

Minutes of: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 15 November 2023

Present: Councillor C Boles (in the Chair)
Councillors D Berry, C Boles, A Booth, E FitzGerald, L McBriar, J Rydeheard, L Ryder, G Staples-Jones and M Whitby.
H Chadwick, Union Representative and D Lewis, Youth Representative

Also in attendance: Isobel Booter, Director of Education, Jeanette Richards, Executive Director Children and Young People, Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member Children and Young People and Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services.

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor U Farooq and Councillor N Frith

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies are noted above.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made.

Councillor Booth advised she is employed by a College within Bury.

3 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th September 2023 be approved as a correct and accurate record.

Matters arising:

Councillor Berry questioned if there have been any lessons learned that could be adopted regarding the reoffending rates of young people in Bury, compared to that of other countries that have lower reoffending rates of young people.

In response Councillor Smith advised one of the functions of the national Youth Justice Board is to look at research across the UK and around the world (from countries that are similar to ours and have similar laws) and to use this research to inform evidence based interventions which are shared with local youth justice boards. The issue we face is that many countries have quite a different legal framework to the UK, for example, in some Scandinavian countries the age of criminal responsibility is 15 whereas ours in the UK is 10, so this immediately means that we will have more young people within the youth justice system than those countries.

More recently the board has looked at arrest rate and there has been a drive across police forces to record youth crime at a lower level which pushes up arrest numbers. We are mindful

of this, and we are currently working with our local force in Bury to develop a clearer pathway to prevention so that more young people can be supported outside of the formal criminal justice system. We will track this to review impact over the next 6-12 months.

Councillor Berry also asked if we have an update on school attendance figures of Radcliffe children and is the council in a position to report on the reasons why Radcliffe has the highest number of persistent children's absences.

The current attendance figures for the first half term for Radcliffe schools are:

School	Term	Attendance % Exc Nursery
RADCLIFFE LOCALITY	Autumn 1	94.7%
The Derby High School	Autumn 1	92.90%
Chapelfield Primary School	Autumn 1	94.40%
Gorsefield Primary School	Autumn 1	94.90%
Cams Lane Primary School	Autumn 1	94.90%
Millwood Primary Special School	Autumn 1	90.20%
Radcliffe Hall CE/Methodist Primary	Autumn 1	94.60%
Radcliffe Primary School	Autumn 1	95.20%
St Andrews CE Primary School (Radcliffe)	Autumn 1	95.00%
St Johns CE Primary School	Autumn 1	94.70%
St Marys RC Primary School	Autumn 1	94.80%
Wesley Methodist Primary School	Autumn 1	94.20%

To improve overall attendance for all of our schools, the attendance offer that is being provided is:

- Introduced attendance forums for all schools and academies.
- Implemented training on attendance processes and guidance.
- Provided new attendance policy for all schools and academies which is available on the Headteacher Hubs for schools to download.
- Emotionally based school avoidance Pathway offered to all schools.
- Trauma Informed school training provided to all schools.
- ACES (Adverse childhood experiences) training which is offered to all schools.
- Each school has an allocated attendance officer providing the core offer – targeted support meetings, legal interventions, penalty notices, multi-agency meetings.
- School attendance orders have been implemented from September 2023

Overall attendance for all Bury schools has increased by 1.8% in the autumn term from the previous year. Overall absences has decreased by 1.8%, overall unauthorised absences have decreased by 0.4% from the previous autumn term and one secondary school has increased their overall attendance by 2% from the previous year.

Helen Chadwick, Union Representative requested a correction to word in the minutes.

Councillor Rydeheard asked if the meeting with Ms Marek had taken place. Officers advised this is yet to take place.

Members were informed since the last meeting two task and finish groups have taken place.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5 MEMBER QUESTIONS

There were no member questions.

6 ATTAINMENT HEADLINE OUTCOMES 2023 (PROVISIONAL)

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People provided an overview of the Attainment Report. The report covers an analysis of 2023 performance data that outlines the improving school led system within the borough of Bury. Currently 91% of primary schools are judged by Ofsted to be good or better. Alongside this the percentage of good or better secondary schools has risen over 15% in the last 12 months to 61%.

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People wished to place on record gratitude to Isobel Booler in her role in this work. Members of the Committee wished to put on record their gratitude and appreciation to Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills and the teams for this report and the findings.

Members wished to place on record that it is good to see SEND given the same priority within the report.

Discussions took place regarding the quality education offer to schools. Members were informed that the take-up of maintained schools is high (all but 2 schools) whereas take up of academies is not as high.

Discussions took place regarding progress eight assessments. Members were informed that The Derby and Hazlewood are both positive outliers. In addition there are three schools with below -0.5 these are Tottington, The Heys and The Elton but all have school improvement plans in place.

Discussions took place regarding the success of results for children entitled to free school meals. Councillor Smith advised 23% of Bury children are on free school meals and improved outcomes for all students is a key priority.

Discussions took place with regards to children and young people who or classed as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Isobel Booler, Executive Director of Education advised the whole cohort is a higher proportion when compared to other vulnerable cohorts. Out of the Children who are looked after 87% are in education, employment or training and 9 children are not. An area of significant priority is with regards to care leavers post 18. Support is currently available through an active Connexions Service and SEND internships.

It was agreed:

1. Officers and Councillor Smith be thanked for their update and report.

7 DETAILED REPORT ON COMPLEX SAFEGUARDING AND MISSING RESPONSE - ANNON EXPERIENCES

Councillor Smith provided a brief overview of the report on safeguarding.

Members of the committee were informed that children from another authority are placed within the Borough that go missing are included within the figures.

A member of the committee questioned the process when a missing child returns. Members were informed the first stage is to report into police who then hand over through the multi safeguarding hub. Once the child is returned the Police undertake a safe and well check a triage for a requirement for a return interview

Members were informed that governance arrangements have been strengthened through sub-groups and an action plan. Members were assured that the prevention and battle against sexual exploitation is through a partnership approach and raising awareness. Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised that strengthening families to protect children is also key.

Discussions took place regarding the effectiveness of reporting. Members were informed that the measure of effectiveness is through re-referral rates back into the service. Data to be brought back to the Committee.

It was agreed:

1. Data insights are being refined and can be brought back to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

8 IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Jeanette Richards, Executive Director for Children and Young People provided an update on the Improvement Plan for Children's Services.

Members were informed that on the 1st and 2nd of November Children Services were subject to their fifth monitoring visit of which four have taken place in the past twelve months. The focus of the monitoring visit was on the progress and experience of our care leavers with a specific focus on pathway planning.

Publication of the letter on the 06th December 2023 and the summary headlines are:

- Unfortunately all our young people do not receive a consistently good services from our PA's
- Some older carer leavers were not receiving a service at all.
- Leadership challenges has impacted on improvement plans and service delivery

Members were informed that particular issues regarding our care leavers has been workforce, leadership and the location of the offer. Members were also informed there have been issues with the new international social workers due to hold ups with social work england.

Discussions took place with regards to care leavers housing, social housing, housing projects and the right to stay with their foster carers. Members were informed that the Council needs to move towards a joint housing protocol between the housing department and children services.

It was agreed:

1. To share a self-evaluation and an update against activity against the improvement plan
2. For all members of the Committee to support and champion the role of Corporate Parenting.

9 URGENT BUSINESS

It was agreed that members wished to share thanks and gratitude to Isobel Booler, Director of Education for her work with the Committee and Children's Services

COUNCILLOR C BOLES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.22 pm)