

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
10 JUNE 2015
7.30 - 9.05 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Mrs McCracken, Virgo and Mrs Temperton
Ms C Barrett, Children's Social Care Representative
Mrs L Wellsted, Parent Governor Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Brossard, Ms Hayes and Skinner
Mr R Briscoe, Parent Governor Representative
Miss V Richardson, Teachers' Representative

Executive Member:

Councillor Dr Barnard

Also Present:

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning
Christine McInnes, Chief Officer: Learning & Achievement
Councillor Sarah Peacey

63. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Birch be elected Chairman of the Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

COUNCILLOR MRS BIRCH IN THE CHAIR

64. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Brossard be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

65. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Panel noted the presence of the following substitute member:

Councillor Allen for Councillor Ms Hayes

66. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 4 March 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

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

68. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

69. **Public Participation**

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

70. **Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel**

The Panel received the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP) held on 25 March 2015.

71. **Director's Introductory Briefing and Service Plan 2015/16**

The Director of Children, Young People and Learning gave an introductory briefing covering the Department's role and functions and the Service Plan for the period April to September 2015. The short duration Service Plan was a roll forward from the previous annual plan, with a new Service Plan due to be developed for October 2015 incorporating the manifesto policies set out during the recent elections.

The Director's presentation detailed the clear responsibilities of each of the three branches into which the Department was organised: Children's Social Care; Learning and Achievement; and Strategy, Resources and Early Intervention. A summary of the services which each branch provided was included, together with details of the performance indicators used to assist in measuring how those services were delivered. Particular reference was made to the Children and Young People's Plan: Creating Opportunities – A Joint Strategic Plan for Children, Young People and Families in Bracknell Forest 2014 – 2017 published in April 2014. This Plan was developed by the Children and Young People's Partnership comprising the Council's key partners and stakeholders including the Local Safeguarding Children Board and was informed by local and national research and significant consultation and engagement with children and young people.

Arising from answers to questions the Panel noted:

- With reference to school places, there continued to be an issue in Ascot Heath where there were insufficient places at the Junior School to take all those wishing to transfer from the Infant School. Earlier attempts to resolve the situation had been unsuccessful and it was suggested that each of the Governing Bodies should be pressed further to reconsider the options in consultation with the Council, parents and the local community.
- Further explanation would be circulated regarding the performance indicators NI112 (Under 18 conception rate), L158 (Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 60% of pupils achieve level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2) and NI092 (Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest). Further information concerning L207 and L208 (Analysis of schools

performance data to track pupil progress to plan and implement appropriate interventions) would be included in the updated Service Plan.

- Regarding NI052, although take up of school lunches appeared low, it was above target and was often related to pupils opting for a packed lunch in order to undertake other activities rather than a reflection on the quality of the food.
- The key action to review the structure and design of Children's Social Care in the light of new legislation including the Children and Families Act 2014 had been completed and reported to the Executive. This would be an appropriate item for the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

The Panel noted the report and presentation.

72. **Quarterly Service Report**

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Quarterly Service Report (QSR) for the fourth quarter of 2014/15 (January to March 2015) relating to Children Young People and Learning. The QSR began by reflecting on a busy year with many successful achievements and, focusing on Quarter 4, set out some of the main events and statistical highlights for each of the three branches of the department.

The Panel took particular note of the following:

- There had been no Ofsted inspection of the Local Authority since October 2011 (although Local Government Association and peer reviews had been carried out). The next review was due to take place before October 2015.
- The outcomes for Ofsted inspections in schools had generally continued on an upward trajectory. From the detailed note circulated at the meeting it was pleasing to see that Ranelagh School had retained its outstanding outcome, while Wildmoor Heath and Sandy Lane had both made positive progress. Reports on inspections at St Michael's Sandhurst and Harmans Water were imminent.
- Headteacher recruitment for April/September 2015 had been very successful with nine appointments made and just two vacancies remaining to be filled. A note containing details of all teacher recruitment was circulated, which confirmed that Bracknell Forest was an attractive place to live and work, with good fields of strong applicants for most positions.
- A campaign to recruit more foster carers had been launched – the target was to find at least 10 new foster carers.
- There was a substantial ongoing workload to convert all Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements to Education, Health and Care Plans by April 2018 to comply with statutory requirements, making a significant demand on capacity.
- Performance on NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) prevention was strong, with the February 2015 figure of 3.77% (132) down from 4.2% (144) in the previous year.
- The Chief Officer: Children's Social Care summarised the work of the four divisions (each with its own Head of Service) comprising the Children's Social Care Branch.
- Given the national shortage of qualified and experienced social workers, recruitment and retention of staff was a real issue for Bracknell Forest. A Programme Board had been established to develop proposals to recruit and retain, market premium payments had been put in place, most management posts were now held by permanent staff and good succession processes had

been established. This had helped stabilise the situation and reduce the number of vacancies but more work remained to be done.

- The number of Looked After Children had reduced from 114 to 104, with Bracknell Forest figures lower than the average for the South East and much lower than the national average. A table illustrated the breakdown of the placements for the children, showing the majority in foster care or agency foster care. Further tables gave a résumé of the wards from which the Looked After Children originated and details of where care had been provided by one or more social workers.
- The Education Welfare Service had successfully negotiated a contract to provide services to schools in Hampshire but this would not affect its ability to serve Bracknell Forest needs.
- A new policy and procedures for Elective Home Education was being trialled over the summer term, with a view to introducing a final version for the new academic year. With 60 children in the Borough now educated in this way, the Panel requested that further information about this be provided at a future meeting.
- It appeared that unauthorised absences of pupils from school on account of holidays had declined.

The Panel received responses to their questions and comments and thanked the officers for their interesting reports and presentations.

73. Update on the Implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children, Young People & Learning with an update on the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 which had come into effect in September 2014. This new legislation was transforming the way that services in relation to children and young people, especially those with special educational needs or disability (SEND), were delivered.

The report summarised the key requirements of the Act under heading for each Part, with a résumé of progress over the first year, as follows:

- Part 1: Adoption and Contact
- Part 2: Family Justice
- Part 3: Children and young people in England with special educational needs or disabilities
- Part 4: Childcare
- Part 5: Welfare of Children
- Part 6: The Children's Commissioner
- Parts 7, 8 and 9: Employment

The Panel noted that the most major changes were around special educational needs whereby the separate arrangements for children in schools and young people in post-16 institutions and training up to their 25th birthday were brought together and the integrated Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan would replace the Statement of Educational Needs. Bracknell Forest was one of only a third of local authorities to bring in new ways of working by the 1st September deadline. The substantial task of the transfer of all children and young people who currently had a Statement of Special Educational Needs to an EHC Plan would continue until April 2018.

The Panel noted the report and answers to a number of questions on matters of detail.

74. Next Review Topic/Working Group

Consideration was given to a report inviting the Panel to select its next policy review topic and establish a working group to undertake the review, having regard to the Panel Work Programme for 2015/16.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) A working group be established to review the Council's response to Child Sexual Exploitation, delivered in concert with Community Safety partner organisations.
- 2) Membership of the working group should comprise Councillors Mrs Birch, Mrs McCracken, Peacey and Mrs Temperton, together with Mrs Wellsteed and any other interested members of the Panel not present.

4:30 – 5:00 pm was the preferred start time for meetings of the working group

75. Executive Forward Plan

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

In clarification of questions raised, the Panel noted:

- The process for appointing a sponsor for Binfield Learning Village as an Academy School had been agreed in line with the clear Government guidelines. Neither of the local schools had been in a position to adopt the Learning Village.
- The approval of a revised Larchwood Statement of Purpose for 2015-16 was a statutory requirement, which had to be carried out each year.
- A query in relation to the approval of the procurement plan for the expansion works at Great Hollands Primary School, which was subject to consultation with Headteacher, Governing Body, parents/carers and neighbours. The timescale of a decision date of 25 June 2015 and public consultation in July 2015 would be checked given the consultation requirements.

CHAIRMAN