
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2024

Present: Councillors Barnes-Andrews (Chair), Chapman, Webb, G Lambert, Beaurain and Cooper
Appointed Members: Rob Sanders

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

The apologies of Councillor Kaur were noted. It was noted that following receipt of the temporary resignation of Councillor Kaur from the Panel, the Monitoring Officer acting under delegated powers, had appointed Councillor Cooper to replace them for the purposes of this meeting.

The Panel also noted that Councillor Allen was in attendance virtually.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESSOLVED That Councillor Webb be appointed as Vice Chair for the 2024-2025 municipal year.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March, 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. **OUTCOME OF LOCAL AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) AREA INSPECTION**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director for Children and Learning outlining the outcome of the local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection, conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in April / May 2024.

Councillor Winning (Cabinet Member for Children and Learning), Rob Henderson (Executive Director, Children's Services and Learning) and Dr Debbie Chase (Director of Public Health) were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

It was noted that OFSTED had recently published their report into the Provision of Special Educational Needs in Southampton and therefore the papers were no longer required to be treated as confidential.

The Panel discussed a number of points including:

- The accuracy of the Council's SEND self assessment;
- The key learning points from the inspection;
- The Council's SEND transformation programme and Capital programme;
- The uptake of the mandated healthy children programme and any potential variations to this across the City;

- The number and percentage of elective home educated children with SEND is circulated to the Panel; and
- The development of the SEND Partnership action plan.

RESOLVED

- 1) That, reflecting issues raised by the inspection about the visibility of some children with SEND, the number and percentage of elective home educated children with SEND is circulated to the Panel.
- 2) That, to help target activity aimed at improving uptake, analysis is undertaken of the mandated healthy child programme developmental checks to identify if there are any significant variations across the city, geographical or otherwise.
- 3) That the issue returns to the agenda of the Panel in November to consider the SEND Partnership action plan developed in response to the inspection findings.

5. **FAMILY SAFEGUARDING MODEL**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director - Children and Learning, providing an introduction to the Family Safeguarding Model.

Councillor Winning (Cabinet Member for Children and Learning), Rob Henderson (Executive Director, Children's Services and Learning), Steph Murray (Deputy Director - Children's Social Care Delivery) and Matt Jenkins (Head of Family Safeguarding) were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel discussed a number of points including:

- The risks and challenges associated with the Family Safeguarding Model approach that could prevent it from delivering the required outcomes and how these will be mitigated;
- The performance outcomes expected through the introduction of the Family Safeguarding Model;
- Commitment from key partners to make the model work;
- Learnings from Hertfordshire that provides assurance that demand can be reduced and savings achieved from 2024/25; and
- The composition of the Operational Board, including representation from schools.

RESOLVED

1. That the Panel suggested that a Headteacher is invited to attend Operational Board meetings to enable feedback about the impact of the Family Safeguarding Model on school outcomes to be identified and recorded.
2. That an update on progress implementing the Family Safeguarding Model is presented to the Panel at the 30 January 2025 meeting.

6. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered and noted the report of Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children's Services and Learning in Southampton

Councillor Winning (Cabinet Member for Children and Learning), Rob Henderson (Executive Director Children and Learning) and Steph Murray (Deputy Director, Children and Learning) were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel discussed a number of issues including:

- The reduction in the number of children entering the safeguarding system in Southampton;
- The increase in the percentage of children subject to 2 or more child protection plans;
- The welcome increase in the initial health assessments undertaken on time and the number of in house foster carers.
- The consistently high percentage of audits that show practice to be good or outstanding;
- Increasing workforce stability and reducing caseloads of social workers;; and
- The progress on the new children's homes.

7. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received and noted the report of the Scrutiny Manager which enabled the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel to monitor and track progress on recommendations made at previous meetings.