

## **Minutes of the People Services Scrutiny Committee**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 at 6.00 pm**  
**in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley**

### **Present:**

Councillor M Mottram (Chair)  
Councillor M Attwood (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors C Baugh, R Body, P Bradley, A Goddard, C Perks, D Vickers; Mr A Qadus and Reverend A Wickens.

### **Officers:**

M Williams - Chief Officer Environmental Services (Lead Officer) (Place Directorate); T Oakman – Strategic Director People, D Fishbourne – Interim Lead for Education Outcomes, M Joseph – Interim Chief Officer Children’s Services, R Clayton – Chair Safeguarding Board, G Earney – Interim Lead Secondary Adviser, H Ellis – Head of Family Solutions, Chief Superintendent R Fisher – West Midlands Police, J Price – Senior Early Years Adviser, S Roach – MASH Lead (People Directorate) and H Shepherd - Democratic Services Officer (Resources and Transformation Directorate).

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#### 34 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors N Barlow, D Hemingsley and G Simms.

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#### 35 **Appointment of a Substitute Member**

It was noted that Councillor A Goddard had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor N Barlow, for this meeting of the Committee only.

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#### 36 **Declarations of Interest**

No member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct.

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#### 37 **Minutes**

##### **Resolved**

That, the minutes of the People Services Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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38      **Public Forum**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

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39      **Dudley School Improvement Alliance Delivery Plan**

A report of the Strategic Director People was submitted on the School Improvement Delivery Plan.

The Interim Lead for Education Outcomes presented the report and outlined the purpose for the establishment of the School Improvement Alliance and stated that it was the Alliance's role to identify what could and would help achieve improved education outcomes in all type of Schools across Dudley.

In presenting the report the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes referred to the three key priorities that had been identified:-

- Leadership and management, including Governance
- Pupil Premium and closing the gap
- Mathematics

It was stated that working parties for each individual priority had been established to consider targets and objectives which would be incorporated into the School Improvement Delivery Plan and that the final version of the Delivery Plan would be available shortly.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes confirmed that the School Improvement Alliance Delivery Plan would have clear links to Dudley's Values and Behaviour Framework, a copy of which would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

In response to a further question raised, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes stated that a central budget was held by the Local Authority to assist schools that were categorised by Ofsted as being in special measures or Schools causing concern and to ensure that statutory obligations were fulfilled. However, due to substantial cuts in grant allocations this budget had been significantly reduced.

A member commented on the pupil premium funding and the perception that children in receipt of free school meals did not perform academically and how this inaccurate perception could be tackled. The Interim Lead for Education Outcomes confirmed that pupil premium funding was based on free school meal eligibility rather than prior attainment. She expressed the need for parents who were eligible to receive free school meals to continue to apply for this provision, despite the universal infant free school meals provision, as this impacted upon pupil premium funding allocated. It was stated that Schools in receipt of pupil premium funding were held accountable to demonstrate pupil improvement and to identify how the additional money had been spent in trying to 'close the gap' between this group and non pupil premium peers.

In response to a further question raised, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes stated that Schools and Children Centres all held information on the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals, which was promoted to parents, however, some parents found it difficult, for their own personal reasons, to apply and accept the benefit, even though it was for the benefit of their children.

Arising from a question raised with regards to how poor governance in the borough could be improved, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes stated that the Local Authority had the power to remove a Governing Body if it was considered not to be performing or achieving the statutory requirements. Training for all Governors would be reviewed and collaborative working with the National College had commenced through a National Leader of Governance. The Local Authority also clerked Governing Body meetings, which helped identify early on if there was a problem with the Governance at a particular School.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the information contained in the report in respect of the work of the School Improvement Alliance through its Delivery Plan across Dudley, be noted and endorsed and further updates be provided to future meetings of the People Services Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) That a copy of Dudley's Values and Behaviour Framework be circulated to Members following the meeting.

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### **Schools Standards Report 2015 (Primary and Secondary)**

A report of the Strategic Director People was submitted for Scrutiny Committee Members to note the standards of attainment and progress across Dudley Primary and Secondary Schools in 2015.

The Interim Lead for Education Outcomes presented the report and stated that to ensure transparency and for Members to be kept informed, a similar report would be submitted, on an annual basis, to future meetings of the People Services Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

In presenting the report, the Interim Lead for Education referred to paragraphs of specific importance and made particular reference to:-

- The improvement achieved in the level of development in Early Years provided in Dudley, however, this sector had also improved nationally and therefore the gap between Dudley and the national average had widened.
- Key Stage One continued to improve and was in-line with national levels, however, it was Dudley's objective to exceed the national level and not to settle for average.

- There was a positive picture for Key Stage Two, in that the quality of Schools had improved with the majority achieving a rating of 'Good' from Ofsted, however Dudley had fewer schools rated 'Outstanding' than the national average and this was the target that schools should be aiming to achieve.
- The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 had improved and was equal to national levels and had exceeded the levels set regionally.

The Interim Lead for Education Outcomes referred to 'challenge visits' that had been implemented in both maintained and non-maintained schools to discuss standards and confirmed that Officers had visited 17 secondary schools out of 20 within the Borough during the last term. She also stated that at least two schools had been identified as potential 'coasting' schools and discussions had been had with these schools to address the issues.

A member expressed his disappointment in the figures presented, but welcomed the honest information that had been provided.

Arising from a question raised, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes confirmed that since the publication of the report, a fourth primary school had been categorised by Ofsted as in special measures. It was stated that the Head teacher of that School had since left and its governing body had been replaced by an Interim Executive Board. Thorough and robust improvement plans had been developed, in consultation with Ofsted, for all four schools. The Local Authority, under its new regime, was working in close partnership with all four schools to develop good leadership, management and governance. One of the Schools identified as being in special measures was due to be re-inspected following the Easter break.

In response to positive comments expressed by a member with regards to a Head teacher within their ward and the positive impact they had had on the School and the community, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes confirmed that it had been identified that Head teachers who were involved within their community and had good communication with their parents, received far fewer complaints and played a key role in enabling the school to thrive.

In response to a request made by the Worcester Diocesan Board of Education Representative, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes agreed for data from the previous three years to be included in all future reports so that trends and comparisons could be made.

In responding to questions raised with regards to how many excluded pupils were from the Black, Minority and Ethnic community and what measures were being put in place to reverse the trends, the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes stated that she would circulate the figures with regards to the number of exclusions together with a breakdown of ethnicity. It was also stated Dudley's Exclusion Officer was of an excellent calibre and worked extremely hard to ensure that no child fell through the net and that each individual continued to be educated in either another mainstream school or alternative provision.

Discussion was had with regards to the increase in Primary pupil exclusions in particular that there was a need for additional social, emotional and mental health provisions within the Borough to assist with the issue and to help develop preventative mechanisms. It was confirmed that there were two short stay pupil referral units in Dudley and that a Special Educational Needs and Inclusion strategy was currently being developed.

In response to a further question raised, it was stated that the Local Authority had an obligation to ensure that parents who had chosen to educate their children at home were providing the correct level of education and checks were undertaken to ensure this was the case.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the information contained in the report in respect of the standards of attainment and progress across Dudley Primary and Secondary Schools in 2015, be noted.
- (2) That the total number of exclusions for 2015 and a breakdown of the ethnicity of those excluded, be provided by the Interim Lead for Education Outcomes following the meeting.

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### **Update on the Development of the Dudley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub**

A report of the Interim Chief Officer Children's Services was submitted to provide an update on the development of the Dudley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The MASH Lead Officer presented the report and provided members with the background to the MASH; outlined the agencies involved in the MASH and provided an update on the current progress position with regards to accommodation, information governance and ICT issues.

It was stated that funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant to support a MASH Schools Advisor post had been refused by the Secretary of State, despite having the full support of Dudley Schools Forum. Members were advised however that some additional funding to support the appointment of an Education Liaison Officer had been identified and this post would be advertised shortly.

Following the presentation of the report, Members commented positively to the progress made in developing the MASH and implementing the single point of access. A member expressed his concerns with regard to the proposed ICT system and the identified risks with different ICT packages being integrated and the transition from Children to Adults.

The Strategic Director People confirmed that lengthy consideration had been given to the implementation of the MASH and it was decided that to ensure a smooth transition it would be beneficial for it to be implemented in two stages, stage one would be for children and stage two for adults. It was also stated that although Dudley was one of the last authorities to implement a MASH, this had been to the benefit of Dudley as they were able to learn from other authorities experiences.

In responding to a question raised with regards to the awareness of the MASH, the Interim Chief Officer Children's Services stated that original contact details for MASH services would remain the same and the telephone number for the single point access would continue to be operated. One of the advantages to the implementation of the MASH would be that the Child Sexual Exploitation team, the Domestic Abuse Response Team and Missing would operate from the same location so that when a concern was raised all the appropriate professionals would be located in one room. It was considered that this would assist with services providing a consistent approach and would not impact on the referral but provide a better and consistent response. It was stated that all feedback that had been received since the implementation of the single point of access had been positive.

In response to a comment made, the Strategic Director People confirmed that all calls and enquiries received via the MASH would be monitored, which had not been the case in previous years. Members were reminded that the MASH was not a call centre and did not receive thousands of calls on a daily basis. Calls would only be received when a resident, family member, teacher or other professional had a genuine safeguarding concern, therefore calls would be managed and dealt with promptly.

The Strategic Director People stated that the establishment of the MASH was the beginning of a big transformation for Children's Services and focus had been given to getting MASH implemented, however, there was still a lot of work within Children's Services that needed to be done.

Arising from a question raised by a Member, the Strategic Director People confirmed that all agencies were experiencing financial difficulties, however providing an efficient and effective service did not just require money, but smarter ways of working. He expressed his disappointment with regards to the request for funding being refused by the Secretary of State to fund the proposed MASH post, however other funding avenues were now being explored.

The Strategic Director People suggested that Members may wish to visit the MASH centre once it was in operation to get a more in-depth understanding of the service and processes and requested that Members contacted him direct so that visits could be arranged.

## **Resolved**

- (i) That the information contained in the report in respect of the development and implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), be noted and endorsed.

- (ii) That further updates on the implementation, in order to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people in Dudley, be provided to future meetings of the People Services Scrutiny Committee.
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## 42 **Child Sexual Exploitation – Dudley**

A report of the Interim Chief Officer Children's Services was submitted to provide an update on the Child Sexual Exploitation developments in Dudley.

The Head of Family Solutions presented the report and highlighted the national, regional and local context and outlined the importance of not working in isolation. She stated that Dudley formed part of the West Midlands Regional Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to develop a regional child sexual exploitation framework and action plan.

She stated that the awareness of child sexual exploitation was taken very seriously by Dudley, with strong objectives and zero tolerance within the Borough. Keeping children safe was a Safeguarding Board priority and to ensure effective co-ordination of child sexual exploitation, a dedicated Child Sexual Exploitation team was developed in September 2015, comprising of an array of professionals.

It was proposed for the Child Sexual Exploitation team to be relocated with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub so that all referrals and concerns would be submitted to a single point and that all relevant professionals would be available on one site.

The Head of Family Solutions referred to the dedicated Child Sexual Exploitation co-ordinator post and stated that funding on a permanent basis had now been secured and the post would be advertised shortly.

It was stated that with regards to missing children, which is currently managed through the Runaway project, it was proposed that this would be incorporated into the Child Sexual Exploitation team responsibilities to ensure that each missing child case was assessed against the Child Sexual Exploitation risk indicators.

The Head of Family Solutions referred to the clear child sexual exploitation framework and procedures that had been developed at Dudley, which were updated on a regular basis to ensure that they incorporated any relevant national and regional changes.

With regards to raising awareness, the Head of Family Solutions stated that a lot of work had been undertaken in promoting awareness of child sexual exploitation, including multi agency training with partner agencies; identifying early prevention mechanisms; the transition into adulthood protocol; training and awareness courses for licensing and taxis firms and the development of a positive working relationship with the voluntary sector.

Chief Superintendent Fisher then provided an outline of child sexual exploitation from a Police perspective, stating that it was on the top of everyone's agenda and that police resources dedicated to deal with the work described had been identified.

He referred to the work that had been undertaken in raising awareness, and made particular reference to the work undertaken with hotels and reported that positive feedback and outcomes had been received from hotel staff who were now challenging and preventing possible perpetrators.

In referring to the prosecution process for perpetrators it was considered that there was further work to be done in this area, however assessments were required to ensure proportionality and reasonableness was implemented, as not all cases would be considered a risk and could be a genuine relationship between two people.

Arising from the presentation of the report, Members asked questions, made comments and responses were given when appropriate:-

- The issue with regards to neighbouring Local Authority Taxi Groups working together to promote Child Sexual Exploitation awareness and to provide consistent training to taxi drivers across the West Midlands, would be raised at the next West Midlands Regional Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group meeting.
- That the 12 children classified as at 'serious risk', each had individual support plans developed and meetings were held on a fortnightly basis to discuss each case. It was stated that risk assessments for children that were looked after and placed outside of the Borough were completed to ensure that a child was not being placed in an identified hotspot and although challenging, the Local Authority did all it could to prevent the perpetrator from locating the victim.
- Irrelevant of the race of a perpetrator, Child Sexual Exploitation would not be tolerated and appropriate action would be taken upon a reported incident.

### **Resolved**

That the information contained in the report in respect of the development of the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, be noted and endorsed.



The Independent Safeguarding Chair presented the report and apologised for the delay in submitting the document. He outlined the national context of the report with regards to the requirement for all local authorities to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board and what the Board's key objectives were.

### **Resolved**

That the information contained in the report in respect of the Annual Report of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board 2014-2015, be noted.

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#### **44      Comments made by the Chair**

The Chair and Members of the Scrutiny Committee expressed their best wishes to Roger Clayton on his retirement and thanked him for the work that he had done in relation to Safeguarding.

The Chair and Members of the Scrutiny Committee also referred to Councillor C Baugh, who would be standing down as a Councillor in May, 2016, and expressed their appreciation to him for his work on the Committee.

As this would be the last meeting of the People Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2015/16 municipal year, the Chair thanked all Officers that had been involved and for the informative meetings that had taken place.

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The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.

CHAIR