

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

TUESDAY 8 JANUARY, 2013 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

<b>Panel Members Present</b>	Councillor B. Cassidy (Chair) Councillor R. Martin (Vice Chair) Councillor D. Shires Councillor T. Jukes Councillor R. Thomas Councillor E. Hughes Councillor G. Perry
<b>Non elected non-voting members present</b>	R. Bragger (Primary Teacher representative) P. Dunn (Secondary Teacher representative)
<b>Portfolio holder present</b>	Councillor R. Andrew - Children's Services
<b>Officers Present</b>	Rose Collinson - Interim Executive Director, Children's Services; Sue Butcher - Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services Frank Barnes - Assistant Managing Director, Participation, Serco Denise Falconbridge - Managing Director, Serco Shannon Moore - Head of Improvement Services, Serco Carol Boughton – Head of Service, Serco Dan Mortiboys – Senior Finance Manager (Head of Schools Finance) Neil Picken – Senior Committee Business and Governance Manager
<b>Also Present</b>	Robert Lake – Chair of Walsall Safeguarding Children's Board

### **258/13 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Mr S. Raynor.

### **259/13 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

### **260/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

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

## 261/13 MINUTES

Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November, 2012.

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November, 2012, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

## 262/13 HMCi REPORT – PRESENTATION ON KEY ISSUES

The interim Executive Director (Children's Services) provided a presentation on the key issues of the annual report from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, Sir Michael Wilshaw.

The Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) focussed upon the key aspects of the report as follows:-

- The overall state of the nation commentary;
- Detailed reports on:
  - Early years
  - Schools
  - Learning and skills
- The launch of data view;
- The report on social care provision coming in summer 2013.

Following the presentation the Chair made reference to the fact that City Challenge Programme had worked well within some of the poorest areas of London, however, it did not appear to have had the same impact within the Midlands. It was stated that hope and ambition were important and that talent needed to remain within the borough to avoid a 'brain drain'. When asked, officers advised that the current percentage of those not in employment, education or training was roughly 7.6%. This would be verified and confirmed with Members.

A discussion followed on apprenticeships and officers advised that a briefing note would be circulated following a meeting with the Apprenticeship Service.

A question was asked in relation to the effectiveness of extending the school day and whether or not underperforming schools had looked into the possibility of doing so. In response, officers advised that such an initiative had been introduced at the beginning of September 2012 in a school in special measures in Grimsby. Officers stated that it was the Governing Body would need to take the decision and ensure that staffing levels needed to be sustainable. Officers agreed to provide a briefing note on this matter to Members.

## Resolved

- 1) That the Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) verifies the percentage of those not in education, employment or training and confirms with Members;
- 2) That the Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) circulate a briefing note on apprenticeships following a meeting with the Apprenticeship service;
- 3) That the Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) provides a briefing note on extending school days.

## 263/13 PERFORMANCE AT KEY STAGE TWO IN 2012

The Head of Improvement Services presented a report setting out how school performance is measured nationally and indicates how Walsall schools have performed over time.

During the presentation it was explained that a rigorous moderation process was in place within Walsall. It was also highlighted that two schools within Walsall had not yet received confirmed results by the time that validated results were published which had an impact on the overall position of Walsall in the performance tables.

Member's attention was also drawn to the fact that Walsall's performance had improved faster than the national, West Midlands, Black Country and Statistical Neighbour averages over the period 2005 – 2011.

In relation to vulnerable groups it was reported that Walsall's performance was higher than the comparator local authorities however Serco was striving to do even better.

In relation to achievement by ethnic heritage it was stated that the lowest performing group were from Pakistani heritage, a cohort of 347 children, with significant under performance also of Other and Bangladeshi heritage pupils. Members queried the reasons behind the lowest performing groups and asked what was being carried out to improve matters. Officers advised that there were two groups within Walsall, the first was a Head Teachers group which consisted of Heads from schools with a large proportion of Bangladeshi students. Secondly, a summit had been held in 2012 and research undertaken by the University of Wolverhampton. In 2013 an 'Achieving for All' pilot had been developed to look specifically at vulnerable groups. Officers from SERCO explained that there was more to be done and that support would continue.

Discussion ensued during which it was asked what the impact on the league table would have been should the two schools which had not confirmed their results in time thus resulting in a nil return. It was explained that this was difficult to answer as many other authorities may have had nil results also. The position within the league table would however, have improved although by how much was difficult to predict.

A question was asked in relation to the level of support new Head Teachers receive. Officers from SERCO explained that an induction programme was in place which linked with a mentor scheme. There was also a Black Country Support Service available.

Schools also had a grant to buy in training as and when required. An improvement advisor was linked to each school and the Governing Body was responsible for performance management matters. Should any concerns be raised with performance the Governors should engage with the Head Teacher. In relation to this, a Councillor stated that many Governor volunteers were lay people rather than professionals with experience of education. The Assistant Managing Director, Participation, Serco explained that DSIN analysis was carried out to target interventions as required which would highlight the matter to Governors and also highlighted the fact that Governing Bodies were required to agree performance targets with Headteachers.

The Chair stated that twenty schools were not achieving and asked what was being carried out to improve this as some schools had been underperforming for four years. Officers from SERCO advised that there were a number of strategies to improve underperforming schools including statutory intervention powers. These included the ability to remove governors and delegations to make decisions. The option to turn a school into an Academy was also a consideration. The Chair noted the response but asked what was happening with schools currently. The Panel were advised that a number of activities were in place ranging from appointing a new Head Teacher, utilising partnership review groups and academy conversions. .

Members expressed concern that turning schools into Academies was not a magic solution. The Assistant Managing Director, Participation, Serco agreed that turning a failing school into an Academy was not a 'cure all' solution, however, it was the policy direction at the present time. Discussions were taking place to establish what needed to be carried out to address Academies that were failing. It was highlighted that as resources to schools were reduced alternative ways needed to be found to improve matters.

Members asked that future reports specify which schools were Academies which officers agreed to. The Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) advised that a report by the RSA (the Royal Society of Arts) would be published on the 10.01.13 relating to Academies. This would be circulated to Members together with a briefing note. It was also stated that whilst limited, opportunities still existed for effective Scrutiny of Academies. The Chair requested that updates on the performance of Academies, focussing on those which were under achieving be considered throughout the year.

Discussion returned to the issue of Governors and it was noted that an effective, strong and focussed board of governors could turn a school around. The school itself required a desire and determination to change otherwise intervention would be ineffective. It was suggested that governing bodies should be invited to attend future meetings of the Panel to seek ways in which they could be supported to achieve within their roles. The Chair supported this and suggested that a report be considered by the Panel focussing on those schools which were failing, the interventions put in place and detail as to how effective those measures have been. Officers agreed to provide this information to the next meeting of the Panel and suggested that Head Teachers also be invited to provide a joint presentation. The Panel agreed.

## Resolved

- 1) That the report produced by the Royal Society of Arts on Academies be circulated, once published, together with a briefing note;
- 2) That updates on the performance of academies be considered by the Panel throughout the year;
- 3) That a report be considered at the Panel meeting to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 on effective school improvement strategies , the interventions put in place and how effective these measures had been; Head Teachers and chairs of governors of schools in challenging circumstances be invited to attend.
- 4) That future reports clearly identify which schools are academies.

## 264/13 OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND IMPACT OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Members considered a report providing an overview of the educational outcomes for looked after children in Walsall including results by key stage, trends over time and National comparisons.

Discussion took place on the support given to foster parents to which Members were advised that an 'enrichment pack' was provided. The virtual school also offered training however take up was low. It was acknowledged that more creative ways needed to be found to reach foster carers. Members were advised that in 2012, 26 children at Key Stage 1 had used the virtual school, seven of which had received 1:1 tuition using Pupil Premium and additional funding.

In relation to children at Key Stage 2 the cohort of children was 21 and outcomes for these children were above National outcomes. A member asked what the difficulties had been at Queen Mary's and what impact residential workers made? In response it was stated that many afterschool clubs had led to difficulties in getting children collected. The matter was being investigated and new ways of working being looked into to use residential workers in a different way. The Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) stated that whilst there were complications it was important to find a solution as to how to transport children to and from afterschool provision. The Head of Improvement Services, Serco stated that the offer needed to be attractive to young people to encourage attendance. The Head of Service, Serco also contributed stating that provision during term time was more successful whereas afterschool provision was more complex. The Chair requested a briefing note on this matter or an update to the Panel meeting in March.

Clarity was sought on virtual schools and whether a cost versus impact study had been undertaken. In response it was explained that a virtual school did not exist in real terms, or as a building. Children do not attend it - they remain the responsibility of the School at which they are enrolled. The Virtual School is simply an organisation which has been created for the effective co-ordination of educational services at a strategic and operational level for looked after children.

The Head of Service, Serco explained that for year 9 students a 'taster day' at Wolverhampton University would be offered for the first time. It was also reported that there had been no permanent exclusions for looked after children for 8 years.

A Member asked what level of provision was available for training to which it was explained that a whole host of provision was available. Staff were well equipped to find courses ranging from animal management and nail technicians to NVQ's in Business.

A discussion followed on the impact of placement moves. It was explained that placement moves were only carried out if absolutely necessary.

The Chair asked for any information available to indicate how many looked after children attended university. The Head of Service, Serco advised that this information would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

The Chair requested details of the number of looked after children that were employed by the Council as part of its apprenticeship scheme. The Head of Service, Serco advised that this information would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

The Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) stated that the Council had been awarded the 'From Care2Work' Quality Mark. This recognises that Walsall invests time and gives support to young people leaving care that prepares them for the world of work. Work was being undertaken with the Regeneration Directorate to build upon this to offer even more opportunities for looked after children.

The age profile of those entering into care was requested. Members were advised that there was a larger cohort within the 0 – 4 bracket and then a smaller cohort for those aged 5 – 12. A spike then appeared for those aged between 13 -15.

## **Resolved**

- 1) That a briefing note be circulated on afterschool provision at Queen Mary's Grammar School ;**
- 2) That information on the number of looked after children entering University be circulated to members of the Panel;**
- 3) That details of the number of looked after children engaged with the apprenticeship scheme be circulated to members of the Panel.**

## **265/13 CHILDRENS SERVICES COMPLAINTS – ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chair advised that this item had been deferred and would be considered at the meeting to be held on 12 February, 2013.

## **266/13 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14**

The Senior Finance Manager (Head of Schools Finance) presented a report detailing the draft capital programme for the Children's services portfolio.

Members considered the report and expressed concern that the draft capital programme 2013/14 to 107/18 showed clear pressures with a reduction of over £2m by 2017/18.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

## **267/13 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY**

Members considered a report providing an update on post Ofsted improvement priorities and activity.

Discussion took place on the social work health check survey. 49.4% of Social Workers had responded and a further update would be provided at the next meeting of the Panel once more analysis had been undertaken. The Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) advised that it was important to continue to ask and follow up the survey to ensure progress.

The Chair asked if the feedback was better than expected. The Panel were advised that there were differences between tiers and so the survey would help target resources. Overall the results were constructive and positive about commitment to improvement. It was noted that the most cited things social workers wished to change included more input into decision making and more time for direct work with children and families.

In relation to the divergence between the outcomes of the Safeguarding Peer Review and the Ofsted inspection, a Member asked how peer reviews could be trusted in the future. The Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) advised that the peer review model had been revisited as it was complex and not as successful as it needed to be in ensuring the team worked together to drill down into safeguarding practice. . Future peer challenges would be focussed on specific areas rather than broad reviews. A peer challenge into Walsall's Children with Disabilities team was being undertaken in January 2013, led by Gloucestershire. . Councils would request a peer challenge into a specific area and the challenge would investigate and suggest ways to improve.

The Chair asked that an update on the review being undertaken in the new format be considered by the Panel at the meeting to be held on 26 March, 2013 as part of the improvement activity update.

In relation to complaints and compliments, the views of young people had been sought. The result of which was that the complaints system needed to be simplified. The Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) advised that this matter could be considered in more depth at the next meeting of the Panel when an updated report on complaints and compliments would be submitted.

Discussion followed on C4EO, the company commissioned to provide support in areas relating to performance and quality assurance. It was asked how they were appointed, whether they were a charity and whether the Interim Director (Children's Services) had been involved with them previously? In response, she confirmed that along with all

Directors of Children's Services (DCS) she engaged in gifting time to sector led support in return for gaining time in the home Authority from colleagues (as with Gloucestershire leading a peer challenge). C4EO was, she understood a charity limited by guarantee, which championed and promoted sector led support and had been recommended by the Children's Improvement Adviser to Walsall to help support improvement. She also confirmed that all Directors of Children's Services (DCS) would have committed to engaging in a national leadership programme for DCS. This programme also supported a sector led approach. It was now organised by the Virtual Staff College of which she was company secretary in a voluntary capacity.

Improving the quality of partnership and governance was raised. Members noted that Robert Lake had been appointed as Chair of the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board. The chair congratulated Robert Lake, whom was observing the meeting, on his recent appointment.

Officers drew member's attention to the successful submission to the national Children's Improvement Board to work with the Children's Society and the WCSB sub group responsible for child sexual exploitation at both strategic and operational levels. It was asked that the outcome of this work be reported to the Panel in early summer 2013.

Members queried whether an appointment had been made to the Head of Corporate Parenting position? Officers advised that following the departure of the previous post holder in September, 2012, interviews had been held and an interim appointment was made. Unfortunately, the interim declined the post less than 48 hours before they were due to start. Alternative arrangements were being considered to build capacity in-house.

The issue raised by social workers in the social work health check of wanting more decision making and more time with children and families was revisited. The Interim Assistant Director (Children's Services) explained that presently Children Service Support Officers undertook most of the direct work with families and children as they were not able to hold and manage case loads. This was being revisited to see if it could be configured differently. The interim Executive Director (Children's Services) stated that there was a need to support, challenge and gain mutual trust.

In closing, clarity was sought on the weaknesses which had been identified in the children's social care commissioning and contract monitoring. Members were advised that contract monitoring was looser than expected and a full review needed to be undertaken to establish what value the Council were getting from existing contracts. Commissioning would be reshaped and improved to ensure better arrangements in future.

## **Resolved**

That the update be noted.

## **268/13 EDUCATION CONTRACT**

(Exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972) as amended.



An update was provided on the provision of SEN transport and transfer of the Children's Centres to the Council. Further details were provided on Walsall's '*Sharing Practice*' developments which had been devised with head teachers.

Under questioning the Interim Executive Director (Children's Services) advised that it was anticipated that the transfer was expected to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2013.

**Resolved**

That the update be noted

The meeting terminated at 8.30 pm.

Chair:

Date: