

SCRUTINY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 DECEMBER 2016 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

Panel Members Present Councillor Hussain (Chair)
 Councillor Murray (Vice Chair)
 Councillor Bird
 Councillor Chambers
 Councillor Creaney
 Councillor A. Ditta
 Councillor E. Hazell
 Councillor Longhi
 Councillor Wade

Officers Present: David Haley - Statutory Scrutiny Officer
 Neil Picken – Senior Democratic Services
 Officer

Leader of the Council Councillor S. Coughlan

Portfolio Holders Councillor D. Coughlan (Social Care)
 Councillor I. Robertson (Health)

52/16 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors D. Barker and C. Towe.

53/16 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

54/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

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

55/16 MINUTES

Members considered the minutes of the meetings held on 13 October, 2016.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October, 2016, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

The Chair invited each of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs to provide feedback on the recent round of meetings.

Social Care and Health

The Chair of the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee (SC&H) advised that the Committee that three local NHS Trusts were in special measures and regular updates were requested.

He advised that he had requested to meet with NHS England regarding the £23 million being removed from the local health economy. He further advised that despite numerous attempts, Dr Paul Watson, Regional Director (Midlands and East), NHS England had not agreed to meet to discuss matters. The Chair of the SC&C confirmed his commitment to progress this and advised that he would continue to scrutinise Walsall CCG.

Discussion ensued on the sustainable transformation plan. The Chair advised that the document had been prepared by the NHS commenting that it was not clear what the document was trying to achieve. These comments were endorsed by other members.

General points were made relating to the lack of cooperation of Ministers when elected members tried to approach them for clarity.

Education and Children's Services

It was reported that the Committee continued to oversee education. The Education Challenge Board was in place and continued to engage with Heads. It was intended that the Board would eventually cease in its current guise and instead be managed by Heads to provide effective school to school challenge.

Children's Services were also challenged at each meeting. At the last meeting, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was discussed but attendance by Partners was disappointing. A special meeting was to be held in January, 2017 to revisit CSE.

Other areas considered included unaccompanied asylum seeking children, the budget and challenges it brings and looked after children. The implementation of Education, Health and Care Plans was also being closely monitored as it was taking longer than anticipated.

A debate followed on the implementation of MOSAIC - the electronic case management system for social care and ways to safely reduce the number of looked after children. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer advised that the number of children on child protection plans was reducing. It was stressed that Partners needed to carry risk better rather than making instant referrals to the Multi Agency Screening Hub.

It was commented that it was important to reduce caseloads for social workers to improve the quality of practice. However, the aim to reduce caseloads to 15 was ambitious.

The issue of mental health for children leaving foster care was raised, particularly in relation to referrals and how these are undertaken. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer agreed to consider this point noting that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service would be attending a future scrutiny committee.

The Vice Chair of the Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee also explained that she had attended the foster care Christmas party stating that members should support such events.

Corporate and Public Services

The Vice-Chair of the Corporate and Public Services Committee (C&PSC) advised that the budget had been considered. In addition, the Remembrance Day Working Group had undertaken some good work and ensured that the Parades took place. It was now important to identify a long term solution as organisers would have to find 70% of the costs for future Parades.

The Leader of the Council advised that he had listened to the Working Group and had worked positively with the Police and Crime Commissioner to identify a solution for the 2016 Parades. These were community events and should be supported.

A Member commented that in some circumstances road closures should be revisited to ensure that pedestrian safety was ensured but that disruption to traffic was minimised. The Committee countered the view stating that safety of pedestrians was paramount.

The Vice-Chair of the C&PSC was requested to consider CCTV and the Solihull Contract at a future meeting.

Resolved:

- 1. That the Chair of the Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the inclusion of the Solihull Contract and CCTV in its work plan; and**
- 2. That the updates be noted**

57/16 AREAS OF FOCUS 2015/16

Members considered the areas of focus for each of the Scrutiny Committees.

Resolved:

That the areas of focus be noted.

58/16 **FORWARD PLANS**

Members considered the forward plan of key decisions form Cabinet and the Black Country Joint Executive (annexed).

Resolved:

That the forward plans be noted.

59/16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was 14 March, 2017.

The meeting terminated at 7.00 p.m.

Chair:

Date:.....