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Minutes of the meeting of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 14 JULY 2020 at 7.00 PM

Present: Councillor Carr (Chair)
Councillors Baines, K Bradburn, Brown, Cryer-Whitehead, D Hopkins, V Hopkins, Marlow, Miles, Townsend and Wales and D Main (Catholic Diocese of Northampton Representative), and S Rahman (SACRE Representative)

Officers: M Heath (Director of Children's Services) and R Tidman (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Montague

Also Present: Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member for Children and Families), R Mascarenhas (Youth Participation Worker), T Adigun (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet), A Antonisthas (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet), T Poyner (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet) and two members of the public.

CYP03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Brown, K Bradburn and V Hopkins and S Rahman advised the Committee that they were employees of schools within Milton Keynes, but they did not have any interest in the items on the agenda that would preclude them taking part in any discussions or votes the Committee might have.

Councillors D Hopkins, Marlow and Mills advised the Committee that they were governors of schools within Milton Keynes, but they did not have any interest in the items on the agenda that would preclude them taking part in any discussions or votes the Committee might have.

Councillor Baines declared an interest as a parent whose children attend Stantonbury International Campus, but he did not have any interest in the items on the agenda that would preclude him taking part in any discussions or votes the Committee might have.

CYP04

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 29 January 2020, 12 February 2020 and 20 May 2020 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

That in relation to the meeting of the 29 January that it be noted that Councillor Montague had volunteered to be the Committee's Mental Health Champion for Young People and that an updated letter would be sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the JTAI Inspection report.

CYP05

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from David Tooley (Local Democracy Reporter)

What plans do the committee have to engage the scrutiny process in relation to the recent Ofsted report into Stantonbury International School?

Councillor Carr responded that the recent report published by Ofsted subsequent to an inspection at Stantonbury Academy in January raised serious concerns across a number of domains and the Council has been clear that the quality of provision at the school has not been of an acceptable standard. Throughout the last six months a number of discussions have taken place with the Multi Academy Trust, the CEO, the senior leadership team at Stantonbury and the Regional Schools Commissioner in relation to the concerns raised. It is recognised however that the local authority has limited influence in the governance and leadership of Academies but does have a role in seeking assurance that appropriate steps are taken to address the concerns highlighted and ensure that students wellbeing and educational needs are met.

On publication of the report the Milton Keynes Director of Children's Services held a meeting with the CEO and head teacher to seek assurances regarding current arrangements, the actions that had been undertaken since the inspection and to confirm the preparations that have taken place for the beginning of the school term in September. A number of assurances were received including information as to the steps made by the school since January to address concerns. It is acknowledged however that due to COVID-19 it is difficult for the school to fully evidence the impact of the work undertaken since the inspection, but the concerns raised were accepted. The school has confirmed that it has progressed a range of

changes in response to the report received and that it will be fully staffed from September with additional leadership capacity working within the school. It is agreed that the Milton Keynes Director of Children's Services will undertake a further visit to the school in September and report back to the specific item on Academy's to the Committee in December 2020. It will be expected that by then evidence will be able to be seen as to the impact of the new leadership and changes within the school as well as feedback received from students, families and partners. I have also requested that the Director of Children's Services provide a summary of the expectations that we can have as a Committee as to how to work more appropriately with academies to achieve better outcomes.

As a supplementary question David Tooley asked, is the Council confident that the leadership of the school is treating the matter seriously.

Councillor Carr responded that yes she believed the Council were confident that the new management team was treating the matter seriously. The proof would be in the results and an improvement for all the children there.

(b) Comment from Elaine Paling (National Executive Member, NASWUT, the Teachers' Union)

I would like to see particularly with regard to Stantonbury and all other academies that you don't just look at academic achievements but also the safety, wellbeing and mental health of students. Particularly at Stantonbury students do not feel safe. I would also ask you to look into this trust, its achievements or lack of are pretty damning. I am a member of NASWUT and we have members in the school who have brought up many problems in the past that have been ignored by the senior leadership team. You must look at the performance of this trust and they must be held to account for their academic performance and the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

The Director of Children's Services responded that he recognised the Council has a duty where it can to look at the health of the entire school however the Council was limited in how much involvement they had within an academy setting. The Council held regular conversations with the Regional Schools Commissioner, the school and the trust and have been clear with those parties that we do not just want to see in an improvement in academic performance but across all areas.

RESOLVED -

That the responses to the questions received be noted.

CYP06

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Witness: M Heath (Director of Children's Services)

The Committee received a report from the Director of Children's Services that outlined the response from Milton Keynes Council to the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to the delivery of Children's Services.

In response to questions the Committee noted that:

- (a) They were particularly proud of all those involved with delivering children's services who have continued to work through this challenging period;
- (b) There was concern about the increase in demand for children's mental health services and what the additional £60,000 funding would provide;
- (c) Libraries had been closed for a significant period and they would not like to see this situation lead to any permanent closures;
- (d) Confirmation was sought that budget would be made available to deliver the recommendations of the Child Poverty Commission;
- (e) Funding for schools, particularly Reception places was worrying due to the contracting primary sector and the Committee would like to explore this issue more fully at a future meeting;
- (f) Over 360 laptops had been made available to those students that met the criteria and many schools had offered blended learning, although there seemed to be a mixed picture of the quantity and quality of the work provided;
- (g) There was some anecdotal evidence of students who had not returned to school from the year groups that should have done because they did not feel safe and they did not then receive any schoolwork;
- (h) In terms of social services timescales and visits there had been fewer referrals, so assessments had been able to be carried out swiftly and discussions had taken place differently. How

much of this new way of working could be used going forward was still to be seen;

- (i) Supporting children moving from primary into secondary, particularly those with SEN or who were vulnerable was a key area of work;
- (j) Further information about the RAG ratings used in the report would be helpful;
- (k) The Troubled Families programme had proved very successful but there was concern that there was a question mark over funding;
- (l) Provisions would need to be in place to recognise and support the concerns of vulnerable groups, including BAME students and their parents as they return to school;
- (m) More engagement was required with young people, that is, direct messages to them from those in power.

RESOLVED –

1. That it be noted that the Committee expressed their sincere thanks to all staff who worked throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and who put the needs of our service users and local community at the forefront of their work.
2. That the terms in which the RAG rating for children involved with Children's Social Care and Children and Family Practice are measured be circulated to the Committee for their information.
3. That an update be provided to the Committee on the budget position for the Troubled Families project.
4. That Cabinet be asked to advise on whether there was funding allocated in the recovery budget to deliver on the recommendations of the Child Poverty Commission.
5. That the Director of Children's Services be asked to provide an update to the Committee on budget strains within the service.
6. That the Planning Group consider how the meeting in December 2020 be framed including invitees to address the impact of Covid-19 on attainment and education gaps.
7. That the Director of Children's Services be asked to circulate more detail on the additional funding for children's mental health services.

8. That the Director of Children's Services be asked to consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the BME community, particularly in relation to concerns around school attendance.

CYP07

UPDATE ON THE JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION

Witness: M Heath (Director of Children's Services)

The Director of Children's Services updated the Committee on the actions that had been taken in response to the recommendations in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Report

The Committee noted that:

- (a) The partnership generally worked well but there was for example some external pressures due to partners such as health and the police who worked over a wider area than just Milton Keynes. However, MK Together did allow for a greater ownership of issues across agencies;
- (b) There was concern about domestic abuse numbers and how we support children and families. It was noted that due to the setup of the Council's MASH it encompassed all children and adult referrals which meant more activity was able to be captured;
- (c) More information was required on budget pressures to deliver the Action Plan as these pressures may be heightened due to the unknown impact of Covid-19 on children's mental health;
- (d) The voice and experience of children known to the youth offenders' team was not included in the development of the Action Plan and this should be addressed given they are a highly vulnerable group with complex needs.

RESOLVED

1. That the Director of Children's Services be asked to consider and report back to the Committee on the budget constraints and any impact these may have on the delivery of the JTAI Action Plan.
2. That the Director of Children's Services be asked to feedback concerns to partners that the voice and experience of young offenders was not incorporated into the action plan.

CYP08

PARENT GOVERNOR CO-OPTEEES

Witness: R Tidman (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer provided a summary of the situation with co-optees onto the Committee.

There was some concern expressed by the Committee as to how parent representatives from Academies could be accountable or transparent as they did not have a wider body to report back to as those from maintained schools did. It was noted that it was positive that the Committee included co-optees that could be part of the wider vision for the children of Milton Keynes. However, this needed to be balanced with representatives who had been elected by a wider body to ensure they were truly representative.

RESOLVED

1. That the chair and vice-chairs review the nominations received for the election of parent governor representatives.

CYP09

2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and noted the proposed Work Programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed changes to the 2020/21 Work Programme be received and noted.
2. That if members of the Committee have any suggestions for items for scrutiny which are within the Committee's remit during 2020/21, they be fed into the Committee's Planning Group.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9:12PM

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