
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Councillors T Bunday (Chair), Barnes-Andrews (Vice-Chair), Chapman (except minute numbers 17-19), Lambert, Mrs Mintoff, Webb and Beaurain

Apologies: Councillor J Baillie
Appointed Members: Rob Sanders

17. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

It was noted that following receipt of the temporary resignation of Councillor J Baillie from the Panel, the Monitoring Officer acting under delegated powers, had appointed Councillor Beaurain to replace them for the purposes of this meeting.

18. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

19. **BUILDING FOR BRILLIANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director, Children and Learning, providing an overview of the revised service improvement arrangements.

Cllr Winning – Cabinet Member for Children and Learning and Rob Henderson - Executive Director, Children and Learning were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel discussed a number of points including:

- How costs were being managed and the apparent downward trend in overall cost of the service as measures already embedded take effect e.g. the stabilisation of the workforce and the reduction of agency staff;
- Potential measures that will further reduce expenditure;
- The need to mitigate the potential negative impact of budget proposals on outcomes for children and young people in the city.

RESOLVED that draft budget proposals for Children and Learning are appended to the agenda of the 25 January 2024 meeting of the Panel.

20. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - EXEMPT PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of the exempt appendices to the following Agenda Item

The appendices 3 and 4 are considered to be exempt from general publication based on Category 3 of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules. The information is exempt from publication because it relates to the financial and business affairs of both the Council and specified third parties and is commercially sensitive.

21. **SEND AND HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

The Panel considered and noted the report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel consider the appended information on SEND pressures, the SEND Capital Programme and home to school transport and the approaches proposed to address the identified challenges.

Cllr Winning – Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, Tammy Marks – Head of SEND, Pete Boustred – Head of Transport and Planning and Annamarie Hooper – Service Manager, Service Delivery, Performance & Compliance were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel received a presentation, attached to the papers of the meeting, setting out the various factors and considerations relating to the provision of home to school transport including potential plans to enhance and improve the service whilst attempting to address an increase in demand.

The Panel discussed a number of points including:

- The proposed changes to eligibility criteria in the draft policy;
- Timescales for the school travel service transformation programme;
- Opportunities to reduce the cost of the service;
- The growing demand for SEND services in the city;
- The SEND capital programme and the need to improve SEND provision and consistency within mainstream schools in Southampton.

22. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children's Services and Learning in Southampton.

Cllr Winning – Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, Rob Henderson - Executive Director, Children & Learning, Steph Murray – Deputy Director, Children and Learning, and Laura Trevett – Performance Manager were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel discussed the following issues:

- The steady improvement in performance and outcomes across Children and Learning;
- Placement stability, recognising the increase in the number of Looked After Children placed in unregulated / unregistered settings;

- Initial Health Assessments within 20 days as performance had declined following recent improvements;
- The quality of social work practice as, reflecting the prediction of the Executive Director, there had been a significant increase in October in the percentage of audits that were rated as good in comparison to those rated inadequate or requires improvement.

23. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel considered and noted the report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel considers the responses to recommendations from previous meetings and provides feedback.