

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



MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM - BOOTLE TOWN HALL,
TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE, L20 7AE
ON TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Hardman (in the Chair)
Councillor Danny Burns (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Evans, McGinnity (Substitute Member)
Harrison Kelly, Christopher Page, Porter,
Prendergast, Richards, and Spring.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Roscoe, Cabinet Member – Children,
Schools and Families
Sandra Cain, Independent Advisory Member
Karen Christie, Healthwatch Representative
Michelle Ravey, Archdiocese Representative

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Parker, Cheryl Swainbank (Parent Governor Representative), Gemma Armer (Parent Governor Representative) and Maurice Byrne (Healthwatch).

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

26. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Committee considered a number of questions raised by a member of the public, together with the responses given.

A member of the public who had submitted questions attended the meeting and supplementary questions were responded to by officers present.

RESOLVED:

That the questions and responses, be noted.

27. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2024, be confirmed as a correct record.

28. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer submitting the most recent update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families whose portfolio fell within the remit of the Committee.

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

- Southport Recovery
- School Attendance
- School Improvement
- 14-19 Engagement in Education, Employment and Training for vulnerable young people
- The Delivering Better Value Programme/Inclusion
- Post 16 Education, Employment and Training for Young People with SEND
- EHCP's
- Home to School Travel

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

- Children's Social Care
- Early Help
- Data, performance and quality assurance
- Achieving Permanence for our Cared for Children
- Springbrook respite provision
- Corporate Parenting
- Workforce Stability
- Practice in Help and Prevention
- Partnership Understanding of Multi-Agency Safeguarding
- Children with Complex Needs and Disabilities
- Emotional health and Wellbeing of Care Experienced Children
- The partnership working with the Sovini group on homes for care leavers
- The recent opening of 'The Hub' for care experienced young people.

Councillor Roscoe attended the meeting to present her 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 support received from the Government after the Southport incident.
- Details of the overspend in Children's Services as reported recently to the Council's Cabinet

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- The expected future Ofsted inspection
- Workforce stability
- Foster Care resources
- The re-opening of Cherry Grove as a therapeutic home
- Work around Emotional Based School Avoidance.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families be noted
- (2) A glossary would be useful to the Committee when considering reports
- (3) For future Cabinet Member Reports in the new format, appendices should be attached containing more information.

29. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee received a verbal update from the Executive Director of Children's Services on progress made on the Improvement Programme.

Information was provided on the following:

- Response to the Southport incident
- Work of the transformation team
- Social Work Academy

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- The pace of change
- The recent changes to the improvement plan and reasons for the changes

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update be noted.

30. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Quality Assurance and Safeguarding) that set out the quality assurance and performance headlines for the period

The performance Scorecard was circulated with the report and provided data and analysis of the Key Performance Indicators identified as illustrative of 'system health'.

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Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- The reason for the increase in Child Protection Conferences
- The reason for the decrease in audits judged 'good'
- The role of Kinship care
- The work to reduce delays in the audits judged 'inadequate'.

RESOLVED:

That the update on Quality Assurance and Practice Improvements be noted.

31. CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES - SEND DATA

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education) that set out data on performance in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The report also set out information on the preparation for an impending joint area SEND inspection and confirmed the governance arrangements of the SEND Improvement Board, which oversees SEND performance in Sefton.

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

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Training
- The increase in numbers of Early Years age children requiring support and the reasons for this
- The level of resources available to manage the increase in children requiring support
- The actions for October/November and how many were on track
- Compliance with the 20 week timeframe for EHCP Assessments.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The update on SEND be noted

32. CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

It was reported that this item would be deferred until the next meeting on 28th January 2025.

33. 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 Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2024/25;
- note that there was one item for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the latest Key Decision Forward Plan;
- note that the topics of ASD/ADHD Services, Child Poverty and Health Inequalities in Care Experienced Children were being considered for in-depth scrutiny by Members of the Committee during 2024/25 and relevant activities are included in the schedule of the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2024/25, as set out at Appendix B;
- note the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2024/25;
- receive an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2024/25, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;
- (2) The item for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan that falls under the remit of the Committee, on this occasion, be noted;
- (3) note the topics of Child Poverty, ADHD/ASD services and Health Inequalities in Care Experienced Children for in-depth review;
- (4) the informal meetings of Committee Members and site visits to be undertaken during 2023/24, as set out at Appendix B be noted;
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.