



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

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON TUESDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Danny Burns (in the Chair)
Councillors Evans, Christopher Page, Parker, Porter,
Prendergast, Richards and Spring

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Roscoe, Cabinet Member – Children,
Schools and Families
Councillor Atkinson
Maurice Byrne, Healthwatch Representative
Michelle Ravey, Archdiocese Representative

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hardman and Harrison Kelly; Cheryl Swainbank (Parent Governor Representative), Gemma Armer (Parent Governor Representative) and Sandra Cain (Independent Advisory Member).

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024, be confirmed as a correct record.

17. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Committee considered a number of questions raised by two members 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.

18. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS

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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:

- The Delivering Better Value Programme
- Workforce Training Package
- SEND – EHCP's
- Post 16 SEND
- School Attendance - new national guidance
- Early Years
- School Improvement
- 2024 results in Phonics, Key Stage 2, GCSE and Post 16.
- Academisation
- 14-19 Participation
- Virtual School

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

- Ofsted Letter dated 25th July
- Ofsted Inspection response
- Early Help
- Youth Justice
- Help and Protection
- Corporate Parenting
- Safeguarding
- The Social Work Academy
- Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement
- Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership

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:

Education

- How well received the Work Force Training package was amongst Teaching Staff and could anonymised feedback forms be an option
- How much extra resource had gone in to reducing the EHCP backlog
- The new guidance on school attendance and the work to implement changes
- SEND Pupils attendance
- 0-25 Journey and the graduated approach

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- If there was information available on children who were on a reduced offer and how schools report this.

Childrens Social Care

- Team Around The School and if this had now become permanent rather than a pilot scheme.
- If a learning exercise from the Southport incident would be carried out and used to inform policy across the country

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families be noted; and
- (2) the thanks of the Committee to all Children's Services Staff, Emergency Services and Street Care Staff for their response to the Southport incident, be recorded.

19. 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
- SEND agenda
- Team Around the School
- Family Hubs Launch
- Significant rise in Front Door and Child Protection cases
- Findings of the last Ofsted Monitoring visit and work to improve.

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- The pace of change
- The support available for Children's Services staff following the Southport incident
- The work of the police in terms of safeguarding and how fast they respond.
- The Social Work Academy and the numbers of Social Workers graduating and working for Sefton.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update be noted; and
- (2) a visit be arranged for the Committee to meet with the Social Work Academy Graduates.

20. 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 June-July 2024.

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

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- If Children's Services had the correct level of resources to manage the recent increase in child protection cases
- How inadequate practice was being targeted
- If samples of cases were examined on a regular basis to spot check for any issues

RESOLVED:

That the update on Quality Assurance and Practice Improvements be noted

21. 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 rate
- Persistent absence rate
- 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

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

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- The downward trend in some of the early years' foundations profile data.

RESOLVED:

That the data contained in the Education Scorecard be noted.

22. OFSTED INSPECTIONS SPRING/SUMMER 2024

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 Spring and Summer Terms 2024:

1. St Mary's Catholic Primary School
2. Crosby High School
3. Farnborough Road Junior School
4. Springwell Park Primary School
5. Litherland High School
6. IMPACT PRU
7. St William of York Catholic Primary School
8. St Nicholas CE Primary School
9. St Luke's CE Primary School
10. Greenacre Nursery
11. St Luke's Primary Halsall
12. Birkdale Primary School
13. St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
14. Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School
15. Trinity St Peter's CE Primary School
16. Ursuline Catholic Primary School
17. Crossens Nursery
18. Freshfield Primary School
19. St Thomas CE Primary School
20. Holy Family Catholic Primary School
21. Lydiate Primary School
22. St Michael's CE High School
23. St Robert Bellarmine Catholic Primary

A Summary of Ofsted Outcomes and Support during Spring 2024 was attached to the report.

Members commented that they hoped Ofsted assessors were being mindful of the impact of the Southport incident on Southport Schools and it was confirmed this had been noted by Ofsted, whilst still being mindful of legal deadlines.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

23. 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 2023/24;
- note that there were no items 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; and
- Formally note the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) on Housing for Care Leavers;

Maurice Byrne, Healthwatch, spoke to provide an overview of the Healthwatch Annual Report 2023/24.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;
- (2) 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;
- (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.
- (6) the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) following their review of the provision of housing for former looked after children who were now care leavers be formally noted.

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