



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

**MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM - BOOTLE TOWN HALL,
TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE, L20 7AE
ON MONDAY 7TH NOVEMBER, 2022**

PRESENT: Councillor June Burns (in the Chair)
Councillor Spencer (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Brough, Danny Burns, Carlin, Evans,
Hardman, Chris Maher, Murphy

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M. Byrne, Healthwatch Representative
Mrs. S. Cain, Independent Advisory Member
Councillor Roscoe

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Prendergast and Wilson, Councillor Doyle, Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care and Karen Christie, Healthwatch.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

22. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022, be confirmed as a correct record.

23. SUMMER 2022 DATA

Further to Minute No.19 (3) of 27 September 2022, the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Social Care and Education that updated on summer 2022 test and examination data. The report set out the background to the matter and referred to the current position and next steps with regard to the possibility of re-establishing the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Executive Director of Social Care and Education be requested to submit a further report to the next meeting of the Committee providing information on the up to date test and examination data.

24. INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEMS AND START WELL UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health that provided a brief overview of the Integrated Care System development through the Sefton Partnership and provided specific detail on the Start Well Plan and its delivery. The report set out the background to the matter; an overview of the Start Well Plan; next steps, and key updates.

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

- the completion of the review, by the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Board, of the local plan developed by the Sefton Emotional Health Partnership; and funding issues associated with this
- autism related funding issues associated with the ASD Community Network programme and the Cheshire and Merseyside Transforming Care developments
- the Framework for Integrated Care (FiC): vanguard model and referral pathways associated with the model
- waiting times for CAMHS assessments
- continuity issues regarding service provision following the recommissioning of SEND or CAMHS services including the handover of work between providers
- performance of the CAMHS service

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) ongoing support for the delivery of the Start Well Plan be agreed and further updates and reports be received in due course and that such reports include updates on the issues above raised by Members.

25. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Social Care and Education on progress made against the Children's Improvement Plan (the Plan). The report set out progress and priorities for the next quarter. A copy of the Improvement Plan was attached at Appendix A.

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

- a concern was raised about the red and orange RAG ratings

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particularly in respect of partner agencies providing active support where required to the achievement of the Improvement Plan; and assurance was sought that arrangements would be put in place to improve such matters as soon as possible

- a concern was expressed that delays appeared to be in areas where the Council relied on external partners
- improvements to the recruitment of staff
- the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the provision of support packages identified in the Plan
- monitoring of Personal Education Plans
- social worker retention issues once qualified via the Social Work Academy and a request for statistics in relation to this matter
- the ability for front line practitioners to take part in the Social Work Academy
- the numbers of newly qualified social workers who had graduated from local universities
- potential to recruit social workers via COMPASS job fairs
- the proportion of agency social workers employed, and potential problems caused by clients having to repeat issues associated with their cases due to a turnover of agency staff

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made and the priorities for the next quarter be noted; and
- (2) of the Executive Director of Social Care and Education be requested to provide statistical information on social worker retention issues once qualified via the Social Work Academy

26. PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Social Care and Education that provided an overview of the September performance dashboard. A copy of the dashboard was attached to the report.

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

- trends associated with cared for children
- contingency plans in place to combat the strains placed on services due to the cost-of-living crisis
- information sought on Sefton's comparison and performance with Liverpool City Region, North-West and national local authorities to gauge how Sefton was improving its services
- the aim to improve the resilience of families so that that they are less reliant on the local authority for help
- the link between poverty and neglect and that empathy should be shown to families struggling with financial difficulties

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- concern expressed about meeting targets for the statutory requirement for dental checks

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the performance dashboard be noted;
- (2) the intention to share education data at the next meeting be noted;
- (3) in relation to the cycle of performance reporting, a rotation of Children's Social Care, Education and Health performance be agreed.

27. CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Social Care and Education that outlined the role of the Children's Services Commissioner for Sefton and the final report of the Commissioner. The report set out the background to the matter; key issues; and recommendations made to the Council. A copy of the Commissioner's report was attached and outlined the role of the Commissioner; an executive summary and recommendations to the Secretary of State for Education; the local authority area: Sefton; the challenges as described by Ofsted; methodology used key issues; and recommendations to the Council.

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

- reference was made to the "Key Issues" section of the report and the comment that "a strong culture of non-compliance which has become a custom and practice coping strategy"; and reassurance was sought that measures were being put in place to combat this
- leadership arrangements in place for the Council to start its improvement work
- delivery of a reliable dashboard to support managers and to deliver credible and timely reporting on performance
- whether it was unusual for the Commissioner to remain with oversight for the foreseeable future
- the refresh of the terms of reference and membership of the Improvement Board
- measure to improve and support the political ownership of children's services

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be noted.

28. 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.

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; and
- Youth Justice Service.

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

- Education Excellence;
- Schools;
- Academisation;
- Exams and Tests; and Attendance; and
- Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND).

Councillor Roscoe attended the meeting to present her report and to respond to any questions or issues raised by Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care and the Cabinet Member – Education be noted.

29. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

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

- to review the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2022/23;
- to note the progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group;
- the views of the Committee on the re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group;
- the views of the Committee on the review of health services for children in Sefton;
- to note the progress of informal briefing sessions for Committee Members to be held during 2022/23, and the intention to hold an informal briefing on the Leeds Family Values in due course;
- to note the intention to hold a site visit for Committee Members to meet with Children's Services Teams at Magdalen House, Bootle, in due course;

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- to note that there were no items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan;
- to receive an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- to formally approve the nomination for a new Parent Governor Representative to sit on the Committee; and
- to formally approve the nomination of a new Archdiocese Representative to sit on the Committee and to thank the retiring Archdiocese Representative for their service on the Committee.

Appendix A to the report set out the Committee's Work Programme for 2022/23; and Appendix B set out the Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review.

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

- the potential re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group
- the review of health services for children in Sefton

RESOLVED:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report be agreed;
- (2) progress of the Impact of Covid 19 on the Primary Curriculum Working Group be noted;
- (3) further consideration be given to the re-establishment of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group once the Committee has considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education providing information on the up-to-date test and examination data (Minute No 23 (2) refers);
- (4) the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health be requested to submit a report providing details/reviewing health services for children in Sefton; and thereafter the Committee give further consideration to holding an informal meeting to consider the matter in more detail;
- (5) the progress of informal briefing sessions for Committee Members to be held during 2022/23 and the arrangements made to hold an informal briefing session on the Leeds Family Values, to be held at 4.00 p.m. on 21 November 2022, be noted;
- (6) the arrangements being made to hold a site visit for Committee Members to meet with Children's Services Teams at Magdalen House, Bootle, at 2.00 p.m. on 23 November 2022, be noted;

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- (7) the fact that there are no items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan that fall under the remit of the Committee, on this occasion, be noted;
- (8) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (9) the nomination received for a new Parent Governor representative, Cheryl Swainbank, to serve on the Committee be formally approved; and it be noted that a further recruitment drive will take place in the new year to seek a second Parent Governor representative; and
- (10) the nomination received for a new Archdiocese Representative, Joan McCarthy, to serve on the Committee be formally approved and the retiring Archdiocese Representative, Father Des Seddon be thanked for his service on the Committee.