

ITEM 4

Time commenced – 6.00pm

Time finished – 8.12pm

Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board

Monday 29 October 2018

Present: Councillor Russell (Chair)
Councillors Ashburner, Harwood, Hezelgrave, and Hussain
Co-optees - Steve Grundy, Chris Hulse and Chris Reynolds.

In Attendance: Alex Hough – Democratic Services Manager
Kathryn Leach – Child Poverty Topic Review Witness
Suanne Lim – Director of Integrated Services
Hazel Lymbery – Director of Early Help and Children's Safeguarding
Paula Martin – Child Poverty Topic Review Witness

17/18 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Keith, Willoughby and Winter, Gillian Butler and Nicky Fenton.

18/18 Late items introduced by the Chair

It was reported that additional appendices had been circulated since the publication of the agenda in relation to minute 24/18, having been accidentally omitted from the original bundle.

The Chair stated their intention to consider evidence from the invited topic review witnesses as the first main item of business.

19/18 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

20/18 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

The Board noted that under minute 16/18 they had resolved to thank Paul Brookhouse and Ruth Richardson for both their contribution to the topic review and their work in Derby in recent years.

21/18 Topic Review – Child Poverty in Derby

The Chair introduced Kathryn Leach, Head of School at St Chad's Infant and Nursery School, and Paula Martin, Headteacher of Firs Primary School, to provide

evidence to members, as part of the Board's topic review of Child Poverty in Derby. Additional written evidence was also circulated on behalf of Helen Kelk, Headteacher of Rosehill Infant and Nursery School, who was unable to attend the meeting.

The Board heard that the three schools were very different, but faced significantly similar challenges in terms of the impact of child poverty on teaching and learning. It was noted that Firs Primary School had a steadily growing school population with significant proportion of these children being new arrivals to the UK. It was noted that over forty languages were currently spoken by children at the school.

Members heard evidence of Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs. It was reported that many children who attended Firs Primary School did not have their most basic physiological needs met at home, which resulted in children not being able to reach their full potential. It was noted that poverty had a significant impact on a child's IQ, which was exaggerated the longer a child was living in poverty.

It was reported that 38 per cent of children attending St Chad's would change school during the course of an academic year. Moreover, a significant proportion of children did not speak English when arriving at the school. It was noted that although 28 per cent of pupils at St Chad's currently qualified for pupil premium funding, a significant number of families did not have access to benefits therefore schools were unable to prove their entitlement to the pupil premium. This presented particular challenges, where schools were funding basic needs such as uniforms and breakfast clubs from core budgets.

The importance of home and school partnerships was emphasised. It was noted that St Chad's had successfully introduced family inductions which aimed to support parents with new processes and cultures they may be unfamiliar with. Home visits for new arrivals had also been introduced and although they presented challenges in terms of releasing two members of staff, the potential benefits were substantial.

The Board heard anecdotal evidence of the impact of poverty. For example, teachers reported a lack of appropriate clothing and children falling asleep in class as a result of their housing situation. Families typically lived in private rented housing, often in multiple occupation, with parents in short-term employment on zero hours contracts. This resulted in frequent school moves and disruption to the child's routine. It was reported that teachers in schools with high levels of child poverty were not only expected to be educators, but also social workers and medical professionals.

It was emphasised that working in a school with high levels of child poverty was a rewarding experience, but one that came with very particular challenges. It was reported that adult literacy was a significant problem, with parents unable to support children with their learning. Moreover, parents may not always recognise the importance of formal education, which had an impact on attendance. It was stated that poverty had a detrimental impact on child development, noting that on average a child from a deprived background would hear 32 million fewer words

between 0 and 48 months than their contemporaries.

The Board heard that schools in inner city areas often had no playing fields and local parks were not always safe to use. Although inner city schools had access to sports funding, they were often unable to utilise it. Victorian school buildings and narrow access roads presented practical challenges with regards to bringing in large equipment for special events.

Members heard the difficulties schools experienced with regards to identifying and resolving the language gap with children and families. Teachers praised the work of the New Communities Team and stated that they were purchasing translation services to the fullest extent possible, but that demand was outstripping supply given the increasing variety of languages spoken in schools and the families in need of support.

It was reported that schools were trialling early phonic lessons with parents and children; the importance of purchasing books was also stressed, with dual language books being particularly useful as teaching aids.

Child safeguarding was also cited as a significant challenge for schools in deprived areas, with significantly more pupils subject to child protection plans compared to more affluent areas. It was noted that in deprived areas parents were more likely to suffer from alcoholism, substance abuse or mental health problems.

It was reported that due to the high mobility rate amongst families, children struggled to make lasting friendships and suffered from isolation. Moreover, it was stated that a school move sets a child's learning back by an average of six months. It was reported that at Firs Primary, only 52 per cent of children who started Year 6 completed the previous academic year. Moreover, it was noted that very few children who started Key Stage 1 at the school would go on to complete Key Stage 2 at Firs Primary.

The Board heard evidence that children from deprived backgrounds struggled to gain experiences outside of their home and school lives. The importance of local outings was emphasised; for example, it was noted that some children at Derby's inner city schools had never visited the city centre with their families.

It was reported that schools in deprived neighbourhoods struggled to generate the same level of fundraising from parents compared to those in more affluent areas; this impacted on the ability to fund school improvements. Moreover, schools in deprived areas struggled with recruitment of teachers and school governors.

The Board questioned the witnesses on a range of issues related to child poverty; the importance of connecting with and understanding deprived communities was emphasised. Members discussed how the challenges presented by child poverty could lead to a spiral of decline for schools, resulting in poor OFSTED results and exaggerating recruitment problems. It was noted that the situation of children from deprived backgrounds was increasingly complex, particularly with regards to the Roma community.

It was stated that schools were optimistic that OFSTED would start to recognise the challenges presented by child poverty and the valuable work schools were doing in creating good citizens. It was suggested that more time should be devoted to training teachers in relation to new communities. Moreover, it was stated defining children as EAL (English as an additional language) was unhelpful and that a more nuanced approach was required that accounted for a variety of nationalities, identities and customs encountered by teachers.

It was suggested that more services needed to be located at schools; the success of home and school partnerships and the participation of St Chad's in PEEP (Partnership Engagement and Enforcement Programme) was cited as a basis for creating community hubs located at schools.

The Board resolved:

- **To thank Helen Kelk, Kathryn Leach and Paula Martin for their contribution to the topic review and their work in Derby schools**
- **To note the evidence provided in order to inform the development of recommendations at the conclusion of the Topic Review.**

22/18 Work Programme

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive proposing a revised work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Board resolved to agree the revised work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year.

23/18 Council Cabinet Minute Extract 94/18 from the meeting on 10 October 2018

The Board considered a minute extract from the Council Cabinet meeting on 10 October 2018 relating to Improving Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision in Derby.

It was reported that the decision had been subject to call-in, which was upheld by the Executive Scrutiny Board on 22 October 2018. Council Cabinet considered the outcome of the call-in at its meeting of 24 October and resolved to defer any further decision to allow for matters raised to be taken into full consideration.

24/18 HMIP Inspection of Youth Offending Service

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services with regards to the outcome of a recent inspection carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) of Derby City Council's Youth Offending Service. It was reported that the authority was the first local authority to be inspected under HMIP's new framework.

It was noted that the inspection took place in June 2017 and comprised of case audits and discussions with senior leaders and staff. The inspection considered organisational delivery, post court cases and out of court disposals, for which the authority received an overall rating of good.

It was reported that the inspection found staff to be passionate and committed to their roles; that partnership working was outstanding; and, that clear systems were in place to capture the views of children. Contract management and policies were considered to be good and that the service delivered an impressive range of interventions, especially in terms of reducing re-offending. The Derby Youth Justice Plan was cited as providing a clear vision for the direction of the service and clear pathways for service users.

Amongst areas for improvement, the inspection found a need to identify and minimise the impact of discrimination and disadvantage in the criminal justice system, particularly with regards to girls and young people from a black and minority ethnic background. Moreover, the need to accurately assess safeguarding, wellbeing and vulnerability of young people subject to out of court disposals was emphasised, as well as ensuring the needs and wishes of victims are given greater attention by the service. Three recommendations were made in this regard.

It was reported that an Action Plan had been submitted within two weeks of receiving the inspection outcome and had been approved by the Probation Service.

The Board welcomed the inspection outcome and sought further clarification on measures taken to address the safeguarding issues and other areas for improvement noted in the report. It was stated that a wide range of audit activity was planned and that an informal peer review process was being undertaken with Derbyshire County Council and that further updates would be provided to the Board in this regard.

Following questions from members, the Board heard that a mental health nurse assessed all young people referred to the service. Further clarification was sought on how the service intended to tackle discrimination in the youth justice system. Levels of sickness absence in the service were also considered, particularly in the context of savings identified in the medium term financial plan. It was reported that no savings were proposed to the out-of-court team, which is where required improvements had been identified.

The Board resolved:

- **To note the key findings from the HMIP inspection of the Derby Youth Offending Service and welcome the overall rating of good.**
- **To receive further updates on progress against the Action Plan to address areas for improvement.**

25/18 SEND Progress Update Report

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services updating members on the delivery, referral and assessment of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the reorganisation of the service to form the new School Organisation and Provision SEND Team. The update followed a request made by the Executive Scrutiny Board in July 2018.

It was reported that following the transfer of Statements of SEN to EHCPs by the deadline of 31 March 2018, it was proposed that the structure of the Vulnerable Learners Service was reviewed. It was reported that following research into best practice from other authorities, a structure had been agreed and the majority of posts had been appointed to.

Performance measures and indicators for SEND were detailed at Appendix 2 of the report; it was reported that the Performance Framework was now included on the Council Scorecard.

The significant challenge presented by the transfer to EHCPs was noted and it was reported that the SEND Team were now working to clear a backlog of new cases. It was reported that 186 requests for EHCPs had been received since April 2018 and 145 assessments had been agreed. It was stated that the service aimed to issue 75 per cent of EHCPs within a 20 week period.

The Board queried why the target had been set at only 75 per cent; it was stated that the service needed to be realistic with regards to targets, but that the aspiration remained to issue all EHCPs within 20 weeks. Members also questioned how a proposed pause in locality funding would affect the medium to long-term provision of SEND services; it was suggested that this was considered by the Board as part of a planned Performance Surgery in quarter four. Referring to the SEND review, members supported plans for greater inclusion and clarity of pathways, but suggested that further detail was required with regards to funding.

The Board resolved:

- **To note service improvement, development of performance measures and frequency of reporting in relation to SEND**
- **To thank the School Organisation and Provision SEND Team and recognise the continued drive towards improvement.**

MINUTES END