



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

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 6TH JUNE, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Hardman (in the Chair)
Councillor Carlin (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Danny Burns, Evans, Howard,
Christopher Page, Prendergast and Spring

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. M. Byrne, Healthwatch Representative
Mrs. S. Cain, Independent Advisory Member
Ms. C. Swainbank, Parent Governor Representative

Councillor Doyle – Cabinet Member – Children's
Social Care
Councillor Roscoe, Cabinet Member – Education

Councillor Harvey
Councillor Tweed
10 members of the public

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions took place.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carragher;
Councillor Richards and her Substitute Councillor McGinnity; and Ms. Joan
McCarthy, Archdiocese Representative.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023, be confirmed as a
correct record.

**5. SEFTON PLACE - COMMUNITY EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND
WELLBEING SERVICES UPDATE 2022 - 2023**

RESOLVED: That

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- (1) the item be deferred, to be considered at an informal meeting of Committee Members on Microsoft Teams, on a date to be determined, in order to enable all relevant health partner representatives to attend; and
- (2) updated data be requested for the informal meeting.

6. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Social Care and Education on progress made on the Improvement Programme. The report set out the background to the matter, indicating that the Improvement Programme continued to be comprised of the four themes, namely:

- Quality - Ensuring the right staff are in the right place at the right time to deliver a consistent standard of good quality safeguarding services to children and families.
- Improving Implementation of Learning - Using what we know and learn to continuously improve and enhance the services we deliver for children and families.
- Improving Tools - Ensuring we have the right tools to enable the workforce to deliver good quality services for children and families.
- Improving Strategic Partnerships - Effective partnership working to enable the delivery of common goals and a high-quality multi-agency response for children and families.

The report indicated that the Improvement Plan also identified four key areas that would be strengthened through the actions included, namely:

- Corporate Leadership
- Governance and Partnerships
- Practice
- Enablers and Resources

The report also set out details of progress and Improvement Plan priorities for the next quarter.

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- Methods used to recognise that cultural change had been embedded.
- Any negative feedback received from families. A report outlining complaints received could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Effective consideration of the presence of males in households considered to be at risk. A report on domestic abuse could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- The importance of audits undertaken to capture the voice of the child.

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- The pace of change and how this was evidenced.
- Clarification on key priorities for the next quarter.
- The importance of administrative support for Children's Services, particularly for social workers with large caseloads. A report on the administrative support pilot scheme could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- The quality and timescales for assessments.
- Protected caseloads for newly qualified social workers.
- The importance of a good working environment for social workers.
- Methods used to encourage individuals to consider social work as a career. A report on the work being undertaken with Leeds to attract social workers could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- The quality of fast-track training for social workers.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made on the Children's Services Improvement Programme be noted;
- (2) the Executive Director of Social Care and Education be requested to report back on the following matters, in line with the Improvement Plan progress, to future meetings of the Committee:
 - (a) negative feedback / complaints received from families;
 - (b) domestic abuse;
 - (c) the administrative support pilot scheme; and
 - (d) the work being undertaken with Leeds to attract social workers.

7. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW OF PRACTICE

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education that set out performance management and quality assurance information in respect of Children's Social Care. The report set out the background to the matter and the following Appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A - Dashboard - Performance Management and Quality Assurance Report; and
- Appendix B Children's Services Analysis Tool (CHAT)

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- Tracking and monitoring of performance management and quality assurance for Children's Social Care.

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- The value of receiving a narrative for the Children's Services Analysis Tool (CHAT).
- The cessation of a child looked after due to death.
- Accommodation types for care leavers and high numbers of independent living.
- Children in need and complex needs.
- Pre-court proceedings and support/interventions offered prior to formal decisions being made.
- The possibility of obtaining data on individual social worker performance.
- Offers of return home interviews for looked after children following the recording of missing/absent incidents from placements.
- Performance in relation to Children in Need.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the information provided be noted;
- (2) the Executive Director of Social Care and Education be requested to submit a further report to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (3) the Democratic Services Manager be requested to include performance management and quality assurance information in respect of Children's Social Care, to include the CHAT report, as a standing item to all meetings of the Committee during 2023/24, and that the following information be included within future reports:
 - a narrative for the Children's Services Analysis Tool (CHAT); and
 - data on child exploitation.

8. SAFEGUARDING LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFER

Further to Minute No. 52 (3) of 6 March 2023, the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Services and Education that provided a summary of training provided by the Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) for 2022/23, in addition to agency engagement. The report provided an overview of training provided by the SSCP for 2022/23, as well as agency engagement, together with training proposals for 2023/24 for the SSCP. Appendix A to the report contained training data.

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- Clarification on any issues regarding training could be sought from Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and

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- (2) Members of the Committee be requested to consider further any issues in relation to training and to provide any feedback.

9. EDUCATION SCORECARD

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education presenting the Education Scorecard. The report provided an overview of the data.

The Education Scorecard was attached to the report and set out statistics on:

- Pupil absence
- Pupil exclusions
- Education, Health and Care Plans
- Not in Employment, Education or Training
- National and Sefton Language Data
- Ofsted breakdown by schools
- Early Years Foundations Profile
- Phonics
- Key Stage 1
- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 4

Further to Minute No. 54 (2) of 6 March 2023, the Scorecard now included categories relating to language known or believed to be other than English and language unclassified.

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- Spring term attendance.
- The number of schools rated as Outstanding within the Borough.
- Support offered to children waiting for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHSPs).
- The risk of permanent exclusions as a result of fixed term exclusions.
- Provision for 16–19-year-olds and the possibility of including data on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in future Education Scorecards.
- General trends for exclusions.
- Ofsted ratings for schools.
- The possibility of including national averages, where they are available, in future Education Scorecards.
- The benefits of the Committee receiving the Education Scorecards on a regular basis.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the data contained in the Education Scorecard be noted;

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- (2) the Assistant Director Children's Services (Education) be requested to include the following in future Education Scorecards:
 - data on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET);
 - national averages, where they are available; and
- (3) the Democratic Services Manager be requested to include the Education Scorecard as a regular item for meetings of the Committee during 2023/24.

10. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Children's Services (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 Spring term of 2023:

- Redgate Primary School
- Meols Cop High School
- Trinity St Peters Primary School
- St John's Waterloo Primary School
- Litherland Moss Primary School
- Great Crosby Primary School
- Kew Woods Primary School
- St Philip's Primary School
- St Elizabeth's Primary School
- Chesterfield High School
- Farnborough Road Infants School
- Melling Primary School

A Summary of Ofsted Outcomes and Support during Spring 2023 was attached to the report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

11. PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer indicating that the Council's Constitution required the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) to have two parent governor representatives who have voting rights on education matters. Representatives were normally appointed for a two-year term of office and there was currently a vacancy on the Committee.

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The Governor Services Team within the Council had sought nominations for a new parent governor to sit on the Committee and one nomination had been received.

RESOLVED:

That the nomination received for a new parent governor representative, Gemma Armer, to sit on the Committee for a period of two years be approved.

12. 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
- Youth Justice Service (YJS):
 - Performance
 - Focus on Risk of Serious Harm and Violence
 - Oversight Framework
 - Prevention Projects

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

- Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme
- OFSTED Local Area Inspection preparation
- SEND
- School Improvement
- Early Years
- Academisation

Councillors Roscoe and Doyle 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 raised the following questions/issues:

- The possibility of having update reports from the Cabinet Members earlier on agendas for future meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

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

13. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

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

- seek the views of the Committee on the draft Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24;
- invite Committee Members to participate in informal briefing sessions during 2023/24, rather than establish a traditional working group;
- identify any site visits to be made during 2023/24
- identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan;
- note the training proposals available from the Local Government Association and in-house; and
- receive an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A - Work Programme for 2023/24;
- Appendix B – Terms of Reference for the Committee (extract from the Council's Constitution); and
- Appendix C - Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- The possibility of the Cabinet delaying consideration of the two items within the Key Decision Forward Plan, as set out in Appendix C of the report, that fell under the remit of this Committee.
- Clarification on the pre-scrutiny process could be sought from the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer.
- Clarification on the CHAT report being a regular standing item for future meetings of the Committee.
- The possibility of holding site visits for Committee Members to the Menai Wellbeing Centre and to Children's Services at Magdalen House, Bootle.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be agreed, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;
- (2) further to Minutes numbered 5 (1), 6 (2), 7 (4) and 9 (3) above, the following items be added to the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24:

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- (a) the Executive Director of Social Care and Education be requested to report back on the following matters, in line with the Improvement Plan progress, to future meetings of the Committee:
 - (i) negative feedback / complaints received from families;
 - (ii) domestic abuse;
 - (iii) the administrative support pilot scheme; and
 - (iv) the work being undertaken with Leeds to attract social workers;
- (b) the Democratic Services Manager be requested to include:
 - (i) performance management and quality assurance information in respect of Children's Social Care, to include the CHAT report, as a standing item to all meetings of the Committee during 2023/24;
 - (ii) the Education Scorecard as a regular item for meetings of the Committee during 2023/24.
- (3) informal briefing sessions be held, as and when required, rather than the establishment of a traditional working group during 2023/24;
- (4) an informal meeting of Committee Members to consider the Sefton Place - Community Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services Update 2022 – 2023, be held on a date to be determined;
- (5) the following site visits be organised for Committee Members during 2023/24:
 - (a) to meet with the Making a Difference (MAD) Group;
 - (b) to visit the Menai Wellbeing Centre;
 - (c) to visit Children's Services at Magdalen House, Bootle;
- (6) the Key Decision Forward Plan for the period 1 June – September 2023 be noted;
- (7) clarification on the pre-scrutiny process could be sought from the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer;
- (8) the training proposals available from the Local Government Association and in-house be noted; and

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- (9) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

14. DATES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2023/24

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the meetings of the Committee scheduled to be held during the Municipal Year 2023/24 are as follows:

- 26 September 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport
- 14 November 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle
- 30 January 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport
- 12 March 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle.