

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 7 June 2016

Present: Councillor S Smith (in the Chair)
Councillors J Black, R.Cathcart, T Cummings, E Fitzgerald,
M Hankey, M James, D Silbiger, R Skillen, J Walker,
R Walker and S Wright

Also in attendance:

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence:

OSC.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R E Walker declared a personal interest in Minute OSC.24, Public Consultation on the Key Principles for the Bury Library Service, as a member of the Reinstated Bury Central Library Group.

Councillors Wright declared a personal interest in any matter relating to staffing as his wife is employed at a Primary School in the Borough.

OSC.21 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the meeting, held on 22 March 2016, be agreed as a correct record.

OSC.22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Nicole Haydock attended the meeting and referred to income and expenditure figures for the Sculpture Centre which had been submitted to Committee Members. In response to a request from Ms Haydock, the Executive Director of Children's Services undertook to provide the figures for the Service, which he stated, were a matter of public record.

OSC.23 OFSTED INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS AND REVIEW OF LOCAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD

The Cabinet Member (Children and Families) submitted a report presenting the findings of an Ofsted inspection of Bury Council Children's Services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers.

The inspection took place over a four week period during February and March 2016 and involved twelve inspectors focussing on:

- Frontline case practice
- Children and Young People's own experiences
- A greater emphasis on the outcomes and needs of the child

- Early identification and help for children, young people and their families;
- A greater emphasis than in previous inspections about how effectively partner agencies work together to protect children and young people;
- Services for LAC (Looked After Children) (including Fostering, Adoption and Care Leavers)
- A review of the LSCB (Local Safeguarding and Children Board)

The inspection found that there were no widespread or serious failings that may result in or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. Also, the welfare of looked after children and their safeguarding is promoted.

The services to children and young people were recognised as being predominantly good and the report included eleven recommendations to assist the Council in preparing an action plan to ensure all services to children and young people are rated 'good' or 'outstanding'. The Local Safeguarding Children Board received 5 recommendations which will be used to form part of a Safeguarding Board action plan.

The Cabinet Member placed on record her thanks to staff for their hard work and commitment which had resulted in an encouraging report. The Cabinet Member further stated that there would be no complacency and that whilst acknowledging there was room for improvement, the report did provide a baseline for improvements.

Questions and comments were invited from the Committee and the following issues were raised:

- Members stressed the importance of early intervention with regard to those Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET). The Executive Director acknowledged this and highlighted the importance of the opportunities available for looked after children matching their level of attainment, which includes the provision of employment with training.
- With regard to consultations with partner agencies, Councillor Roy Walker highlighted the benefits of increased liaison with Head Teachers and Social Workers. The Executive Director referred to the ongoing work with schools, including the attendance of school reps at case conferences.
- Members of the Committee recognised the positive steps that had been taken within the Service in respect of the increased stability of social work staff.
- In response to a question concerning sustainability and funding, the Executive Director acknowledged the budget pressures faced and highlighted that improved management below the statutory level would result in better outcomes at less cost in the long run.

It was agreed:

1. That staff be congratulated on the positive outcomes within the Inspection Report.

That the Action Plan, responding to the recommendations in the report, be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee

OSC.24 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE KEY PRINCIPLES FOR THE BURY LIBRARY SERVICE

The Cabinet Member (Strategic Housing and Support Services) submitted a report regarding a proposed consultation on the Bury Library Service which will be based on six Key Principles. The responses received could be used to provide the framework for a full review of the Bury Library Service in 2017.

The six Key Principles to be consulted on are:

1. To provide a Library Service across the borough which provide all residents with access to libraries and electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.
2. To ensure that the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.
3. To ensure that the resources committed to the library service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with Council and other services.
4. To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the library service for example by extending opening hours, increasing our digital services and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.
5. To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the Library Service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services.
6. To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.

In order to gain a wide range of views on the service, contact will be made with current library service users and non-users. The consultation will include an online survey, telephone survey, public meetings and face to face contact and this will be supported by a consultancy company.

The report provided an indicative timetable for the process to be followed, including the submission of the outcome of the first consultation phase report to Cabinet in October. A second consultation would then take place with a final report to Cabinet in March 2017. Consultation would then take place with staff members

during April and May 2017 with the final implementation of proposals anticipated by 1 July 2017.

Questions and comments were invited from the Committee and the following issues were raised:

- In response to a question concerning the effectiveness of the consultation methods, the Cabinet Member explained that a full strategy is in place to monitor the consultations. The Cabinet Member explained that a key part of the process will be to get the views of non-service users to find out what things would make those residents use libraries.
- Councillor Black highlighted the potential benefits of integrating services and working with partners as a means of ensuring libraries are sustainable for the future.
- Councillor Roy Walker suggested that the principle of retaining a Central Library worthy of the town the size of Bury should be included as a principle within the report.
- Councillor Roy Walker requested a breakdown of book issue figures for libraries within the borough. The Cabinet Member cautioned about looking at book issue figures in isolation and stressed the need to also look at footfall and usage of services.

It was agreed:

That this Committee supports the key principles that will drive the review of the Library Service, as set out in the report.

OSC.25 DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

Leigh Webb, Democratic Services Manager, submitted a report setting out the terms of reference for the Committee along with a Work Programme Prioritisation Protocol to assist members in the development of a Work programme for 2016/2017. The report included a brief summary of the Overview and Scrutiny structures along with the remit of the Committee, which allows for the setting up of task and finish Overview Project Groups to carry out in depth reviews into specific topics.

During discussion of this item, Members focussed on the work and remit of the Children's Safeguarding Overview Project and questioned the rationale behind the decision at the last meeting of this Committee for the Group to continue its work during 2016/17.

It was agreed:

1. That the following Performance Monitoring items be included as part of this Committee's Work Programme for 2016/17:

- Corporate Financial Monitoring Reports (Quarterly)
 - Corporate Performance Updates (Quarterly)
2. That the Chair of the Children’s Safeguarding Scrutiny Overview Project Groups be requested to attend the next meeting of this Committee.
 3. That the following additional issues be considered by the full Committee as part of the Work Programme for 2016/2017:

Item	Comments
Traffic Circulation in the Borough	Request for Highways Officers to report on traffic flow/congestion in the Borough
Highways Maintenance	Report requested on resurfacing programmes and pot hole repairs
Community Cohesion	To include the issue of social housing allocations
Children’s Safeguarding (OPG)	(Chair to attend next full Committee meeting)
Library Review	Regular updates/consultation as the Review progresses
OFSTED - Safeguarding	OFSTED Action Plan to be submitted to Committee
Academisation of Schools	Report requested on current status of schools and the authority’s response to schools planning to convert to Academies

OSC.26 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business reported.

COUNCILLOR S SMITH
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at Time Not Specified and ended at Time Not Specified)