



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Spencer (in the Chair)
Councillors Danny Burns, Hardman, Murphy and
Prendergast

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. M. Byrne, Healthwatch Representative
Mrs. S. Cain, Independent Advisory Member
Ms. M. McDermott, Parent Governor Representative
Councillor Doyle – Cabinet Member – Children's
Social Care
Councillor Roscoe, Cabinet Member – Education

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors June Burns and Christine Maher; Councillor Carlin and her Substitute Councillor J. Kelly; Councillor Evans and his Substitute Councillor Brodie Browne; Ms. Karen Christie, Healthwatch Representative; and Father Des Seddon, Archdiocese Representative.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declaration of personal interest was made and the Member concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item:

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Prendergast	Minute No. 18 – Cabinet Member Reports	His wife is a teacher at Rowan High School.

12. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment of Minute No. 4 to read as follows, the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022, be confirmed as a correct record:

That it be noted that the Minutes of, **and reports submitted to**, the Improvement Board, in relation to the Children's Services Improvement Journey, have been requested by the Committee.

13. DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 12 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health) of 6 September 2022, the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities) updating on Sefton's strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse, including an overview of the Domestic Abuse Act and work of the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to date. The report set out the background to the matter; an overview of the Domestic Abuse Act; local authority statutory duties within the Act; the roles and responsibilities of the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board; links to other national/statutory guidance; and cross-partnership collaboration.

The Terms of Reference for the Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board were attached to the report at Appendix A.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- The main features of the domestic abuse needs assessment.
- Any issues associated with voluntary sector organisations working with domestic abuse victims.
- The possibility of future updates on the matter.
- Monitoring of any delays to interventions.
- Understanding the impact on young victims of domestic abuse and how to offer appropriate support.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

14. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education that updated on progress made and presented the Performance Dashboard for consideration. The report set out details of progress and priorities for the next quarter.

The Children's Social Care Performance Dashboard was attached to the report.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- Reasons why managed teams had not been recorded previously within the Children's Social Care Workforce Report Summary.
- A comparison of managed teams and the commissioning of a team to commissioning a service.
- How managed teams fitted into the process.
- Accountability of managed teams.

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- Concerns that managed teams were outside the Council's direct control.
- Costs associated with managed teams.
- The development of the academy and numbers attained.
- Recruitment to vacancies.
- Any documents provided to the Committee should be circulated in advance of meetings.
- Referrals appeared to be increasing.
- Children In Need (CIN) Plans currently included children with disabilities. This should be differentiated in future Performance Dashboards submitted to the Committee.
- The percentage of overdue Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs).
- The number of Plans currently open.
- Trends in Child Protection (CP) Episodes.
- Trends in Cared for Children (CfC).
- The model used for determining the approach as to how children were put on a Plan.
- The statutory requirement for dental checks for Cared for Children (CfC).

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Performance Dashboard at Annex A be noted;
- (2) the progress made and the priorities for the next quarter be noted; and
- (3) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to note the comments of the Committee in relation to the Performance Dashboard and Children In Need (CIN) Plans that currently included children with disabilities, in that this should be differentiated in future Performance Dashboards submitted to the Committee.

15. EARLY HELP SERVICES

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education, that provided an update on the work to review Early Help Services and set out an approach to present to Members of the Committee. The report detailed the background and current position.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following:

- The need to consult with staff and addressing the culture of staff needs.

RESOLVED:

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That the report be noted.

16. EDUCATION EXCELLENCE STRATEGY FOR SEFTON 2022-2027

Further to Minute No. 43 (4) of 15 March 2022, the Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director Children's Services (Education), that presented the Education Excellence Strategy for Sefton 2022-2027. The development of the Strategy, together with the proposed next steps in terms of programme development were also set out. The report would also be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 6 October 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the Education Excellence Strategy for Sefton 2022-2027 be received and noted.

17. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education updating on recent Ofsted Inspection Reports and the work of the School Improvement Team.

The following schools had been inspected and reports received during the Summer term of 2022:

- Holy Trinity Primary School
- Maricourt High School
- St Johns Crossens Primary School
- St Philips Primary School
- Birkdale High School

A Summary of Ofsted Outcomes and Support during Summer 2022 was attached to the report.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Clarification regarding schools recently inspected.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

18. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer submitting the most recent update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care, and the Cabinet Member – Education, whose portfolios fell within the remit of the Committee.

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The Cabinet Member update report – Children's Social Care, attached to the report at Appendix A, outlined information on the following:

- Children's Social Care
- Youth Justice Service:
 - Performance
- Critical Learning Reviews
- Female Cohort Mapping
- Violent Crime

The Cabinet Member update report – Education, attached to the report at Appendix B, outlined information on the following:

- Education Excellence
- Schools:
 - St Teresa's
 - Sacred Heart
 - Savio
- Exams and Tests
- White Paper – "Opportunity for All"
- School Rebuilding Programme
- Attendance
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Councillors Doyle and Roscoe attended the meeting to present their reports and to respond to any questions or issues raised by Members of the Committee.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Social work practice approaches adopted.
- Suitable office space for confidential discussions within Magdalen House, Bootle.
- The Early Years and Early Help services. An explanation regarding the closure of buildings associated with services could be sought.
- Reference was made to the Children's Services Improvement Plan that had been considered by Committee members at an informal meeting held on 17 August 2022.
- Concerns were expressed regarding an attempted suicide referred to within the update from the Youth Justice Service and the importance of early intervention was emphasised.
- Reference was made to Minute No. 5 (1) of 5 July 2022 and the decision taken by the Committee to have sight of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.
- Further to Minutes No. 4 and 5 (2) of 5 July 2022, Members asked for an update regarding the possibility of receiving the Minutes of the Improvement Board and the attendance of the Improvement

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Board Chair at a meeting of the Committee. These matters would be discussed at the next meeting of the Improvement Board.

- The mental health toolbox and raising awareness of resources.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care and the Cabinet Member – Education be noted;
- (2) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to provide an explanation regarding the possible closure of buildings associated with Children's Services;
- (3) it be noted that the Committee had previously taken the decision to request to have sight of the Children's Services Improvement Plan; and
- (4) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to raise the possibility of Committee Members receiving the Minutes of the Improvement Board; and the attendance of the Improvement Board Chair at a future meeting of the Committee, these matters to be raised at the next meeting of the Improvement Board.

19. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer:

- reviewing the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2022/23;
- noting the progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group;
- seeking the views of the Committee on the re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group;
- seeking the views of the Committee on holding informal briefing sessions during 2022/23, rather than establish a traditional working group;
- identifying any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan;
- receiving an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- noting the position of the Parent Governor Representatives that sat on the Committee.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23;
- Appendix B – Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review;

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- Appendix C - Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Thanks were extended to the Committee's Parent Governor Representatives.
- Regarding the possibility of re-establishing the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group, a report could be requested on exam results and performance this year of secondary schools, to ascertain whether there was a need for the working group. Results were requested by school, if possible, and previous reports from 2019 could be used as a template.
- An informal briefing for Committee Members on the Leeds Family Values model was proposed.
- Visits by Committee Members to Children's Services based in Magdalen House, Bootle, could be arranged.
- The reporting of children's health services issues to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;
- (2) progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group be noted;
- (3) previous reports on school performance be provided to the Head of Education and she be requested to submit a report on exam results and performance this year of secondary schools, by school, if possible, in order for the Committee to ascertain whether there is a need to re-establish the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group;
- (4) an informal briefing on the Leeds Family Values model for all Committee Members be arranged in due course;
- (5) visits by Committee Members to the Children's Services Teams based in Magdalen House, Bootle, be arranged in due course;
- (6) the Key Decision Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2022 – 31 January 2023, be noted;
- (7) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (8) the position of the Parent Governor Representatives that sit on the Committee be noted, and thanks be extended to the retiring Parent Governor Representatives.

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