11 parents evening;

and

that the presentation be noted.

61/10 SERCO EDUCATION CONTRACT: EARLY YEARS IN THE MAINTAINED SECTOR

The Assistant Managing Director, Serco – Improvement and Effectiveness introduced the report (annexed). The following is a summary of the report and subsequent discussion:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets out the framework, standards and overarching principles for 0– 5 years learning and development. All three and four year olds are entitled to fifteen hours per week in an early years setting, with 85% of all children in this age group

eligible. There are 127 schools where EYFS is provided, with 75% rated by Ofsted as delivering good or better early years provision;

- The key indicator measured nationally is the percentage of pupils achieving 78 points at Foundation Stage, with the three year trend for Walsall indicating an overall 9% improvement. However, the borough remains in the lowest quartile for pupils achieving 78 points. Following a Member query, officers explained that this score related to National Indicator (NI) 72 which provided reflected performance across thirteen indicators, including in relation to writing, knowledge and understanding. In response to Member queries, officers explained that the poor performance was due in part to the baseline entry point for many of these children. It was often necessary to provide significant support for children in this age group within the borough to ensure they reached similar levels of basic development to those in other areas. Following a Member query the Interim Managing Director Serco agreed that current performance on this measure had resulted in Walsall falling from 89th to 115th in the national rankings, although progress did continue to be made and the rate of improvement is significantly above the national average and the ambition remained to narrow the gap;
- In relation to writing there was clear focus on early years and parenting. To encourage improved communication skills teachers have also worked with parents to teach them nursery rhymes which they can then use with their own children. Children's Centres are also undertaking activity to assist in preparing children for school. Other activity included helping develop parents self-esteem and the gross motor skills of children. Significant action is also undertaken to assist those children for whom English is not their first language to ensure progress continues into Key Stage One. A Member highlighted the importance of ensuring that parents were properly equipped to provide appropriate support. He felt that some of the problems experienced were as a consequence of failures in the delivery of education for previous generations in the borough;
- Following Member queries the Interim Managing Director Serco explained that savings that Serco were required to make as its contribution to the council's budget target would result in a reduction in support for much of this activity, with some services likely to cease. It would be important that good practice was shared between different learning settings and centres of excellence were established to act as satellite providers of services;
- Officers explained that consistent with the national trend girls continued to outperform boys in a range of accessed areas. However, against the national trend boys are closing the gap. Officers explained that typically girls perform more effectively in relation to Communication, Language and Literacy, while boys exceed the performance of girls in Physical Development;
- There is significant evidence that early years provision input has a positive impact on performance in later phases of education. The challenges include overcoming stereotypical types of play in relation to boys and the negative effect. For example, while girls play with dolls and this will often involve conversation, boys will play with cars and trucks and this doesn't lend itself to conversation style play. There is a focus on structured play and engagement and scaffolded learning where a boy might play with a car but someone else is also there to encourage conversation. Effort was also

being committed to encouraging both parents to read to their children. In response to a Member query, officers explained that it was rare to find male teachers within early years provision. This was likely to be due to concerns that they would be viewed with suspicion;

- The Assistant Managing Director, Serco Improvement and Effectiveness explained that a range of support and challenge was provided to early years settings. This includes the provision to schools of training sessions or other support by Early Years Consultants and Improvement Officers. While training for School Improvement Partnerships and Children's School Improvement Advisors on EYFS has enabled them to provide effective challenge to Heads and Senior Leaders regarding the types of provision delivered;
- The improvement in narrowing the gap and the improvement in the quality of early years provision has led to Walsall being invited to participate in a Department for Education (DfE) short life project to identify successful strategies for improving provision in disadvantaged areas. Next steps in continuing to embed the EYFS include analysis of the data which focuses on those areas requiring further development, an emphasis on the prevention agenda and the provision to early years settings of significant joined up support;
- Key next steps include activity to analyse the data produced in relation to early learning, a focus on the prevention agenda and the effective sharing of good practice.

Resolved:

that the presentation be noted.

62/10 SERCO CONTRACT REVIEW PROCESS

The Assistant Director, Children's Services introduced the item. The following is a summary of the update and subsequent discussion:

- Each contract theme group had undertaken a review of each output specification. Headteacher representatives have also participated in this process and attended every Theme Review meeting, while every Head teacher had been enabled to contribute their views via an on-line survey. The Assistant Director, Children's Services praised the commitment of Head teachers and governors to the contract review process. A Member also expressed both thanks for the efforts of all stakeholders and confidence in the governance and transparency of the process. A further Panel member acknowledged the clarity of the review process, including a structured timetable for Primary and Secondary Head teachers. An additional Panel Member explained that teachers as well as Head teachers had been given the opportunity to contribute their views to the process;
- The budget reduction target for the Education contract in the 2011/12 financial year had been confirmed as £2.5m. Serco will be reporting to the council on 4 January 2011 regarding where savings will be made. The contract review board will then meet on 17 January to review the proposals, prior to

the Cabinet meeting on 9 February to consider the budget proposals for all council services. A Member highlighted the importance of the Education Contract Added Value Measures.

- Officers explained that, while the contract review had been put in place prior to the introduction of the Schools White Paper 2010, it was apparent that the White Paper would change the shape of education in the future. Funding would be provided directly to schools enabling them to commission services as they felt appropriate. However, there were likely to be implications for Early Years provision and subject specialist school funding;
- It was agreed that officers would provide guidance to the Panel regarding the impact of funding changes. It was also agreed that the Schools White Paper 2010 would be shared with each of the main political groups. The Interim Managing Director Serco explained that he would also be visiting Area Partnership meetings to provide guidance regarding the White Paper.

Resolved:

That

- 1. officers will be report back to the Panel regarding the impact of funding changes;**
- 2. officers will provide guidance regarding the Schools White Paper 2010 to each of the main political groups;**

and

- 3. the report be noted.**

63/10 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 AND FORWARD PLAN

The Panel reviewed their work programme and latest version of Cabinets forward plan of key decisions.

64/10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The time and date of the next meeting was noted as 25 January 2011.

The meeting terminated at 7:55pm

Chair:

Date: