
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JULY 2017

Present: Councillors Keogh (Chair), Murphy, Painton and Laurent

Apologies: Councillors O'Neill, Burke, Taggart, Catherine Hobbs and Revd. J Williams

5. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillor Burke, Councillor O'Neil, Councillor Taggart, Catherine Hobbs and Reverend J Williams were noted.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

7. **PROVISION OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE COUNCIL**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development informing the Panel of the Council's approach to maximising apprenticeships within its workforce.

Fiona Watton, Service Lead – HR Development, Justine Taylor-Knightbridge, Lead Apprenticeships Advisor and Hilary Brooks, Service Director, Children and Families Services were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting. In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- HR were working closely with the Pathways Team, and local organisations who are currently providing support, to deliver targeted assistance for care leavers;
- Through the Apprenticeship First approach it has been proposed that care leavers are guaranteed interviews when applying for apprenticeship opportunities;
- A communications plan was in development to support the initiatives and to raise the profile of apprenticeships for young people;
- Funding is available to support the Council's approach;
- At present most care leavers were not ready to become apprentices when they leave school. Work to support looked after children become 'job ready' will commence earlier and will include taster sessions. This will take a period of time to deliver required outcomes;
- It is recognised that improving the educational attainment of looked after children is key, linked to the actions of the Virtual School and working with foster carers.

- Data on previous apprenticeship initiatives employed by the Council was limited and that no information exists on employing care leavers as apprentices within the local authority;
- Through the 'Developing Talent' strand there exists the opportunity to enhance retraining/upskilling/cross-skilling of staff in professional areas to meet business needs as part of wider workforce planning;
- The Capita contract includes reference to employing apprentices.

RESOLVED that the Panel requested:

- (i) That appropriate performance information is collected on the provision of apprenticeships in the Council to enable the Panel to effectively challenge outcomes and track progress in 2018/19; and
- (ii) That officers seek to maximise apprenticeship opportunities by exploring the potential to link the developing SCC approach with the commitment to supporting apprenticeships within the Capita contract.

8. **KEY STAGE 2 - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance providing an overview of Key Stage 2 results in Southampton for 2017.

Jo Cassey, Service Lead – Education and Early Help and Hilary Brooks, Service Director, Children and Families Services were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting. Following discussions with officers the Panel noted that:

- The results improved considerably from 2016;
- Southampton's results were broadly in line with the national average;
- Performance in Maths dipped slightly. A strategy was in place to help drive up attainment in Maths. This included an approach to the Solent Maths Hub and a funding bid through the Teaching Schools for additional support.
- The final results will not be confirmed until the autumn.
- Through cluster groups and networks primary and secondary schools were working closely to provide the required support for pupils transitioning to secondary school in 2017.
- The Panel were unclear of the role that Teaching Schools play in improving school standards in Southampton.
- Councillors need to be encouraged to augment their understanding of the performance of schools in their ward.

RESOLVED that the Panel requested:

- (i) that a brief overview be circulated to the Panel clarifying the role of Teaching Schools in improving school standards;
- (ii) that councillors were informed when, following an inspection, Ofsted changes the rating of a school in their ward.

9. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance providing an overview of performance across Children and Families Services since June 2017.

Hilary Brooks, Service Director, Children and Families Services and Phil Bullingham, Service Lead - Safeguarding, Improvement, Governance and Quality Assurance were present and, with the consent of the Chair addressed, the meeting. Following discussions officers it was noted that performance continued to improve and stabilise but that there were some anomalies in the June dataset.

It was noted that timeliness for holding child protection conferences had fallen in June. This was partly due to rising demand and necessary delays but the performance dip was also attributable to workforce issues. To help deliver consistent standards and strengthen personal responsibility the Local Government Association have been commissioned to support the service.

The Panel were informed that summer holidays and the Phase 3 restructure was creating challenges in the short term for the service but that, despite the inevitable dips in performance, the long term trajectory continued to be positive.

RESOLVED that the Panel requested that, in order to help enhance member understanding, the presentation on Phase 3 restructuring is circulated to the Panel.

10. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel considered and noted the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance relating to recommendations made at previous meetings of the Panel.