
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2016

Present: Councillors Keogh (Except Minute 26) (Chair), McEwing, O'Neill and Painton

Apologies: Councillors L Harris, Lloyd, Spicer and Revd. J Williams

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February, 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

26. **POST 16 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

COUNCILLOR O'NEILL IN THE CHAIR

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Economic Development and Skills providing an overview of post 16 education and training for Southampton young people including progress, performance, actions undertaken and emerging issues.

Principals and Headteachers from the providers of state funded post 16 education and training in the City were in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Panel particularly noted the following points:-

- Key issues were diversity and entry into post 16 education. DfE league tables do not include those who took Level 3 qualifications at 19yrs, excluding the significant cohort in Southampton who change provider in year 1, and those who progress to Level 3 qualifications after retaking GSCE exams. It was also noted that those undertaking a Level 1 and 2 qualification did not appear within performance tables along with a number of other qualifications also not recognised by the DfE.
- Principals also indicated that Southampton colleges were prepared to take more risks with pupils than some providers. They were more likely to enter students who were on the borderline for entry standards into examinations.
- Relationships with providers out of the City were good and there was a group in place that looked at professional teaching and learning however, relationships were not as good in terms of "recognition of the market"; there was still a tendency to want to "drive numbers up rather than re-balance the market", which was also true across the country as there was encouragement nationally for the post 16 education sector to be a competitive market.
- That good practice and issues such as PREVENT and safeguarding were shared and meetings regularly took place with all Secondary Heads in the City together with subject network meetings and quality assurance of each other's provision.
- Progression from Level 3 to university was also a key issue in Southampton as it is well below regional and national comparators. The Southern Policy Centre were undertaking a piece of work looking at progression to Higher Education which would be of interest to the Panel.

- That, to enable members to come to meaningful conclusions and judgements, the development of accurate and relevant data identifying participation, attainment and progression that can be compared with other cities is essential.
- There was a Post 16 Solent Area Review taking place which was currently two thirds of the way through the process and would be proposing draft recommendations to a steering group made up of all Post 16 Heads (excluding Secondary Schools 6th Form which was normal practice), the Local Authority and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). There would be a consultation process and all colleges would need to respond by 9th June 2016. It was noted that formal/legal partnerships were being encouraged.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the providers of state funded post 16 education and training in the City continue to develop the performance dataset, working alongside the Council's data team, so that in the future members are able to understand and compare post 16 education and training performance in Southampton.

NOTE: Councillor Keogh declared a personal interest in the matter set out in the report as a college lecturer and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and decision.

27. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director Legal and Governance providing the Children and Families monthly dataset for March 2016.

Kim Drake, Service Director Children and Families was in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting. The Panel were provided with an overview of performance across the Division since January 2016.

The Panel particularly noted the following points:-

- Monthly meetings were taking place with Senior Managers within the Division to analyse data and to identify any risks to children and the service provided.
- Risk had been highlighted in relation EH4QL (% of single assessments completed in 45 working days) which was being pursued to ensure issues were unlocked as a matter of urgency.
- That the consistency of data still remained an issue but was significantly further developed than 6 months ago and where complex validation was needed this was now known and in place.
- There had been a reduction in PEP's (Personal Education Plans) within the data presented, the Panel sought assurance that these were being undertaken appropriately. It was noted that these were being undertaken and information that was needed was being collected however it was considered that the reduction was that of a recording issue/staff changeover and was being resolved.
- That the PARIS recording system was in need of review and a "cleansing of the system". It was noted that a number of stages had been added to the system which in fact over complicated it and this needed to be simplified. In addition there was a training need as a result of turnover of staff.

- It was noted that Kim Drake had produced a 6 month summary of a high level view of progress/concerns which could be shared with the Panel as part of an “Ofsted readiness” report.

RESOLVED

- (i) that an Ofsted Readiness report be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel;
and
- (ii) a demonstration of the PARIS system be provided to members of the Panel.

28. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE**

The Panel received and noted the report of the Service Director Children and Families providing an overview of the significant difficulties the Local Authority had faced over the last few years in recruiting and retaining social workers.

Kim Drake, Service Director Children and Families was in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting. The Panel noted that there were currently 58 agency social workers out of workforce of 170 social workers working with Children and Families and costed around £20-25k more than a permanent employee.

The Panel particularly noted that there had been historical issues and acknowledgement that policies had not been followed in relation to sickness. As part of the transformation redesign of the service it was noted that the use of agency staff was a significant financial burden and recruitment and retention was key to developing new structures within Children and Families. There was a need to develop a strong employment offer that was not restricted to just salaries but included caseloads, IT and working environment. The Panel noted that staff morale and sickness presented a real challenge and required improved leadership and management which the transformation redesign proposals presented an opportunity to address.

29. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received and noted the report of the Service Director Legal and Governance detailing progress on recommendations made at the previous meeting.