

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 March 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr R Burton – Chair
Cllr L Lewis – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr E Coope, Cllr B Dunlop, Cllr N C Geary, Cllr J Kelly, Cllr S Moore,
Cllr L Northover, Cllr S Phillips, Cllr Dr F Rice and Cllr R Rocca

Co-Opted Members: Mr P Martin and Mr M Saxy
A Brandon, N Collins and G Grogan

143. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

144. Substitute Members

None.

145. Declarations of Interests

None.

146. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 February 2021, having been previously circulated, be signed by the Chair and confirmed as a correct record.

147. Action Sheet

The Chair advised that the item requested by a member of public for scrutiny in relation to SEND was planned to come to the July meeting to progress.

148. Public Issues

None.

149. BCP 's Members of Youth Parliament Summary Report

The Members of the Youth Parliament presented their Report and highlighted the following:

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 March 2021

- They thanked Officers and Members for all the support given over the last year and had enjoyed being part of the Overview and Scrutiny process
- It was highlighted that whilst Covid had changed their planned role it was felt that a lot of good work within the local community had been undertaken
- Work was highlighted which included work around the environment, including a youth summit and regular MYP newsletter
- The MYPs referred to the recently circulated Stress cards and advised it was hoped they would be launched for the next academic year. They thanked the Interim Corporate Director, Children's Services for assisting with their planned launch, ensuring the resource would be well utilised
- Next year the focus would be continuing with the same campaign issues plus one more, homelessness.
- They were planning an Environmental awards campaign, which would include eco councils and ensure schools were held to account over environmental issues
- PHSE with help of CD to ensure schools engaged with students in that area
- Plan to promote more opportunities for volunteering and jobs and skills in the area
- Felt contributed positively and developed in their roles and looked forward to continuing to progress.

The Committed thanked them for all their contributions over the past year.

The Chair queried the progression on stress cards and was advised that focus groups in schools had provided feedback, which had been incorporated.

In response to a query about whether the MYPs planned to continue a focus on knife crime, the Committee was advised that it was still part of their campaign focus, but it had been difficult to progress during the last year due to Covid.

The Committee was advised that at the online Youth Parliament Annual Conference, it was debated what should be included in UK Youth Parliament manifesto.

A Committee Member suggested it would be beneficial for the MYPs to have a link on the BCP website which could link to their newsletters and all the work which was being undertaken. **Action.**

The Chair summarised the discussions as follows:

- That stress cards were an excellent idea
- Pleased that assurances were provided that the MYPs would continue to focus on previous focuses such as knife crime
- Information on the Youth Parliament's Conference

- Share MYPs Newsletters and work being undertaken on the BCP Website.

RESOLVED that the MYPs update report be noted.

150. Report on Children not in education, employment and training to include details on how the Pupil Premium is being spent

The Headteacher of the Virtual School and College presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Virtual Headteacher provided background into the role and purpose of the virtual school and advised that the purpose of the Report was to ensure that a clear local offer of the opportunities and support available to young people in BCP was publicised, allowing young people to re-engage with education, employment or training, allowing young people in BCP to go on to lead fulfilled lives and to reach their potential. This was in line with one of the strategic objectives that elected members had already supported through the 2021/24 Children and Young People's Partnership Plan.

The Committee was advised that Pupil Premium was not allocated post 16 and that the purpose of the Report was to focus on that group of pupils.

The Committee discussed the Report and comments were made, including:

- It was highlighted that education provision for 16-18 year old did not have the same sanctions as younger pupils and that the onus was on the pupil to attend, not the parents.
- There was some discussion about ensuring that entrance courses such as English and Maths were available to start when pupils wanted to and not just at the start of an academic year, creating more flexibility and choice for pupils to re-join or progress in higher education. The Committee was advised the aim was to ensure a clear offer was provided, which met the needs of any young person.
- The Virtual Headteacher advised of a planned meeting with Skills and Learning to discuss using both tutors and exam centres, which would provide more flexibility in the offer, as well as providing opportunities to acquire more functional skills.
- The Interim Corporate Director, Children's Services advised that Covid had challenged the way education was delivered and consideration should be given to using the model for delivering educational services moving forward.
- The Committee was advised that post 16, a vulnerable pupil could apply for a bursary, however this was only if they were on roll at a registered post 16 provider.
- There was some discussion on transitions and the support that was provided for pupils when moving to college or another school's 6th form.
- A Member acknowledged the Report as an aspirational document but requested the Committee had sight of a detailed plan, with

progress measures and specific details of what the funding had been used for, for pupils who were in the NEETS category. **Action – detailed Report to come back to Committee at a future date**

- The Committee was advised that over the last year, Pupil Premium had been focused around Covid and access to learning and that this report was focused on post 16, where it was confirmed that whilst these pupils did not attract funding, funding was generated for them as and when required
- The Committee was advised that BCP had a responsibility to provide support and opportunities for young people and some of the plans were shared, such as work experience within the Local Authority. The impact of work experience was discussed and it was noted that in the future, hoped apprenticeships would attract funding with individual services being required to allocate budgets where required.
- There was some discussion over some of the data provided within the Report and the Committee was advised that it was better to have a larger percentage of 'NEETs' and less 'not knowns', as at least the Service was aware of the young person and plans could be put in place to support them.

The Chair summarised the discussions as follows:

- Issues surrounding people who find themselves as NEETS
- Enable young people to start courses when needed
- Working with Skills and Learning, to include providing functional skills
- Bursary money for post 16.
- Detailed Report and plan to come back in the future
- Funding that may be needed in the future when moving to apprenticeships.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee:

- i. Acknowledged the support given to the development of a comprehensive universal NEETS offer for young people in BCP between the age of 16 and 24 who need education, employment and/or training.**
- ii. That Vulnerable young people including children in care and care leavers were made a bespoke offer; and**
- iii. A re-engagement programme for those young people that were NEET was developed and implemented.**

151. Children's Services Improvement Journey – update

The Chair of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and the Interim Corporate Director, Children's Services presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The purpose of the Report was, at the Request of the Chair of the Committee, for an update to be provided on the progress of the Action Plan, following the Ofsted 'focused visit' in October 2020.

Sufficient improvements in Children's Services had been made in the last few months to be able to confirm an upwards trajectory. This had been confirmed in audits (now called practice reviews), which demonstrated a clear month-on-month improvement both in performance and in the quality of practice. These practice reviews had been carried out independently of line management to ensure 'we were not marking our own homework'. Having said that, the pace of improvement needed to quicken in some delivery areas, as set out in the report's 'Challenges Ahead' section.

The Committee discussed the Report and comments were made, including:

- The Committee was advised that the improvement grading reflected the four Ofsted ratings.
- The Committee discussed the validated audits of practice reviews which commenced in December in a systematic programme by two experienced auditors from other local authorities.
- A Member welcomed the presentation and work to date and requested the Committee receive more detailed information on targets and whether they were being met.
- In response to a concern that the Impact assessments had not been completed, the Committee was advised that the Report was populated in order to satisfy the Committee's preference at the last minute and that the next Report could provide Key Performance Obsessions (KPOs), with much more technical detail and full details on the Impact assessments. **Action - technical report to come to future Committee to include impact assessments.**
- The Committee was advised that the baseline had been set in December and that the Service was now showing month on month improvements to reduce inadequate and poor work practices. The Committee noted that improvements had been shared with the cross party improvement group and some service improvements had been reported to Corporate Parenting Board.
- The Committee wanted to thank all the Officers and staff for their commitment and work to date in improving the Service.
- In response to a query regarding the learning hub model, the Committee was provided with information on how this was being achieved and that greater emphasis was being placed on systematic learning, accessibility and ensuring change was well implemented
- Staffing and the differences between agency and permanent staff was discussed together with the positive result of the pandemic, which had resulted in three senior managers being recruited who did not live in BCP and could work agilely. The Committee was advised what was required to recruit permanent staff including a good reputation, supportive team managers, low caseload and good supervision.
- The Committee was advised of the challenges ahead which included how long until improvements would translate into measurable

improvements seen by children and young people being worked with.

- The Interim Corporate Director, Children's Services confirmed the fifteen-point Action Plan would be circulated to the Committee as a refresher. **Action.**

The Chair summarised the discussions as follows:

- Ofsted ratings and numbers of audits and improvement being made and measured
- A technical Report would come to the Committee, which would include the KPOs and detailed impact assessments
- The Learning Hub Model
- Costing of staff and what was being done to improve retention
- Measuring the improvements for children's outcomes.

RECOMMENDED that Members note and scrutinise this update and suggest further improvements as this was a crucial improvement programme to get right.

152. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Covid Resilience, Schools and Skills provided an update to the Committee which included:

- A plan, in co-production with the Chair of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, to undertake an appreciative inquiry focusing on inclusion, which would consider the state of the nation, positive practices and an aim to minimise exclusions across BCP.
- The work being undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing Board on addressing food insecurity/poverty and mental health. The Portfolio Holder advised she could provide a detailed information only report for the Committee on all the work that was being undertaken. **Action.**

An MYP requested information on how young people could become involved to help combat food poverty and the Portfolio Holder advised she would investigate and feedback to the MYPs. **Action.**

The Portfolio Holder concluded her verbal update by thanking all the young volunteers who had been supporting the vaccination programme.

153. Items for Information

The Chair confirmed that the items for information would be circulated to the Committee after the meeting.

154. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was noted.

155. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN