

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL  
12 JANUARY 2015  
7.30 - 9.47 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Brossard (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Gbadebo, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Mrs McCracken and Mrs Temperton  
Mr R Briscoe, Parent Governor Representative  
Mrs L Wellsted, Parent Governor Representative  
Miss V Richardson, Teachers' Representative

**Executive Member:**

Councillor Dr Barnard

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Kensall

**Also Present:**

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)  
Sandra Davies, Head of Performance Management and Governance  
Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care  
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning  
Councillor Leake  
Christine McInnes, Chief Officer: Learning & Achievement  
Amanda Roden, Democratic Services Officer  
David Watkins, Chief Officer: Strategy, Resources and Early Intervention

**35. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 10 September 2014 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

**36. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

**37. Public Participation**

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

**38. Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel**

The Panel received the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP) held on 24 September 2014. The Chairman of CPAP advised that Larchwood short break respite care unit had received an Ofsted visit and was judged to be outstanding. SiLSiP activities had been undertaken over the summer and any funds

available from Members' Initiative Funds would be welcomed for future SiLSiP activities.

39. **Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board**

The Panel considered the 2013/14 Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection practice in Bracknell Forest. This was a statutory report and the aim was to show the impact of the LSCB.

There was advice regarding data in relation to looked after children and child protection. Alex Walters was the Independent Chair of the LSCB and she reported to Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care. There were two overarching statutory requirements: to ensure the effectiveness of local services safeguarding and child protection practice; and to co-ordinate services to promote the welfare of children and families.

The LSCB Executive was a core decision making group and met six times a year, whilst the wider LSCB Partnership met three times a year. There were also individual Chair meetings with Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People and Learning and Tim Wheadon, Chief Executive. Alex Walters produced a report for the individual meetings to show the accountability of the LSCB.

Lead authorities had been identified and the outcomes boxes in the report gave examples of consistency and the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements. The role of safeguarding and the LSCB involved awareness raising and work was undertaken with Involve, a local voluntary and community sector organisation. Lunchtime workshop events were held and the voluntary sector was represented on the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.

There was one serious case review during the period of the annual report but it could not be published at present due to ongoing legal proceedings. Partnership reviews had been undertaken and different methods tested to identify learning. The Child Death Overview Panel was a key requirement and led by Dr Angela Snowling in Slough. There had been good practice as a result of this which was demonstrated in the outcomes box in the report.

The LSCB received regular performance monitoring reports regarding the impact of homelessness. A joint consultation had helped to inform the Children and Young People's Plan and the business plan going forward. The government was consulting local governments undertaking more serious case reviews. There had been auditing activity regarding substance misuse and domestic abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation awareness training programmes had been provided for Children's Social Care practitioners, and there were new thresholds for the joint pathways group. The LSCB Conference in 2013-14 had been highly valued by attendees and the cue card had been updated and was popular among partner agencies. The newsletter was continuing to be produced and the policy and procedures group was still ongoing.

A focus on neglect would likely continue and there was a focus on how to provide evidence of ongoing improvement in this area. There had been much co-ordinated work in relation to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation. The impact of parental mental ill-health and the misuse of technology were other areas of focus. The LSCB had a small operating budget and the aim was to increase contributions from partners.

Priorities were listed in the report (minus two priorities which would be checked). The report had been considered by the Executive and submitted to the Police Commissioner as required.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- Data used in the report was that available to officers at the time of writing the report. The police collected the majority of data regarding missing children and the local authority collected data on looked after children.
- Financial contributions and expenditure in relation to the LSCB were historical and needed to be considered across the board.
- Voluntary sector representation had been reviewed following the departure of two members and representatives had been invited to fill the vacant seats on the Board.
- The Community Safety Partnership would deal with certain issues which might appear to crossover between the two partnerships. There was a Prevent Steering Group and Ian Boswell was the Community Safety Manager.
- Most work undertaken in relation to radicalisation was done in schools. This report was based on previous years work. If this area needed to be included in future years work would need to be reviewed. There was good representation on the LSCB, good attendance at meetings and the focus of work was set through priorities and agreed through the Children and Young People's Plan.
- The Child Sexual Exploitation Group had undertaken work which had led to a positive impact in this area. The Group was jointly chaired with Sonia Johnson and the police. There were clear criteria on what was high risk and what was not high risk. The Group would be revamped in February 2015.

#### 40. **Annual Report of Children's Social Services Complaints 2013-14**

The Panel considered the Annual Report of Children's Social Services Complaints 2013-14.

The report detailed complaints and compliments, the statutory complaints procedure, legislation, and the two processes followed. 3.3 of the report detailed the timescales involved in responses to complaints. 2013-14 showed an increase in complaints but some had been deferred as they were being considered in court.

There was a statutory and corporate procedure; the statutory procedure was in relation to the children and the corporate procedure was in relation to the parents. Changes in the way Stage 1 of the corporate procedure was recorded was thought to affect the data that was presented. There was one complaints manager who worked 15 hours a week and there were costs attached to individual investigators.

The findings of the complaints were at page 176 of the agenda papers and page 177 showed the number of complaints received by different service areas. The types of complaints and resolutions were also detailed in the report. Sometimes concerns were expressed but they were not complaints as such and these were addressed to prevent them from progressing further where possible. Page 182 showed details of compliments received which gave a varied range of feedback. Safeguarding received the highest number of complaints but also the highest number of compliments. Training for staff was an ongoing process.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- Details regarding nationally comparative results at meeting timescales in response to complaints were not thought to be benchmarked but this could be checked with an attendee of the regional group or the Complaints Manager.
- There was no specific explanation for the spike in the data in the second quarter of 2013-14.
- The Under 11s Team, Disabled Children's Team and the Family Placement Team worked with adoptive parents and some workers had more involvements than others.
- The Complaints Manager did not receive benchmarking information to indicate how complaints and compliments figures compared to other local authorities. If complaints were declined it was likely to be because they were deferred or they did not meet the criteria for a complaint and the Panel would be advised of the reasons for the declines. If a concern was answered then it would not progress to a complaint. Further information on benchmarking would be sought.

#### 41. **Quarterly Service Report**

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the QSR for the second quarter of 2014/15 (July to September 2014) relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

The Panel received tabled information on 'A' Level exam results, inspection outcomes and teacher recruitment. The number of teachers recruited in Bracknell Forest was growing steadily; 1,064 teachers were currently employed in the borough as opposed to 965 in 2009. The age profile of teachers: 15% of primary school teachers were over 55 years of age and 9% of secondary school teachers were over 55 years. A third of teachers were aged 30 or under and 37% joined as newly qualified teachers (NQTs), some of which were now headteachers.

Headteachers were being encouraged to work part time and to come back after retirement to pass on valuable experience. A third of primary school headteachers were aged 56 or above and deputy primary headteachers had a young profile. There was a good track record of retaining NQT's and supporting development of teachers including middle leadership training. There was an Executive Headteacher model and currently three Executive Headships in place in the borough pending the appointment of permanent headteachers.

Ten recruitment fairs were planned for 2015; two had been held so far one of which was in Exeter and the contact details of 37 NQTs was gathered to keep in touch with them and advise of job opportunities in the borough. Recruitment managers had been invited to attend and schools could recruit trainee teachers directly at the end of their education via 'School Direct' and work with them to provide experience and training.

The Department for Education (DfE) was increasing the number of training places available. In 2015-16, 47% of primary school teachers and 32% of secondary school teachers were obtained via 'School Direct'. Schools were advised to advertise vacancies as soon as possible. NQTs were highly sought after and grants were offered to train teachers in particular subjects.

The Chairman requested that this information be monitored and expanded to include the gender profile and national figures and trends for comparison for consideration by the Panel every six months.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) reports had been released and the findings showed the number of children attending 'good' or 'outstanding' schools. Many schools had

moved from 'good' to 'requires improvement' owing to the new tougher inspection regime and Bracknell was lower in relation to the national average. However, 73% of children attended 'good' or 'outstanding' secondary schools in the borough. Bracknell had a low percentage nationally of GCSE results grade A\* - C at 22% and the implications of the HMI findings were being considered.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The headteachers of The Pines and Jennett's Park were due to leave at Easter and in the summer of 2015. There was a national talented leader programme which was promoted by government to recruit a pool of headteachers. There were currently 22 headteachers in this programme and there was a process for targeting schools with the aim of spending £55,000 on leadership. The number of children receiving free school meals and Ofsted outcomes would be used to identify these schools.
- Headteachers usually left their posts at the end of the school year but could leave any time during the year, usually at the end of a term. Agency staff were included in figures regarding all staff currently in post. It was requested that this information be added in, in future.
- New schools could be more popular because forms of entry could be expanded in a controlled manner which was easier to establish, where as surge classrooms for schools were more difficult to establish.
- It was difficult to forecast when headteachers were likely to leave their posts and there could be legal challenge if this information was requested from them. The responsibility rested with the school and the governing body. Schools needed to announce the arrival and departure of key members of staff.
- The Ofsted figures for schools in Bracknell were up to date for all published inspections. It was requested that future reports be expanded to indicate when schools were last inspected and whether an inspection was anticipated in the current academic year and be formatted by phase and type of school.
- Advisers would attend all schools in the borough, regardless of their Ofsted report grading. The level of weighting given to pupil premium pupils by Ofsted was high. Pupil premium pupils often made expected progress but because they did not make better progress this had a negative impact on inspection findings. There was a new inspection framework from September 2014 and it was surprising that the performance of a small group of pupil premium pupils was given so much weight when other pupils were performing well.
- It was suggested that it would be useful to breakdown the information regarding Ofsted findings in future and to provide a supplement to the information.
- Pre-meetings at schools before Ofsted inspections had been found to be valuable in providing good experience and advice and pre-Ofsted monitoring support was thought to be good.
- The target was for all schools in the borough to receive an Ofsted grading of 'good' in the future. There was aspiration regarding a broader range of indicators. Much depended on the leadership in schools and schools taking advice when it was offered by the local authority. A timescale could be added to the shared vision published a year ago for this to be accomplished.
- Bracknell had slightly lower results in A\* at A-Level when compared nationally. Many young people were taking one or two A-Levels with fewer taking three A-Levels. It was requested that the 'A' Level results of Bracknell and Wokingham College students be added to future updates. A report had been commissioned locally in relation to what could be done to raise standards post-16.

- It was suggested that the destination for students post-16 be added.

There were currently 105 children in care in Bracknell which was below the South East and national average. Work had been undertaken in this area over the past two years and in 2014, 15 children were subject to guardianship or special protection orders. Bracknell Forest Council was on track to meet this target again in 2015. There were 113 children on child protection plans (CPPs) in the borough and some larger families could affect these figures. Court work was a key impact of this work and children on CPPs were monitored for nine months plus.

There was a full briefing on Child Sexual Exploitation on 26 January 2015 at 7:30 pm with a joint presentation from the Children, Young People and Learning Department and the police.

The Berkshire Adoption Service was a new joint service with other Berkshire Local Authorities which was operational from 1 December 2014. There was much development work being undertaken regarding care leavers, such as with the life skills programme.

#### 42. **Annual Report on the Statutory Roles and Responsibilities of the Director and Lead Member for Children's Services 2013/14**

The Panel considered the Annual Report on the Statutory Roles and Responsibilities of the Director and Lead Member for Children's Services 2013/14.

It was the second year this report had been produced and information was reported against the statutory responsibilities. Key messages and relevant work was being undertaken in relation to outcomes, and the statutory guidance on roles was included at Annex B of the report.

The Chairman suggested the following:

- That it might be useful to bullet point strengths, for example, on page 127 at 2.9 of the report. This could be done in future.
- A comparison in relation to the turnover of staff as it was slightly higher than in previous years, page 130 at 2.32 of the report.
- That the full and correct name of the panel be inserted at 2.36 of the report page 131.
- From page 135 onwards, the action, leading agency and priorities could be added via bullet points. It was clarified that there was more detail in the Children and Young People's Plan and this report gave a flavour of the work in relation to the statutory roles and responsibilities.

In response to a Members' question, the following point was made:

- It was predicted that a number of children would qualify for free school meals, so much mitigation had been put into place and parents had been encouraged to apply. The figures regarding this were being monitored.

#### 43. **Working Group Update Report**

The Panel noted the Working Group update report in respect of the working group of the Panel reviewing substance misuse by, and affecting, children and young people. A further update was expected at the next meeting of the Panel. The Chairman thanked members of this working group for their contribution.

**44. Work Programme 2015/16**

The Panel considered its Work Programme for 2015/16. Panel members suggested that the Youth Offending Service was a good idea for a future working group. Any ideas should be forward to the Chairman or brought to the next meeting of the Panel.

**45. Overview and Scrutiny Progress Report**

The Panel noted the bi-annual Progress Report of the Assistant Chief Executive on Overview and Scrutiny activity over the period June to November 2014 and local and national developments in Overview and Scrutiny.

**46. Executive Key and Non Key Decisions**

The Panel noted the forthcoming Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

**47. 2015/16 Draft Budget Proposals**

The Panel considered key themes and priorities for Children, Young People and Learning as outlined in the Council's Draft Budget Proposals for 2015/16.

The Executive agreed the Council's draft budget proposals for 2015/16 at its meeting on 16 December 2014 as the basis for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Overview and Scrutiny Panels and other interested parties. The consultation period would run until 27 January 2015, after which the Executive would consider the representations made at its meeting on 10 February 2015, before recommending the budget to Council.

Attached to the report were extracts from the 2015/16 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. The extracts were comprised of Revenue Budget Report, Commitment Budget, Draft Revenue Budget Pressures, Draft Revenue Budget Savings Proposals, Proposed Fees and Charges, Capital Programme Report and Summary and Proposed Capital Schemes.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The budget for Independent Reviewing Officers was included in the proposals.
- The grant for additional support for SEN changes finished at the end of March 2015 but additional provision had been made for this.
- There had been a change of responsibility in SEN legislation through the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Local Authority had taken on responsibility for the older group. The figures were much higher than the government had anticipated and this had created a funding issue. Buckinghamshire County Council had taken out a case against the government regarding this decision. £1.9 million additional funding was predicted as a result of this decision. Work had been undertaken on modelling and predicting numbers as some young people finished education at 19 years of age and others carried on with further education. Ways of mitigating this were being considered. The Chairman reported that the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning and others had challenged the government's decision.
- The Chairman suggested that there be a briefing at the next meeting of the Panel on an analysis of how pupil premium operated in schools and what schools were offering as pupil premium.

- Page 18 of the agenda papers stated savings from the Aiming High programme as -£0.108 million but page 31 stated the savings at -£0.106 million. It was confirmed that -£0.106 million was the correct figure.
- If a child was to be placed in, for example, Edinburgh there was a national set fee for adoption of £27,000 which was brought in two years ago. Children could not be placed in Bracknell if they were confidential placements. Placements were sought far and wide nationally.

**CHAIRMAN**