

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 10 July 2018

Time: 9.30 am

Present: Councillors D Williams (Chair), J Guy, T Holyoake, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend, J Watkins and T Watkins

Co-opted Members : R Penn (Church in Wales)

In Attendance: Councillors P Cockeram (Cabinet Member - Social Services)

D Cooke (Scrutiny Advisor), J Jenkins (Service Manager Adult & Community Services), S A Jenkins (Head of Children & Young Peoples Services), S Morgan (Chief Education Officer) and A Powles (Assistant Head of Education - Engagement and Learning)

Apologies: Councillors J Cleverly and L Lacey

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None

2 **Minutes of the Meeting held on the 5 June 2018**

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a **true** and **accurate** record of the meeting held on 5th June 2018.

3 **Service Area Performance Update - Year End 2017/18**

Education

Attendees:

- **Sarah Morgan – Head of Education**
- **Andrew Powles – Deputy Head of Education**

The Head of Education introduced herself, the Deputy Head of Education and explained the reason for the Cabinet Member needing to provide her apologies. The Chair and the Committee expressed their disappointment that the Cabinet Member was unable to attend. The Committee acknowledged that the Cabinet Member had not been able to attend the previous meeting which has meant that the Committee have not had the opportunity to discuss Education's performance with the Cabinet Member, and undertake their role in holding the executive to account.

This meeting start time had been brought forward to 9:30 to allow the Cabinet Member to attend another function at 12:00.

Members asked the Head of Education if there was scrutiny of EAS, if so how this was undertaken. Local Authorities (LA) were accountable for standards of schools and schools were held to account. Schools that were categorised as GREEN or YELLOW had earned a degree of autonomy, with schools that were in AMBER and RED being provided with additional support from the LA. When Schools were identified AMBER or RED LAs were tasked to recognise this and respond appropriately. Newport had four RED schools, who had meetings with the LA and EAS on a monthly basis and Amber Schools had six weekly meetings. The Head of Service explained that once the schools recognised their position, and support was accepted the method of support worked well.

Members asked if GREEN and YELLOW schools were being properly monitored to ensure they were performing. The Officer advised they were looking at performance in all schools and had tracking systems to measure results. Schools were also monitored by the Principal Challenge Advisors with 25% of Challenge Advisors being Head Teachers. The Officer stated she sat on the Welsh Regional Board which scrutinised other LA's categorisation of schools. This, the Head of Service stated ensures schools across Gwent faced standardised categorising.

Members asked if EAS could improve the support for the schools to improve, were EAS giving the schools in RED enough support to bring them out of that categorisation, and how long would it take. The Officer said if the schools needed additional support there were monthly meetings where any issues could be discussed, in addition to EAS Challenge Advisors providing schools in RED with 25 days of support. The 25 days were just a minimum and if required a school could receive more. The Head of Education stated that, as an example, St Julians school was on an upward trajectory, however, could not say when it would come out of special measures.

Members enquired when Estyn carried out their monitoring, and did they give feedback to the Local Authority and the school? The Officer advised that they give a commentary and the report was published on the website.

Members expressed the view that the change in the examination system was unfair, particularly to pupils, and had a negative impact on performance. The Officer stated the reason for the change had been to equip learners to be more employable. An example of a change was a Numeracy and Reasoning papers being added to Mathematics. The Officer stated that Newport was well prepared for the examinations and it was the best performance Newport has ever had, and Newport was 10th in Wales.

The Head of Service explained that there was an attendance forum to share good practice between schools. The Committee were informed there were clear processes across the city from primary to secondary to manage attendance. The forum, framework and peer visits were much more helpful as it had allowed for deep discussion on actions that had been taken, what needed to be done and after peer visits a letter was issued with helpful guidance to help the school improve.

Members asked if all schools followed the same rules when reporting on attendance. The Officer stated the data schools collected on attendance was scrutinised to ensure they were following the official process and it was the Head Teachers responsibility to sign off that the checks had been made. Schools in Newport reported on attendance using a set of codes to identify reasons for absence, to ensure consistent recording and reporting of absences across schools.

Members queried the secondary school which had seen a spike in exclusions, and whether this trend had stopped following the intervention of Local Authority. The Head of Service explained that there had not been a reduction in the number of pupils being expelled. The high number of exclusions was due to a number of factors, including a new Head Teacher in post. Each year schools had a capped target for the number of young people that they could exclude. There was a theme evident that schools in affluent areas had low exclusions rates and schools that were in deprived areas had higher exclusion rates. Education was looking at how to combat this.

Members asked if schools had internal exclusion zones. The Officer stated some schools had and that it was up to the individual schools to manage their own exclusions.

Members asked why the opportunities to undertake vocational courses were being reduced and why were Welsh Government changing performance measures for secondary schools. The Officer explained it was a move to more academic performance, but it did not mean schools could not offer vocational training. The Officer stated that the Welsh Government had invested millions in apprenticeship schemes for young people. The Officer explained how the Council focused a lot on challenging schools and its staff. For example, if that school had leadership issues the LA would provide mentoring to support the school and individuals. Occasionally the offer of support gains a negative reaction from staff.

The Members thanked the Officers for their support at this meeting.

Conclusion and Comments

The Committee were happy with the responses they received, in particular regarding the schools in AMBER and RED. The description of how the schools are supported by EAS and the LA was an area the Committee found very informative.

Children and Young People Services

Attendees:

- **Councillor Paul Cockeram – Cabinet Member for Social Services**
- **Sally Ann Jenkins – Head of Children and Young Peoples Services**

The Head of Service and Cabinet Member introduced the service area performance. Overall for Children's Services had achieved 57.89% GREEN performance measures.

The first of the RED measures concerned the number of young people who saw a dentist within 3 months of becoming Looked After. The Officer stated that children receive dental care as soon as possible when they were in the system. This was the case for young people who had not seen a dentist within three months. The young people were normally seen by an optician and a GP, or Looked After Children's

Nurse as well. One of the Members enquired about the prescription of certain drugs to the Looked After children, the Officer ensured that while she did not know the exact number of young people in receipt of the drug, the number would be very small. The Officer explained that if the Committee wanted to receive further information on the subject they could prepare a report on the management of Looked After children's health and wellbeing.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Regional Partnership Board was trying to get better funding to enable more children to see psychiatrist. The Committee agreed that this was very important and the young people in the Council's care could have had difficult lives that might lead to mental health problems if left untreated.

Members asked if there had been mechanisms in place to recognise an individual child's needs. The Officer explained there were systems in place, and if needed a young person would have received individual tutoring. The Officer gave an example of one of the Looked After children being accepted into a prestigious music school in London. Members asked the Head of Children's Services to pass on their congratulations to the young girl.

Members enquired about times where children are brought to the attention of Social Services and had complicated issues, whether Social Services were notified or given details of the issues. The Officer explained that they need detailed information from the start to be able to intervene in the child's life. The Head of Service gave an example of a Police a referral regarding domestic violence where a child is at risk. The Council would normally send a Social Worker, but if the referral did not contain enough information there would be limited options available to the Council. The threshold of the Council intervening within a family was high and it was against the law to intervene without a Court Order. The Court Order was needed to be able to remove a child from their parents; the challenge was getting the balance right. Members asked who was the Head of Safeguarding. The Officer stated Mary Ryan was Safeguarding Manager and within Education the Safeguarding Officer was Nicola Davies.

Youth Justice

Head of Children and Young Peoples Services explained they had received a letter after the last inspection, which gave no definitive guidance on the national process for dealing with first time entrants into the Youth Justice System (FTE). This measure moved between GREEN and RED all year but the Members were happy to see it GREEN for the end of year report. Newport's performance was also one of the best in Gwent, but they had continued to face a lot of challenges. The Youth Justice Board had rated the LA as GREEN; this was only the second time it had happened in ten years.

Conclusion and Comments

The Committee were happy with the responses and information received from the Head of Service and Cabinet Member. The Members felt that there had been good improvement from previous quarters.

The Members expressed their congratulations to the Head of Service and Cabinet Member on achieving a GREEN rating from the Youth Justice Board.

Adult and Community Services

Attendees:

- **Councillor Paul Cockeram – Cabinet Member for Social Services**
- **Jenny Jenkins – Service Manager**

The Service Manager from Adult and Community Services introduced the Service Areas performance. The Officer started by explaining how the transition from Swift to WCCIS (Welsh Community Care Information Service) required Swift to be closed down three weeks before the end of the quarter. This had resulted in the three weeks' worth of data being lost. The impact on the Measure for Occupational Therapist (OT) assessments had caused the target of 85% to be missed by 3.2%. The OT team were also without a senior OT for 6 months which had also impacted the performance.

The RED measure in relation to people over the age of 75 who had received advice and assistance and had no repeat contact within the following six months was questioned by the Committee. The Officer explained that the target was set using an incomplete first year of data recording (16/17). This made the target of 40% for 17/18 potentially unrealistic as the target was based on the data collected over 6 months the previous year. The over 75's were separated from the over 18's as a local indicator to ensure the difference could be recorded. The achievement of 33.8% against a target of 40% was seen as a demonstration of effective call and enquiry management. We were talking to the Welsh Government to look into changing all performance measures for the next year.

Regarding the AMBER measure Delayed Transfers of Care the Officer explained that high performance was challenging, however against the rest of the other LAs in Wales Newport has done well.

Members enquired if the Council were looking to create an in-house domiciliary care service. The Officer explained that currently the Council were not looking to establish an in-house domiciliary care service.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Council have been promoting their services through Newport Matters, online and through the contact centre, if the individual had no access to the internet. The Members wanted to ensure the maximum amount of information was readily available on the Council's website, and that all information was up to date and accurate.

Members enquired about the Supporting Peoples grant, how it supported and affected the Local Authorities ability to provide services. The Officer stated there was a strict criteria for money awarded via the tendering process. The Cabinet Member stated the Supporting Peoples grant evaluation process is underway and when completed will be published

Conclusions and Comments

The Committee accepted the Officers responses to their questioning and requested additional information relating to the Supporting People Grant, specifically how long it will take to set up and accepting applications, and its implementation.

The Scrutiny Adviser presented the report to Members and outlined the purpose of the report in seeking the Committees approval for items on its work programme for the next two meetings.

The Committee approved the report and the items to be considered during the next two meetings.

Cllr T Watkins gave his apologies for the Committee briefing meeting on 17 July

The meeting terminated at 12.30 pm